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New and different or simply new: An intercultural analysis of government and private television news in Malaysia

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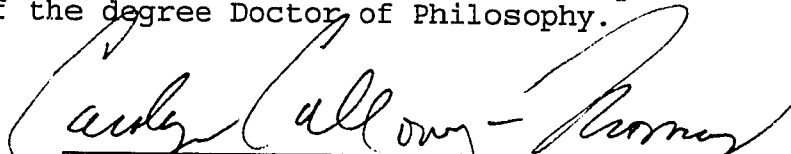
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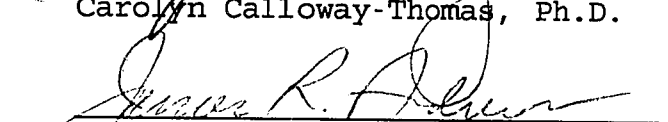
NEW AND DIFFERENT OR SIMPLY NEW:

AN INTERCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF

GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE TELEVISION NEWS

IN MALAYSIA
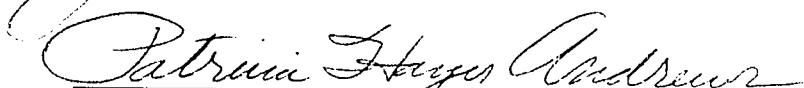
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May 29, 1992

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To my parents

Paul and Frances Johnson Dunlap

Acknowledgments

"New and Different or Simply New: An Intercultural Analysis of
Government and Private Television News in Malaysia"

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Abstract

The government and private television news networks of
Malaysia comprise the focus of this investigation. The case
study shows government and private networks broadcast similar
news products when sources are limited and journalists are
under the same legal and social restrictions. Variety in
ownership appears then to be only the first step toward
diversity of voices in this developing country.

The researcher gathered the data during a three-month
participant-observer period in the Malaysian television
newsrooms. A content analysis of news stories shows that both
Radio Television Malaysia (government) and Sistems Televysen
Malaysia (private) produce more domestic than foreign news and
that the foreign news is largely crisis oriented.

The nightly newscasts offer a rare look at the concerns of a developing nation as reflected in its television news. Network managers use the news to promote the nation's prosperity, advancement and independence, but not to report much negative news about the country or the region. Political, military and business leaders dominate as the main actors in the news stories and the newscasts pay more attention to urban news than rural news.

Five measures of development news reveal a lack of stories that are process- rather than event- oriented, a lack of criticism of the government or its plans and little effort to show the relevance of government programs to local needs. News items did, however, provide some context for the issues reported.

The approaches to news gathering and presentation are examined against the arguments for a New World Information and Communication Order, the long colonial history of Malaysia and the affect of the country's tenuous ethnic mixture of Malays, Chinese and Indian citizens. Decisions about the news are also examined against the ideas of an Asian communication theory.

Results show that the Malays, who are the majority, control the television media. News content decisions then rest on the history and culture of Malays and Islam, the official religion of Malaysia.

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Introduction

A nation's news reflects the rich history and culture
of its people. Through newspapers, magazines, radio and
television, journalists project a national identity and
bring citizens face to face with events in other parts of
the world that affect their lives. For decades, however,
news gathering and dissemination have been controlled by
governments seeking to protect citizens and others seeking
to deny the impact of new ideas. Sometimes the governments
themselves were foreign.

The end of World War II announced an era of
independence from formal colonial rule and overt cultural
domination for many countries not aligned politically with
the former United Soviet Socialist Republic nor with the

United States and Western Europe. As political and economic freedoms became realities for Third World[1] nations, however, so did the desire to reorder the way information had been received and transmitted within their countries, within their regions and around the world. Third World countries wanted more than to be known as non-aligned, they wanted to control and create their own news--their own identity.

Representatives of the developing Third World nations sought to change the idea that most of the information regarded as news and, therefore, identity by the world came from four transnational news agencies, all of which were based in the United States and Western Europe.

As Third World nations regained control of their countries the anticipated economic, social and political adjustments were accompanied by new problems. In some cases, these new nations allowed new and foreign institutions to exist alongside traditional ones. In other instances, the newly independent nations sought to replace media institutions reminiscent of the colonial days. Many others simply transferred media control from the colonial government to the new military or civilian government that replaced the colonialists. The result was often the

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[1] The terms "Third World," and "developing," will be used interchangeably throughout the dissertation.

continuation of controlled information. (Sinha, 1981;
Aggarwala, 1985)

Some independent Third World governments have allowed
political parties and other organizations to establish
newspapers and other printed matter, but the electronic
media traditionally have remained in the hands of
government. As Carla Heath points out in her study of
Kenyan media,

> Even in countries where private ownership of newspapers
> is permitted, private ownership of radio and television
> services is not. Leaders argue that a government
> monopoly on broadcasting must be retained in order to
> ensure political stability, promote national unity
> and development, and minimize foreign cultural
> influence. (Heath, 1988, p. 96)

Press models in the Third World still include complete
government ownership of print and broadcast media; ruling
political party ownership of print and government ownership
of broadcasting; quasi-government corporations which
control print and/or broadcast media and finally a growing
number of private media. Wire services in developing
countries are usually government owned or controlled by
quasi-government corporations.

Government participation in media ownership may remain,
but government monopolies of media are disappearing from the

world. Private ownership is the trend, but not without
difficulty. These new owners of television in former
government monopolies confront a myriad of expectations from
viewers and the competition. For Third World journalists the
expectations include the realization of promises that
private ownership would bring a diversity of voices, access
by the masses and at least some of the hopes of the New
World Information and Communication Order (NWICO)--the
debate which has spanned over two decades and convinced many
developing nations that diversity in ownership would mean
relief from cultural imperialism and the persistent role of
consumer of the world's news. The new order idea promised a
balanced flow of news between the developing and the
developed world and the chance for the Third World to tell
its own story.

William Hachten explains that the NWICO was also
expected to provide:

> 1. Regulation of the right to information by
> preventing the abusive use of the right to access
> information
>
> 2. Definition of the rules to govern truly objective
> news selection
>
> 3. Regulation of the collection, processing and
> transmission of information across national boundaries
>
> 4. Enforcement through domestic legislation and a new
> supranational agency of a proposed international
> journalistic code and penalties including the licensing
> of journalists and

5. Assurance that false or incomplete reports concerning a state's government or its people will be corrected. (Hachten, 1987, p. 134)

The fall of communism in the former Soviet Union re-aligned the political and communication worlds; sometimes by removing excuses and often by providing unexpected opportunities for unincumbered national and international conversations. The former communists, developing nations and others are moving toward more representative news. A crucial unknown is the length and width of the road from government monopoly to private media; from government imposed silence to freedom of expression and a free press.

This investigation probes the question of difference between the contents of a government owned and run television network and the new private television network in the small Southeast Asian nation of Malaysia--a Third World country that has allowed government and private ownership of television along with private newspapers and magazines (most are owned by political parties). The case study approach is coupled with a content analysis of news stories and a three-month participant- observer period in the Malaysian newsrooms.

From Malaya to Malaysia

Malaysia, formerly known as "Malaya," won independence from Great Britain in 1957 and is now comprised of 11

states on the Malay peninsula and two states, Sabah and Sarawak, on the Island of Borneo. As with many other Third World countries, the first modern electronic media inside Malaysia were established by the former colonial rulers to serve the purposes of the colonialists. Although some radio was established during the World War II Japanese occupation, most radio and television were established by the British. Researchers E. Lloyd Sommerland (1966) and Ranggasamy Karthigesu (1988) assert that Britain allowed the establishment of the quasi-government British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) at home, but opted for government controlled media in her colonies and territories, especially government controlled electronic media. Sommerland added too that Britain provided models for press suppression, including the use of emergency laws such as the Internal Securities Act, the requirement that journalists apply for press cards, the Official Secrets Act, censorship of the press, penalties after publication and the closure of media facilities as punishment.[2] (Sommerland, 1966, p. 144)

The nation of Malaysia has three television stations. Two of the stations are operated by the government and share

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[2] Later there is a discussion of the arrest of 106 people in Malaysia in 1987. Many of the arrested were journalists and four newspapers were closed because the police determined they were a threat to national security. Among the arrested was also the head of the leading opposition party. He was held for two years--the maximum time allowed under the Internal Security Act provisions.

a newsroom. There is one private station, which also has a newsroom. Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) is the government station and Sistems Televysen Malaysia (TV3) is the private station. RTM1 and RTM2 broadcast the news in Bahasa Malaysia, English, Tamil and Mandarin Chinese. TV3 broadcasts the news in Bahasa Malaysia and English only. Both newsrooms produce newscasts seven days a week.

Malaysia's cultural and ethnic diversity make it at once an interesting country to examine and an excellent Third World case study. Karthigesu (1988) suggested that when speaking of Malaysian television, "Even at a superficial level, it is not difficult to see that many more pressures are at play on the operation of the medium than is often the case." Karthigesu said the complexity is increased as the religious diversity of Malaysians is taken into account. The Malays are traditionally Muslims, many of the Chinese practice Buddhism and polytheism and a large percentage of the Indian population is Hindu.

Malaysia is not unique in having several ethnic groups representing a variety of cultures and religions. But, it is unusual because the Malays, the indigenous people on the peninsula, are barely a majority of the population and are

clearly not in control of the economy.[3] In 1980, the Malays
were about 52% of the population, but had a stated goal to
attain 30% of the economy by 1990[4]; the Malaysian-Chinese
made up about 37% of the population, but controlled the
economic sector of the country along with foreign interests;
and Malaysian-Indians were about 11% of the population.
(Fourth Malaysia Plan, 1981, p. 59) By 1984, however, the
mean monthly income for Malaysian Indians was 110 Malaysian
dollars more than that of Malays. Malaysian Chinese were
then earning 294 Malaysian dollars more than the Malays.
(Fifth Malaysian Plan, 1986, p. 9) The problem appeared to
be the disproportionate number of Malays who remained in
agriculture. In 1981, 67.7% of the Malay population lived in
the rural areas. The difference in monthly income between
urban and rural dwellers in 1984 was 323 Malaysian dollars.
(Fifth Malaysia Plan, 1986)[5]

Efforts to correct this economic imbalance have created
a growing new middle class of Malays who are benefitting

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[3] The Malaysian population in 1991 was 18,239,000. Ethnic
representation was 61.4% Malay, 30% Chinese-Malaysian , 8.1%
Indian-Malaysian and .5% others.

[4] This goal of reaching 30% of the economy by 1990 was not
reached.

[5] See Faaland, Just, J.R. Parkinson and Rais Saniman.
Growth and Ethnic Inequality. New york: St. Martin's Press.1990
for a detailed account of the economic struggles of Malays and
the move by the government to redistribute the countries wealth.

from affirmative action programs and privileges accorded

them by the constitution. (Kurian, 1987, p. 1261)[6] There

are other indigenous groups in Malaysia, including the Orang

Asli of peninsular Malaysia, the Ibans and Penans of Sarawak

and the Kadizans of Sabah. Sarawak and Sabah are the two

Malaysian states on the Island of Borneo. This inquiry

looks at how Malaysians are seen in television news as

reported by the government station, which was left by the

colonialists and as reported by the private station, which

was begun twenty seven years after independence.

This investigation examined: (1) the differences in

approach between private and government television when

reporting domestic and international affairs and (2) the

differences in approach between the government and private

networks in the coverage of development news.[7]

The findings show that private television in Malaysia

interprets and presents the news only slightly differently

from its government counterpart. Private television

journalists are subjected to the same legal and cultural

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[6] The term Malay applies to any muslim who has Malay as his
or her mother tongue.

[7] In his Winter, 1990 <u>Journalism Quarterly</u> article, "Factors
Influencing Development News Production at Three Indian Dailies,"
Hemant Shah concludes that future research should compare
development reporting by different media with varying forms of
ownership.He suggests that the more we know about how development
news is reported the better the possibility of creating the kind
of reporting that contributes to development.

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restrictions as their colleagues at the government network
and they share the same sources for news. Despite calls
from the developing world for a New World Information Order,
this developing country like many others wants to control
intranational communication for the sake of development. In
Chapter 1, the review of the literature describes the
arguments of the proponents and opponents of the New World
Information and Communication Order, looks at the issues
involved in moving from a government media monopoly to
private media ownership and from event- to process-
oriented news. The study asked:

1. Will government and private television news reports
include more crisis than non-crisis news items about foreign
nations?

2. Will private television news reports feature more main
actors who are unknowns than the government television news
reports?

3. Will private television news reports include more
opposing views than the government television news reports?

4. Will government television news reports use the
government as the quoted source of the news more often than
the private television news reports?

5. Will government news reports evidence less analysis and fail to provide context for the story more often than private television news reports?

6. Will government television news reports reveal the use of more anchor reports and less video than the private television reports?

Chapter 2 provides historical context for the study of Malaysian television. Since media are cultural reflections, an examination of the ancient and modern history provide useful clues to understanding the media's role in Malaysia. The use of media by politicians and journalists is explored and the affect of history on the content of media is considered.

Chapter 3 looks at the organizational structure and processes of both the government and private television networks in Malaysia. Since the researcher accompanied journalists on assignment, many of the comments about newsgathering come from firsthand experience.

Chapter 4 sets out the methodology. The investigation includes a three month participant-observer period and a content analysis of a constructed two-week sample of television newscasts on both networks. Chapter 5 reports the results of the content analysis and discusses the

findings in light of past research. The final chapter (Chapter 6) presents conclusions that are sometimes inconsistent with earlier findings about what developing nations choose for their newscasts and suggests ideas for further research.

CHAPTER 1

A Review of the Literature--A World Challenge to Democratize

During their periods of colonization, Third World nations often were not in charge of their own media, but independence from the colonialists brought with it the challenge to reorder domestic news flow to reflect a new country and later to alter what many saw as the domination of international news by a few transnational corporations. Representatives of Third World nations claimed the world information order allowed former colonial masters to continue to control who and what would become news around the world and within the Third World.

The aim of Third World nations has been to alter the flow of information to include more news originating in the Third World and more news transmitted from the Third World to the West. That struggle has come to be known as the attempt to establish a New World Information and

Communication Order (NWICO).[8]

The United Nations Educational and Cultural
Organization (UNESCO) responded to the call for a new
information order by conducting conferences and studies of
the flow of international news and news within countries. In
1976 in Nairobi, Kenya, UNESCO established the International
Commission for the Study of Communication Problems to devise
a long term comprehensive plan for media and information
systems around the world. Former Irish foreign minister,
Sean McBride, was the appointed leader. The commission
began meeting in December 1977, issued 100 papers and an
interim and a final report.

The final report of the Commission called for increased
efforts toward a New World Information and Communication
Order, expressed the dangers of global news flow being
dominated by transnational news organizations; recognized
there should not be a single model for communication
policies for developing countries, and encouraged the
development of national communication policies. (UNESCO,
1980) Malaysia still does not have a national communication
policy.

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[8] Discussions of the NWICO within UNESCO reached a peak in
the 1970s and 80s. Third World nations continue to seek the
benefits of a new order.

Responses to the New World Information

and Communication Order

The United States has vigorously opposed the New World

Information and Communication Order claiming most Third

World countries with news media only have government owned

and/or controlled news media. U.S. officials say more

representation is needed. They said in 1984,

> Were the Third World nations to proceed and
> succeed with their demands for the implementation
> of alternative media arrangements, publics in both
> the Third World and the West would be fed nothing
> more than government-sponsored information.
> (Harris, 1984, p. 89)

The assistant secretary of International Organization

Affairs for the U.S. Government, Elliott Abrahms, commented

after reviewing UNESCO's policies and budget, "We oppose

interpretations of a new world information order which seek

to make governments the arbiters of media content."

(Abrahms, 1981, p. 67)

United States representatives have also objected to a

New World Information Order because they said it encourages

the restrictions to press freedom commonly found in Third

World and former Communist bloc nations. Third World

journalists also complain about working under sometimes

oppressive government rules and laws. Violation of such

laws could mean jail. Representatives of the United States

argue that a meaningful exchange of ideas and information cannot be accomplished when journalists are denied access to news sources or are jailed for seeking the facts. The United States Congress made its complaint formally. Two congressional resolutions addressed the idea of a New World Information Order. House Resolution 137 attacked its establishment under the aegis of UNESCO by saying it would "restrict the freedom of the press." House resolution 142 encouraged UNESCO to "cease efforts to attempt to regulate the flow of news and information around the world." (State Bulletin, 1981, p. 67)

United States representatives said they were concerned the NWICO may be communist inspired since it was supported by the former Communist bloc nations as well as Third World nations. Elliott Abrahms insisted that Soviet intentions had "nothing to do with communications development and everything to do with the Soviet's comprehensive attack on U.S.interests." (Abrahms, 1981, p. 66)

Part of the United States' response to the NWICO has been to withdraw from UNESCO. In his letter to the Director General of UNESCO, Secretary of State George Schultz began by saying "the United States will withdraw from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization effective December 31, 1984." (Schultz, 1983, p. 82)

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Schultz continued,

> We have been concerned that trends in the management,
> policy and budget of UNESCO were detracting from the
> organization's effectiveness.

John Bolton, assistant secretary for international

organization affairs, added that the United States and other

Western powers recognized their "impotence in the face of a

coalition of developing and communist countries." (Bolton,

1990, p. 1)   Bolton told the Subcommittee on International

Organization Affairs of the House Foreign Affairs Committee,

in 1990, that the U.S. withdrawal had prompted some changes

in the operation of UNESCO, but not enough changes.   He

concluded that the then new Director General, Dr. Mayor

Zaragoza of Spain, was willing to affirm his commitment to

the free flow of information before select U.S. and United

Kingdom audiences, but he was unwilling to declare an end

to the NWICO.   Bolton summed the position of the United

States by asking,

> Who decides whether there is balance? How is it
> measured? Is balance to be achieved by vesting
> authority in governments to restrict the flow of
> information into a country? And who assigns the roles
> to the press? Governments instead of editors? And which
> are the roles that are implied: Boosting government
> policies and programs at the expense of covering real
> news? These are the statist, restrictive nondemocratic
> concepts we have long associated with NWICO. They are
> anathema to free countries everywhere. (Bolton, 1990,
> p. 3)

The United States agreed in 1988 to resume paying its

United Nations dues, which totalled 620 million dollars.

(<u>Congressional</u> <u>Quarterly</u>, February 3, 1990, p. 345)   The

United States has not rejoined UNESCO.

Government vs Private Media

    Some leaders of Third World countries see the

international flow of news as out of balance, but do not see

the need for an externally controlled communication order

within their own borders. Researcher Reynaldo Guioguio

maintains that,

> In most Third World societies, the news media are
> considered part of the overall thrust towards
> modernization and national development and the
> general feeling among government administrators
> and political leaders is that news and information
> must be supportive of government undertakings
> rather than being critical or obstructive.
> (Guioguio, 1985, p. 140)

    Some government leaders, then, see criticism of their

efforts as too expensive for a developing country. UNESCO

Commission chairman, Sean McBride, insisted there is an

obvious link between communications on the national and

international levels. "To isolate one from the other to

treat them separately, as often happens, would not only be a

mistake, but is really impossible." (UNESCO, 1980, p. 217)

So, it was important to look at how domestic and foreign

news are handled in Malaysia, with the aim of detecting the

differences between the government and private approaches.

    The UNESCO reports speak of media in general, but

acknowledge that print and broadcast media are often treated differently in developing countries because of the potentially greater impact of sound and pictures. Elihu Katz and George Weddell included this idea in their pioneering work, Broadcasting in the Third World. They insisted that policy- makers in most Third World countries often feared the power of broadcasting more than they respected its usefulness. As a result, it was rare in 1977, for broadcasting to be left outside the direct control of government. (Katz, 1977, p. 101) The authors asserted that most countries planned television as part of their national development--television was envisioned as a tool of government. In those cases then, broadcasters were required to adjust their news values to the events government regarded as important. (Katz, 1977, p. 213)

Nigerian scholars have introduced other perspectives on the private versus government owned media debate. A. Adefemi Sonaike noted that press freedom modeled after the United States is too expensive for the Third World. According to Sonaike, in Nigeria,

> The goal of development suggests a need for a
> coordination and use of the mass media in
> mobilizing the citizenry for the serious task
> ahead. And government appears to be the only
> state apparatus capable of ensuring that the mass
> media are used for the good of all. (Sonaike,
> 1987, p. 92).

Nigeria, like Malaysia is comprised of several ethnic groups with a variety of languages, traditions and values. Many in Malaysia share Sonaike's view that the government must build bridges among its people and media can be used for this purpose.

Another study of private versus government media conducted by Frank Ugboajah (1987) compared the Nigerian media on four key development issues over a four-year period. Ugboajah argued that government control "does not always lead to less free flow of information." (Ugboajah, 1987, p. 90) Narinder Aggarwala (1983) concurred by pointing to the relative freedom of the British Broadcasting Corporation, which he said was free to offer more of a variety of programming than United States television because of the lack of commercial pressure.

Malaysian scholar Ranggasamy Karthigesu asserted that government control of media in the name of nation-building often limits the growth of that media and increases the probability that media will not mature with the country,

> An inherent danger in communication media providing unquestioning support and strength to governments in the early period of national development or state-formation is that such an attitude might be frozen and may not evolve into the later stage of liberal and more horizontal communication between the   rulers and the ruled. (Karthigesu, 1988, p. 779)

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Karthigesu challenged Third World governments to allow the media to grow as the rest of the country grows or risk being out of step with the citizenry. Being out of step is precisely the charge levelled at the West by some representatives of the Third World. They say the West is using its own cultural lenses to interpret events inside the Third World for the advantage of the West. According to Karthigesu, Third World governments are using their own cultural lenses to interpret what is good for an ethnically diverse citizenry to read, see, and hear. UNESCO commission studies acknowledge that,

> At both the international and domestic levels, many countries do rigidly supervise the media by passing approval on news content and effectively deciding who can be in the profession of journalism.(UNESCO, 1980, p. 107)

Some countries do this by licensing and, in a real sense, silencing journalists. But, the UNESCO commissioners said that, "Even when such practices are based on national laws, they are unacceptable." (UNESCO, 1980, p.107) Aggarwala (1985) insisted that the United States and other countries used the idea of licensing as a scare tactic. He offered that licensing of journalists was considered to protect journalists during times of war and that most countries require some kind of identification card for journalists. In the United States, journalists are required to get press passes when covering national political leaders.

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Aggarwala added that private ownership of the media

does not guarantee good quality, but rather it depends upon

the economic development of the country. Often Third World

media cannot survive without government subsidy, usually in

the form of advertising. "The choice, if it is a choice at

all, boils down to having a government-subsidized or

government owned media or no media at all," according to

Aggarwala. (Aggarwala, 1983: 8) There is, of course, the

possibility of foreign ownership, but in the case of

Malaysia, that has already been tried and rejected.

Aggarwala's point is summarized by William Hachten

(1987) who suggests that no press system is completely free,

not even in the First World. Hachten offered that,

> In the relationship between government and mass
> communication, the basic question is not whether
> government controls the press but the nature and extent
> of those controls. (Hachten, 1987, p. 15)

All press systems then are reflections of their social

and political environments and experience some degree of

government control. Here Hachten echoes a point made earlier

by Aggarwala that the British Broadcasting Service is a

quasi-government entity, which appears to be more free to

choose controversial content than United States media that

are shackled to commercial interests.

Karthigesu insists that the technology of television renders it awkward in a developing country because the hardware, which is Western, comes complete with Western ideas and attitudes toward the dissemination of information. He allows that radio adapts to conditions in a new environment better than television because, "Its production technology is simpler and it can successfully make use of the oral and literary traditions indigenous to the country, even if it employs Western Techniques." (Karthigesu, 1990, p. 131) Television, by contrast, requires more than the chance to go private. The government must encourage journalists to explore the potential of television and resist controlling it.

The Need for Variety

The UNESCO commission made several recommendations in 1980 concerning the NWICO.[9] Among them were:

> 1. The democratization of communication at the national and international levels and the establishment of a larger role for communication in democratizing society. (UNESCO,1980, p. 193)

It is certain that the commissioners were hoping increased

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[9] Although the New World Information and Communication Order sought to correct international imbalances in news flow, it was also designed to address domestic news flow as well as forms of communication other than mass media and mass media programming other than news. See UNESCO, <u>Many Voices One World</u>, the final report of the McBride Commission.

information would create more active citizens and thus alter the communication patterns between citizens and their governmental representatives or, as Karthigesu (1988) suggests, change the communication pattern to one with "more horizontal communication between the rulers and the ruled." In the case of Malaysia, restrictive media and public discussion laws have hampered dialogue on key issues of the day.

>   2. The establishment of strong national news
>   agencies for improving each country's national and
>   international reporting. (UNESCO,1980, p. 196)

Malaysia joined a list of developing nation that chose to have a government-owned news agency. The Malaysian agency is Bernama, with a thirteen-member board of governors and a supervisory council "to guide its policy makers in translating the press-government partnership into terms of practical policy." (Bernama, 1988)

Established by an act of Parliament in 1967, Bernama is the only agency that receives international wires. Editors then forward the copy to subscribing newspapers and radio and television stations. The news agency offers two kinds of foreign services; the Bernama Foreign News Service which is a compilation of selected foreign news items from various foreign news agencies and from its own correspondents

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overseas; and the full unabridged and unedited service of any or all the international wires. (Bernama, 1987; Aggarwala, 1985)

> 3. The improvement of journalistic standards and quality for recognition everywhere as a genuine profession. (UNESCO, 1980, p. 209)

Malaysia has established a training unit as a part of Radio Television Malaysia (RTM). ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, also has located its training facility called the Asia-Pacific Institute of Broadcast Development, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Within the country are three mass communication departments at the university level and the Malaysian National Union of Journalists, that serves as an advocate for the professional press and a major voice in the Confederation of ASEAN Journalists.

> 4. The establishment of media councils to mediate between journalism and government. (UNESCO,1980, p. 209)

This idea is in practice in Great Britain in the Great Council of the Press, where there exist both commercial and quasi-government television. There is also the Nihon Shimbun Kyokai in Japan. Some councils hear public complaints while others judge disputes between journalists and editors or disputes between publishers and the government. The creation of a media council has been suggested in Malaysia by media professionals as well as by the opposition party leaders and consumer groups. Attempts

to maintain a national media council in the United States have also failed.[10]

> 5. The elimination of obstacles and restrictions from the concentration of media ownership, public or private; from commercial influences on the press and broadcasting; or from private or government advertising. (UNESCO, 1980, p. 217)

The government of Malaysia has announced plans to privatize radio, which remains completely under government control. Journalists have also called for the establishment of alternative media that are neither government nor commercial. The biggest obstacle facing Malaysian media, according to Malaysian journalists, is the restrictive set of laws that apply to them and to the media. (Raman, 1985; Loo, 1985; Adnan, 1987; Lent, 1975, 1979) Chapter 3 includes more information about this issue.

> 6. The increased coverage by developing countries of their region and neighbors and more news that conforms to the values of the region instead of waiting for the big news agencies. (UNESCO, 1980, p. 223)

Third World attempts to establish regional news services have been mixed. Jim Richstad(1988) reported major complaints that the disseminated news tended to be either government news or simply more news from the big four international news agencies. Editors said too that stories were not well written and sometimes left out pertinent facts

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[10] There was the National News Council in 1973. It did not succeed in getting enough media support. Some American communities have councils, but no national council exists.

about the subject. Inter Press Service (IPS) is an obvious exception, however. C. Anthony Giffard's (1983) careful review of the service revealed that about 70% of its news was gathered by its own correspondents. Giffard examined the English and Spanish language services which tended to report development news stories.

Regardless of the quality of news items, the function of Third World news services cannot be done by anyone else. This is the part of the world's conversation that must be supplied by developing nations. The voices of governments and international wire services can be included, but the time has passed for them to be the only voices.

The Free Flow of Information and Democracy

The UNESCO Commission called diversity and choice in the content of communication a precondition for democratic participation. The Commission members insisted that,

> Every individual and particular groups should be
> able to form judgments on the basis of a full
> range of information and a variety of messages and
> opinions and have the opportunity to share these
> ideas with others. The development of
> decentralized and diversified media should provide
> larger opportunities for a real direct involvement
> of the people in communication processes. (UNESCO,
> 1980, p. 218)

Commissioner Elie Abel expressed concern that journalists and journalism are in danger in many Third World countries. He said,

> It is a travesty to speak of measures against concentration and monopolization in countries where the media are themselves established as state monopolies or operate as an arm of the only authorized political party. (UNESCO, 1980, p. 218)

The commissioners argued that the free flow of information within the country is necessary to create citizens who are able to use information to participate in government and to improve the quality of their lives. Commissioner Abel's point was that all of this is moot if the news service itself is controlled by the government and the news outlets are owned by the government and/or the only recognized political party. The obvious next question is what can be expected from the private station in a traditional government monopoly. Can viewers expect something other than the reading of government announcements over pictures? Can viewers anticipate more balanced reports? Can they look forward to seeing more reporters on the scene of a story getting firsthand information? Can they expect variety in presentation style?

The UNESCO commission report suggested the way to create diversity in sources for television news is to allow private stations to operate alongside the government owned

or operated stations. For many countries, this is easier
said than done, since media do not exist in a vacuum, but
are part of the dominant socio-political culture. There is,
then, the real possibility that private media that are
subjected to the same restrictions as government media will
have a difficult time making a difference in the amount or
type of information disseminated.

Elihu Katz wrote in 1977 that the main influence of the
West and Western models for communication

> has been inhibiting since the existence of metropolitan
> models has prevented the development of norms more
> closely related to the wholly different socio-political
> circumstances in the developing countries. (Katz 1977,
> p. 101)

Katz was referring to the fact that most developing
countries were mostly rural at the time of his writing. The
same principle can be applied in 1992, not simply because
Third World countries are usually years behind the West in
terms of national media development, but because some Third
World countries are attempting to develop differently than
the West. Part of the reason for the different approach is
the growing number of developing nations with large urban
populations that bring a unique combination of cultural,
social and political influences to bear on the media.

Moreover, John Lee (1982) insisted that the content of news
and news flow cannot be unrelated to the power interests of

the political or economic owner of the medium. He said,

> In the same way, the interests of the medium owner
> cannot deviate very far from those of the social
> class in power in the society. (Lee, 1982, p. 17)

The members of the UNESCO commission found that an

understanding of the points made by Katz and Lee is vital to

understanding the possibilities for the NWICO:

> The fact that the roles communication plays can vary
> according to the needs of the given society or from
> country to country is often underestimated; yet if
> this basic truth is overlooked, a realistic approach to
> communication problems in a divided but interdependent
> world is not possible. (UNESCO, 1980, p. 35)

So, opponents and proponents of a new world order must come

to terms. Jim Richstad (1988) offers the possibility that

the East and the West are often talking about two different

concepts when they discuss the NWICO. He suggests that "free

flow" as used in the Western sense means unrestricted news

flow across borders without regard for political or other

implications, using Western professional news standards.

"Balanced flow" is used by Third World representatives to

describe the presentation of news items "with careful regard

for their necessitating possible delays or censorship of

items for political reasons." (Richstad, 1988, p. 74) So,

according to Richstad when Westerners are talking about a

"free flow" of information, many Third World representatives

are talking about a "balanced flow." Robert Stevenson

suggested that the notion of a 'balanced flow' gives control

to the powerful since the powerful already produce more

news. He suggested instead that Third World countries should

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work toward,

> 1. Economic and cultural disassociation from the major world information powers
>
> 2. Development of human and technical networks capable of satisfying local needs using indigenous resources and frames of reference

Countries must define their cultural and information goals in light of their own needs. (Stevenson, 1982, p. 2)

As Westerners talk of democratizing the news, Third World representatives talk about privatizing the news within the confines of a national ideology for the good of nation building. For many in the Third World, 'keeping the good of the nation first' means the dissemination of good news to counterbalance the "bad news" from the West.

The "Bad News" Habit

Many Third world nations have complained that Western news services consistently disseminate to the world "bad" news about Third World countries. They say that the Western world's emphasis on bad news damages the image of the Third World in the eyes of the rest of the world. Nigerian scholar, A. Adefemi Sonaike, claims that the bad news from the West,

> has the effect of perpetuating worldwide the view that developing countries are incapable of self-regulation and cannot contribute meaningfully to the general culture of mankind. (Sonaike, 1987, p.

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88).

In effect, bad news does more than simply present an
incomplete picture of the Third World, it contributes to the
view that the developing world deserves only what it has.
Such an attitude could affect not only the perception of the
Third World, but also the reception of Third World leaders
as they request money from the World Bank or assistance from
the U.S. Agency for International Development.

In a ten-year study of U.S. network television
newscasts, James Larson concluded, "There is proportionately
more crises reporting from developing nations than from
developed or socialist nations." (Larson, 1984, p. 147) A
similar conclusion was reached by David Weaver and G.
Cleveland Wilhoit in their investigation of two American
wire services. The authors reported that "Western wire
services focus on conflicts and crises when covering the
less developed or Third World countries." They added, "This
may be true, however, because there simply is more armed
conflict and crisis in these countries than in the more
developed countries." (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1981, p. 62)
Narinder Aggarwala (1983) suggested however, that "Coups,
civil disorder, famine, corruption and grinding poverty are
facts of life in the Third World, but so is the process of
economic and social change." He offered that the
"development process," is the most important thing happening

in the developing world. (Aggarwala, 1983, p. 5)

Weaver and Wilhoit (1981) conceded that the values held by the correspondents filing the reports probably influenced the selection of topics to report. They suggested that,

> Basic questions of news values among
> Western journalists may be more
> fundamental and in the long run more
> central to the current debate about
> media coverage than are the differences
> between the coverage of less developed
> and more developed countries. (Weaver,
> 1981, p. 63)

The continued discussion and study of the NWICO has begun to affect the kinds of investigations selected by Western scholars. A study comparing the foreign news coverage of two United States news agencies and the Non Aligned News Agencies Pool (NANAP) with the findings of Weaver and Wilhoit was conducted by Mohammad Kirat and Weaver (1985). Kirat and Weaver concluded that the AP and UPI wires showed a decline in the proportion of news dealing with conflict or crisis in the Third World and an increase in the amount of news from the Third World about social problems such as housing and literacy and about legal and court proceedings.

The analysis of the NANAP wire showed that it covered a wider variety of topics than AP and UPI, but the stories tended to be shorter and mostly event-oriented, less crisis oriented, and mainly on the activities of politicians, presidents and diplomats. The researchers point out,

however, that the stories generally lacked background and contextual material. They also observed,

> Even though the news values of those contributing to NANAP do seem to be different from those of the American news agencies, the quality of news reporting by the non-aligned agencies is in many respects below that of AP and UPI. (Kirat, 1985)

The conclusions suggest some positive changes in foreign news reporting of AP and UPI and potential for NANAP as an alternative source of news. Such a conclusion supports earlier comments by Weaver and Wilhoit about the need for a change in the way the West views and reports the South. They commented,

> Radically different definitions of news than those that exist today might help greatly in promoting not only international, but also intranational understanding and cooperation. (Weaver, 1981, p. 63)

New definitions of news reside in the stories produced every day by journalists all over the world. These approaches must be studied and evaluated within the context of the national culture.

Weaver and Wilhoit participated in the UNESCO/International Association for Mass Communication Research study of world news coverage by press, radio and television in 29 countries. Only the main news bulletins for radio and television were used for analysis. Each news item was coded according to location, source, position, nationality of actor, topic, theme and length. (Sreberny-

Mohammadi, 1984) The conclusions show that stories generally were focused on the activities of political leaders, there was a shortage of news about the developing world, and not much attention to alternative sources. Researchers called for the use of more sources, a regional agenda and better trained journalists.

In his review of the study, Robert Stevenson (1984) notes what the study failed to show. According to Stevenson, the study of 29 countries does not show that Western media and news agencies ignore the Third World; that they single out the Third World for unfair negative coverage; that Third World media are hostage to Western monopoly; or that the socialist and Third World media systems that claim to represent an alternative model operate much differently than their Western counterparts. (Stevenson, 1984, p. 134)

Finnish scholar Kaarle Nordenstreng criticized the use of content analysis in this same project calling the categories "vulgar." He says that researchers missed capturing the qualitative subtleties and,

> what remains is a simple contemporary measurement
> of media performance devoid of the changing
> economic and political relations in the
> international community. (Nordenstreng, 1984, p. 141)

According to Nordenstreng, Stevenson's assessment that the Third World was not singled out for negative coverage

could be based "only on blind reliance on the data provided by the vulgar categories." (Nordenstreng, 1984, p. 141) Nordenstreng insisted the original idea set out to assess the qualitative as well as the quantitative differences in international news coverage. He asserted correctly that failure to recognize the dynamics of development in Third World countries is to miss the point.

One Reuters executive insisted there is no conspiracy among Western journalists to present "bad" news and thus produce a bad image for the Third World. Ian McDowall suggested rather that the West is seeking the novel over the ordinary for the newscast. He concluded,

> The real reason I believe is that the press of any non-authoritarian country prefers news of the exceptional to news that is routine...The Western press doesn't treat the Third World any differently in this respect than it does the First World...[those items that catch] a news editor's eye will tend to be those about conflict, disaster or sex. (MacDowall, 1985, p. 19)

MacDowall said that Reuters' issued a series of features on the wire about development in one medium sized Asian country. "They [the stories] were totally ignored by Asian and international newspapers alike." (MacDowall, 1985, p. 19) If we accept the explanation that Western news services were interested in the novel and not the ordinary, the question remained as to why the Asian countries also did not choose to run the stories about development. MacDowall and Stevenson point to the similarity among media of very

different political systems as an argument against the
theory of cultural imperialism. (Stevenson, 1984, p. 137)

Both scholars, however, may have missed the
significance of the source of the development information,
the many definitions of development news, and the context
offered for the report. The Asian countries may not
consider a particular outside source to be credible
concerning Asian development. Furthermore, the report may
not have addressed the subject appropriately. This may
have been one of the occasions referred to by Weaver and
Wilhoit (1981) when they spoke of "radically different
definitions of news" that may be embraced by people of
different value orientations. What may have been perceived
by the writers for Reuters as development news may not have
been perceived as 'news' by the editors of Asian media.
There is still the possibility that the countries simply did
not want the information.

News as a Cultural Product

The acknowledgement of a variety of definitions for
news could foster international and intranational
understanding by encouraging the idea that news itself is a
cultural product. As a cultural product, the news produced
by one cultural group must conform to that groups' ideas of

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newsworthiness, timeliness, and appropriateness. Former

director of the Asian Mass Communication Research and

Information Center (AMIC), P.R.R. Sinha observes,

> It is high time that they [Western media] realize
> the importance of fair, accurate and objective
> reporting of the trends and events in the
> developing countries not from the view points of
> the audience of their countries but more so from the
> view points of the audience of the developing countries
> concerned. (Sinha, 1981, p. 53)

Sinha suggested then that if the West is to have an

understanding of the East, the description of events needs

to be Eastern. This Eastern context can be obtained from

Western correspondents who live in and study the histories,

cultures and languages of the East or as former ABC

correspondent, Scott Schuster (1987) suggested, from local

reporters in Third World countries. [11] Conversely, Eastern

media need to dispatch correspondents to the West. In other

words, what appeared to be missing from the reporting of the

East and the West was appropriate context for each cultural

perspective.

Another piece of this puzzle is the training of

journalists. Most Third World journalists are trained on the

job and model themselves after journalists who work for

government media. The problem is not always just the

suppression of ideas but government journalists are often

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[11] Cable News Network in the United States currently airs
stories prepared by nationals for inclusion in its program,
"World News Report"

restricted by the organizational structure that comes with being just another government worker.

Scholars have complained also that Third World editors often make selections and write stories out of their experience of being Western trained or influenced. Olatunji Dare of Nigeria made this discovery in his analysis of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN). He reported that NAN relied upon AP, Reuters, and AFP for the bulk of its foreign news.

> It was expected that as a Third World news agency,
> NAN would emphasize news of development over news
> of conflict, crime and disasters, focus its
> reporting on processes rather than events and
> diversify its sources of foreign news to achieve
> balance. The study found otherwise. (Dare, 1986)

Dare said the news agency did not pay much attention to the type of story selected or to its content. There were, however, more stories from the Third World than from developed countries. But, most stories were from the urban centers and the reporting was spot news or events-oriented rather than development or process-oriented. This finding was duplicated in this examination of Malaysian television news.

A Call for Development News

Spot news is a Western invention--the product of a fast-paced society and an abundance of reported events.

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Information that is two days old is dropped from the newspaper or newscast. Aggarwala pointed out, however, that development is the biggest story in a developing country. If spot-news-event-oriented stories take the place of stories about the development process, it is likely that the real news of the day in the will be missed. The problem must be addressed by members of the developing world.

In 1984, a Third World conference was held in Penang, Malaysia. A set of proposals resulted from the meeting to encourage implementation of the precepts of the New World Information and Communication Order:

1. To recognize the right of expression for all (government should ensure that adequate and accurate information is available to citizens)

2. To reduce the power of international news agencies plus increase the coverage of development issues and lessen the emphasis on events

3. To strengthen Third World news services

4. To eliminate internal censorship "covert as well as overt" because it is incompatible with a genuine NWICO

5. To strengthen the capacity of national news agencies

6. To emphasize the national and Third World perspective in the reporting of foreign news

7. To emphasize the popular, non-elite perspective in the national news

8. To develop non governmental and non-profit media

9. To avoid using material which is racist, sexist and vulgar or which presents Third World people in a degrading manner (Third World Network, 1985, p. 59-60)

Third World leaders were calling on Western leaders to

consider the cultural diversity of the Third World.
Conferees listed proposals that claim independence from the
West in determining their roles, goals and heroes. Third
World members were also asserting that the news from the
Third World need not look like First World journalism. They
proposed that news become more process- than event-oriented
and that it rely on news agencies from the East and South,
as well as from the West.

Sonaike (1987, 1988), Weaver and Wilhoit (1981) and
others have suggested that a better view of the Third World
through media requires a broadened concept of news. Many
Third World spokesmen say a new conception probably requires
a shift away from the idea of spot or hard news and toward
the idea of development news. (Sonaike 1987; Aggarwala,
1985; Unesco, 1984) If the role of mass media is defined in
this manner, according to Sonaike, the determinant of news
then becomes <u>relevance</u> rather than <u>timeliness</u> so that
information about a bumper crop does not have to compete
with U.S. threats on Libya or the West Bank conflict.
(Sonaike, 1987, p. 92)

News that is more process- than event-oriented has been
dubbed "development news" by Narinder Aggarwala (1979). He
added that the emphasis on development news is not what

happened at a particular moment or on a given day but what is happening over a period of time. So, when a journalist covers a development story, the aim is not to simply describe but to critically examine, evaluate and report,

1. the relevance of a development project to national and most importantly local needs.

2. the difference between its impact on people as claimed and its actual impact

3. the difference between a planned scheme and its actual implementation. (Aggarwala, 1979, p. 51)

Others describe development news or journalism as the systematic use of communication in support of national development (Lent, 1979); that which deals with the process of development in developing nations (Vilanilam, 1979) ; any story which deals with an attempt to improve the quality of life, environment or financial position health care or social service (McDaniel, 1986, p. 63) or news relating to the primary, secondary and tertiary needs of a developing country. Primary needs include food, clothing, and shelter. Secondary needs are development of the agriculture industry and all economic activity which leads to the fulfillment of the primary needs, plus development of education, literacy, healthy environment, medical research, family planning, employment, labor welfare, social reforms, national integration, and rural and urban development. Tertiary needs are development of mass media, transportation, tourism, telecommunication arts and cultural activities. (Vilanilam, 1979)

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Christine Ogan (1984) defined development news operationally as a product in her analysis of nine important Third World newspapers as "the news that deals with topics such as culture, education, medicine, nutrition, shelter, health, transportation, telecommunications, employment, political participation and a more equitable distribution of resources." Coders were asked to identify development news items that "provide context or background material, describe a process rather than an event, answer 'how' and 'why' questions and explain the consequences of an event or process." (Ogan, 1984)

Ogan asserted that although development news is different from the spot or hard news practiced by Western journalists, development news is not the same as 'good news' or government 'say-so' news. She insisted that development news must be encouraged by the home country. An outside source is unlikely to present the development news of a country as forcefully as the country itself.

Ogan reported that 83% of the development stories took place in the country of origin, 2.6% came from a geographically bordering country and another 8.4% originated in another developing country. She concluded that development news topics overall related to home news taking place within the country (80%) and little foreign news

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(13.1%). She added, "Most development news was written by the newspaper's own reporter, the national news agency , [an editor] of the newspaper or one of the paper's foreign correspondents." Only 4.8% of development news was found in the large transnational news agency feeds.

Both private and government newspapers were included in the study. Contrary to the argument raised by opponents of the NWICO, Ogan found that the most critical sources appeared in government controlled newspapers and when comparisons were made with other countries, those comparisons were also most frequently reported in the government controlled press.

The use of government as the only source was only slightly higher for the government controlled newspaper. The privately owned newspapers were more often coded as not using any government sources, although the absence of attribution makes it impossible to determine with certainty where the information came from.

Ogan suggested the Third World accept its responsibility to encourage an alternative to spot or hard news, since it appears certain that the transnational news services are not filing many development stories about the Third World. She notes,

If adequate development coverage is a goal of the
Third World press, then government leaders need to
stop criticizing the Western press for its
failings and begin to examine the situation at
home and coordinate efforts to improve coverage in
their own countries" (Ogan, 1984, p. 189)

Ogan called for more critical sources to be used, more

analysis of development topics, less dependence on the

government as a source of information, and more use of

alternative sources.

Aggarwala distinguishes between development news and

"developmental news." He says that developmental news means

using the media to further the cause of economic or social

development--promoting economic and social development. In

his article, "Third World Perspective on the News," he makes

it clear that the distinction is necessary. Developmental

news can simply can be the coverage of development issues

and as Ogan points out, reporting development events without

context or analysis is not enough. The findings of this

study show that Malaysian journalists have taken the step to

include stories about development issues with context, but

without analysis.

Third World New Agencies--Filling the Gap

Supporters of the NWICO have complained about the small

number of stories about the Third World that come from Third

World sources, but opponents have shown that available

sources are not being used by the Third World. Bernama, the
national news agency of Malaysia, receives stories daily
from about 23 different news agencies around the world. At
least eight of these services are from other developing
nations supplying information about developing countries.
(Bernama, 1987) Schramm and Atwood (1977), Ogan (1984)
Richstad (1988) and others have noted that the problem is
not the number of alternative services available, but the
quality of those services and the willingness on the part of
Third World news outlets to use the services.

Ogan (1984) reported Interpress Service, DEPTH-News,
the Non-Aligned News Pool and the Pan African News Agency
were used during her analysis of development news stories by
only three of the nine newspapers in the study. Richstad
(1988) reports that Bernama sent 335 general news stories to
Antara, the official news agency for Indonesia in July,
1987. Antara distributed 80 of those and Jakarta (Indonesia)
newspapers used 18. (Richstad, 1988, p. 77)

One of the agencies to which Bernama subscribes is the
Asia-Pacific News Network (ANN) organized in 1981 under the
auspices of the Organization of Asia-Pacific News Agencies
(OANA). ANN was designed to improve the flow of news among
Asian countries as a supplement and complement to other news

sources for the region. English is the language of the exchange. According to Richstad, these services are often too slow and unreliable to be used by news outlets. So, "there remains a great deal of preference and reliance on the international news agencies for stories about Asia." (Richstad, 1988, p. 77) Sonaike (1988) and others suggest that the Western training that many Third World editors receive and their high regard for the former colonial powers encourage them to choose stories from the transnational agencies first.

The ASEAN News Exchange (ANEX) grew out of links between Indonesia and Malaysia in the 1970s and became the news exchange in 1981. ANEX includes the Philippine and Thailand News agencies and Singapore and Brunei, which do not have national news agencies. According to Richstad (1988), ANEX is not critical enough. ASEAN nations share carefully edited stories about each other to encourage development, and to avoid casting member countries in an unfavorable light.

The directors of Asiavision say, however, that it is better for the country with negative news to present its version of events rather than to leave the field entirely to the international news agencies. Asiavision is a television

news exchange between China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Malaysia. (Keune, 1985; 34) Asiavision is divided into two zones; headquarters for zone A is Tokyo, Japan and for zone B is Kuala Lumpur at RTM. Zone A has one satellite transmission and zone B has two transmissions each day. Each Asiavision coordinator calls around the exchange at noon each day to ask which stories each country is contributing. Individual countries decide what they will accept and then in the afternoon the individual feeds are sent to Tokyo or Kuala Lumpur where they are packaged, but not edited and then sent to members by satellite. Oftentimes the news editors in the member countries have to be convinced that releasing unfavorable stories is a good idea. Keune (1985) offers an example of an outbreak of student unrest in Bangladesh, which the government of Bangladesh was not willing to report. Members of Asiavision pressed the government to release the story. Bangladesh released the story, but not inside Bangladesh.

The primary criticism of Asiavision has been that it is an exchange among governments. Although private stations are free to become a member of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union which houses Asiavision, the cost of satellite time is often prohibitive. In fact, the cost has kept many government agencies away from Asiavision as well. (Guioguio,

1985; Sinha, 1986)

Researchers have focused on the images of Third World countries in the Western press, (Kitatani, 1981; Larson, 1984; Weaver and Wilhoit, 1983; Ugboajah, 1987), the frequency with which stories about the Third World appear in the Western press, (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1983; Kitatani, 1981; Larson, 1984) and the frequency of news about the West in Third World media (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1984; Ibrahim, 1984; Othman,1982; Vilanilam, 1979;)

Missing from previous studies has been the opportunity to note *how* private and government owned television in a Third World country treat that country and its close and distant neighbors. Missing from development news research is the analysis of the kinds of sources used, the types of people covered and the settings for development news. Hemant Shah (1990) suggests that without this information it is not possible to know *how* development news is covered.

Based upon the arguments raised in discussions of the New World Information and Communication Order and extant research of those arguments, six research questions were posed:
1. Will government and private television news reports include more crisis than non-crisis news items about foreign

nations. Since a primary criticism of government controlled news is that it suppresses information as in the case of Bangladesh, the study predicted that private television would choose to report more crises to distinguish itself from the traditional government approach.

2.   Will private television news reports feature more main actors who are unknowns than the government television news reports? Researchers of Third World media often describe the news as a parade of government officials. Not often are ordinary people the news in developing nations. This inquiry suggested that the new private television network would position itself as a network of the people rather than another arm of the government.

3.   Will private television news reports include more opposing views than the government television news reports? Of primary concern to the UNESCO commissioners was that without competition, there would be no opposing view available to citizens. The question was whether the private station would use its freedom from government constraint to provide a more balanced news program.

4.   Will government television news reports use the government as the quoted source of the news more often than the private television news reports? Since there are

sources other than the government for news, the question asked if the new private network would take advantage of those other sources to place government announcements in better perspective.

5. Will government news reports evidence less analysis and fail to provide context for the story more often than private television news reports? The question here was whether the private network would follow the lead of government tradition and present very little detail in stories or whether the private network would be more investigative.

6. Will government television news reports reveal the use of more anchor reports and less video than the private television reports? This investigation suggested that since government television is described as "dull" and "uninteresting," that the private network would use a better look to lure people away from the government network.

A content analysis of news reports from the government and private networks shows these differences and similarities.

Summary

    The position of the Third World has changed

significantly twice--once with independence from colonial rule and again with the fall of communism. The two events brought different brands of freedom but also a new challenge to make new decisions without the old considerations.

The rest of the world has also changed. Many former government media monopolies in Western as well as Eastern Europe are being replaced by new private radio and television stations. (Mahoney, 1992, p. 30) There is even the promise of privatizing what was Central Television in the former USSR.

Other parts of the Third World are also stepping up for a turn at privatization, including Singapore. The Republic has announced that it will privatize its state-run Singapore Broadcasting Corp in 1994. (Levingston, 1992, p. 5)

Journalists in Malaysia and other Third World countries continue to talk of a new world order. They still want a balanced flow of news with the developed world, a change from the practice of reporting mostly bad news about the developing world and a chance to tell their own story in their own way. Taking advantage of private media is one big step in that direction. The results of their efforts will look variously because each will have to fashion a television system that reflects their unique history and

cultural perspective. Asa Briggs suggests in the

introduction to the book Broadcasting in India,

> It is remarkable to what a great extent it is necessary
> to understand the general history of particular
> countries in order to understand what they have done
> with their conscious or unconscious communications
> policies.   (Chatterji, 1987, p. 9)

So, even when no official communication policy exists, the

manifestations of an unofficial policy can be seen in the

media. The absence of a sense of history also allows too

many Western scholars to miss the influence of history and

culture on the development of news. In Chapter 2, the

historical backdrop for the production of television news in

Malaysia is examined.

CHAPTER TWO

"The Historical and Social Cradle of the News"

The decisions of a television news operation regularly
are informed by the history and culture of the nation to
which it belongs. The choice of one story over another to
lead the newscast is often directly pinned to a struggle won
or a battle lost by the people of the nation. Malaysian
history is replete with struggles against colonial rule and
the loss of Malay dominance. Malaysian news relies on that
history for definition. Malaysian journalists rely on the
history for guidance.

Ancient Malaya enjoyed the flourishing spice trade
routes from the Far East to China, India and Europe.
Travelers and trade had to go across the Malay Peninsula or
go around it through the Straits of Malacca. Early
Peninsula Malaysia was otherwise characterized by powerful
kingdoms and sultanates and Malay farmers who acknowledged
the tropical weather and evergreen terrain as divine gifts.

The people of Malaya have since experienced many
foreign influences and several colonizers--all events that
influence modern definitions of news. According to
historians Norton Ginsburg and Chester Roberts (1958) the

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earliest history of the Malayan peninsula has been less a
Malaysian history and more a history of the essential
foreign interests which happened to converge upon it. That
convergence began very early.

Ancient records show interaction between Malays and
Indians as early as the second century. Historian, Richard
O. Winstedt, writes that Indians brought more than money to
Malaya, they brought,

> ...three religions (Hindu, Buddhism and Islam), a new
> magic and medicine, Hindu and Islamic law, the arts of
> sculpture, gold- and silver-work and silk weaving, two
> alphabets and secular and religious literature."
> (Winstedt, 1961, p. 263)[1]

Ginsburg and Roberts contend that contact with Indian
traders led to their acceptance into the Malay community.
Indians married Malay women and many of the Indian customs
became Malay customs. The relationships also led to the
"adoption of Hindu ideas of Kingship and the introduction of
Hinduized ceremonials into the local courts." Vestiges of
these practices are evident in 1992 Malaysia. (Ginsburg,
1958, p. 19)[2]

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[1] This book, <u>The History of Malaya,</u> was revised in 1961 and
reprinted in 1986.

[2] The traditional Malay wedding contains many Hindu customs.
Malays are quick to admit the origins of the customs and do not see
any conflict between the Hindu origins of many of their customs and
their Muslim beliefs. It is important to note also that Malays did
not abandon their own culture for the culture of any of their
colonizers.

The Chinese also were among the ancient traders with
Malaya. Although early contact was primarily commercial,
eventually Chinese men took Malay wives and began the "Baba
and Nonya" class and culture in and around Malacca. Baba is
the Malay term for a Chinese Muslim man married to a Malay
woman (Nonya). Historians agree that Malacca was the cradle
of activity for Malaya. Many aspects of modern Malayasia
began there.

A Succession of Intruders

The Portuguese arrived in Malacca after it became key
to the spice trading of the East. Ginsburg and Roberts
report," Nearly all spice from the Indonesian archipelago
was funneled through the port of Malacca and into the hands
of Moslem traders for transport to the spice markets of the
Near East and Europe." (Ginsburg and Roberts, 1958, p. 27)

The spice trade in the area was controlled by Arab
Moslems, so it became clear to the Portuguese that they
would have to fight for it. That fight came in 1511. The
Portuguese overpowered Malacca and created a Portuguese
stronghold. (Ginsburg and Roberts, 1958, p. 27)

In 1640, the Dutch, helped by the ruler of Johore in
southern Malaya defeated the Portuguese. The Dutch, like the

early Chinese, were primarily interested in controlling the trade in the peninsula. Neither the Portuguese nor the Dutch had any significant influence on the culture of the rest of the country.

Malaya consisted of powerful sultans, who had warriors for protection. The rest of the Malay population lived very simple lives in small farming communities near the rivers and on the edge of the forest. Islamic scholar V.S. Naipul suggests they were "half Muslim and half animist." He described the meeting of European and Malay cultures as,

> Separate colliding worlds: the world of Europeans, pushing on to the 'outer edge of darkness,' the closed tribal world of Malays. (Naipul, 1982, p. 226)

History records, however, that Malaya was not dark on the inside when the Europeans arrived. When Portugal took Malacca in 1511, a political system, art, science and literature were all in place. Even before the Hindu period, the Malays had a system of government that included the tribal chiefs. Early Malays respected rule by monarchy along side rule by elders. The idea of a king and a prime minister appears then to be consonant with Malay heritage.

During the eighteenth century, Britain's East India Company established trade with the state of Kedah in northern Malaya. In 1782, Francis Light, a British employee of the Company, convinced the Sultan of Kedah to cede the

island of Penang on the west coast in exchange for what he thought was military protection against his Malay enemies. The Sultan did not get protection. (Ginsburg and Roberts, 1958; Winstedt, 1961) When the Siamese (Thai) drove the then Sultan into exile, in 1821, the British only offered sanctuary in Malaya, but did not fight for the Sultan. (Gullick, 1981, p. 20)

Another employee of the East India Company, Thomas Stamford Raffles, negotiated an agreement with Tunku Hussein of Johore, to occupy the almost uninhabited island of Singapore in 1819. In 1830, Singapore became the capital of the newly formed Straits Settlements (Singapore, Malacca and Penang). The British, who already had control of Penang and Singapore, gained Malacca to fortify its power on the sea route. (Gullick, 1981, p. 21) This was a powerful financial move for the British because of the lucrative trading business. It also was a giant step toward complete control of the country, including the Malay states.

The formal boundaries of British rule in Malaya did not advance into the Malay states until 1874, but the relationship between the Straits Settlement and the independent states began to shift significantly from about mid century according to Gullick (1981) The British were asked to help settle disputes in some of the remaining Malay states between warring sultanates or to protect sultans from

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outside aggression. Slowly the British developed a presence in the independent Malay States and eventually governed them as well as the Straits Settlement uninterrupted until World War II. Fortunately for Malaya, it had survived for a long time before the British arrived. Unfortunately, the British were not the last of its colonizers.

Soon after the end of World War II, Malaya was liberated from one of the darkest eras of its history--a three year period of Japanese occupation (1942-45). Historian, Harry Miller, suggests that British military had been guarding the island of Singapore assuming that the Japanese would attack there. Instead, at about one o'clock Monday morning on December 8, 1942, Japan began its march on northern Malaysia, dropped bombs over Singapore, and attacked the U.S. Naval base at Pearl Harbor. (Miller, 1966) Caught off guard, the British had been outmaneuvered by the Japanese and forced to leave their Malayan paradise.

The Japanese executed many Chinese-Malayans in the name of "anti-Communism" during the occupation. Miller recounts:

> Their reign of terror lasted about six months. They killed thousands of Chinese, most of whom were innocent of the allegations against them; also killed were people accused of being British Sympathizers. (Miller, 1966, p.155)[3]

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[3] See Winstedt for a detailed description of the treatment the Chinese and others received at the hands of the Japanese during the occupation.

The Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (M.P.A.J.A.)
made up of communist guerrillas was born during the
occupation. Hundreds of Chinese helped the guerrillas by
supplying them with food and supplies. The job for the
M.P.A.J.A. was to harass the Japanese--and they did.

Confident of an Allied victory over Japan, the Malayan
Communist party drew up plans in 1943 for the establishment
of a Soviet Republic in Malaya after the war. By 1945, the
guerrillas numbered 5,000 to 7,000. Japan surrendered on
August 14, 1945, and the M.P.A.J.A. emerged as victors.
Drunk with their own success, the M.P.A.J.A. established
control over several villages and towns. According to
Miller,

> They raised their three-starred flags and terrorized
> the people. When officers of the British Military
> Administration eventually arrived they had to use
> considerable firmness in many regions before they could
> install themselves as the real authority." (Miller,
> 1966, p. 160)

This time there was a question about who was to be the
real authority. The relationship between Britain and Malaya
would change after the occupation. The soul of Malaya had
been bruised by the Japanese and the experience awakened the
idea that outsiders should not own Malayans. But, perhaps
more important than that, the British had shown the Malays
that British might was conquerable. Ginsburg and Roberts
concluded,

There arose a feeling that the people had been misled and duped by the British into believing in their protective guardianship, while at the first sign of danger British protection crumbled and the country was deserted and left to the mercies of the Japanese...Out of this common attitude appears to have grown a determination not to heed unquestioningly future British policy decisions. (Ginsburg, 1981, P. 45) [4]

Malaya and Borneo were placed under the British Military after the war. But the attitude of Malayans had changed since the days when the British controlled the Straits Settlement and the independent Malay States. The next problem for the British in Malaya was to be the Chinese Communists. This time Malaya was to become an even more active participant in her own liberation.

The War Against Communism

British rulers were too preoccupied with resettling in Malaya to notice that the communists were growing in number and influence. Winstedt argued that in March 1948, a Communist Congress in India gave orders to Malaya's delegates to intimidate the law abiding, create panic by sabotage, start a reign of terror and seize an area to found a Communist Republic in Malaya. (Winstedt, 1961, P. 251) British reaction to the emergency was slow,

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[4] For a good discussion of the reception of the British by the Malayans see John Gullick's Malaysia.

When the Labour Minister of War got a letter stressing the insecurity of an estate in south Kedah and the inadequacy of the local police force, his stiff reply that the area was peaceful arrived on the day the estate manager was murdered." (Winstedt, 1935, P. 251)

The end WWII found Malaysia on friendly terms with the Western powers. But the closer Malaya became the more Malayan Chinese felt left out. Gullick makes clear that main sources of support for the Chinese communist guerrillas were young Chinese who had been educated in Chinese medium schools and likely not prepared for the Malayan society and its English-language orientation in schools and government.

The most effective allies for the guerrillas were the squatters who lived along the jungle boundaries. During the first years of the war, the British government policy was to round up the squatters suspected of helping the enemy and to repatriate them to China or India. This was not an efficient way of removing a large number of people, so the government employed other methods. Beginning in 1950, squatters were resettled by the government into New Villages to keep them from collaborating with the communists. Some of the property given to the squatters traditionally had been earmarked for Malays. (Gullick, 1958: 91-93) The idea was successful in reducing the power of the communists, but it took twelve years to defeat them.

On July 31, 1960, the struggle came to an end. Historian, Richard O. Winstedt indicates, however, it was a hard victory to celebrate,

> It was estimated that 6710 terrorists had been killed at a cost of 180 million pounds. The security forces lost 1865 men and had about 2500 wounded. The greatest sufferers were civilians, especially Chinese, for whose liberation the communist desperadoes claimed to have been fighting. (Winstedt, 1961: 253)

Racial Tension

The issue of ethnic identity has been used to separate, classify, and confuse people throughout much of the history of Malaya. British colonizers began the identification of race with occupation by encouraging Indians to be civil servants or rubber plantation workers, Chinese to be merchants and Malays to be small rural farmers.

During the Japanese occupation, Malays had been encouraged by the Japanese to become more nationalistic. Historian, Wan Hashim (1983) notes that the Japanese indoctrinated the Malays with nationalistic feelings for their country, thus drawing a clear division in Japanese treatment of the Malays and the non-Malays. While the Malays and Indians were favored, the Chinese were often ill-treated

and persecuted. Wan Hashim suggests that as the Japanese saw they were losing the war, they decided to help Malaya prepare to resist the resettling of the British. He says, however, that Malays did not favor the Japanese over the British. (Wan Hashim, 1983, P. 39)

In 1945, when the British returned to Malaya they received a warm and enthusiastic welcome, but it was short lived. In 1946, British officials announced their intention to establish the Malayan Union, which was to include the nine protected Malay States[5] in addition to the British colonies of Penang and Malacca. Although, as Miller asserts, Britain did not intend to relinquish its ownership of the ports of Penang and Malacca. (Miller, 1966, p. 166) The Malayan Union was to be under a British Governor who would assume some of the rights the Sultans had enjoyed. [6] Under the Malayan Union idea, a governor (who would probably be non-Muslim) would make decisions about religious matters.

Malayan Sultans were asked to sign an agreement--some did. Others sought legal help to stop the Malayan Union idea. Sultan Abdul Aziz of Perak responded:

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[5] Kedah, Perlis, Pahang,Kelantan, Trenganu, Perak, Negri Sembilan,Selangor, and Johore.

[6] The Sultans are the religious leaders of the Muslims. The King is a Sultan who is elected by other Sultans to serve a five year term as King.

I signed because I was caught in an atmosphere of haste
and because I was engrossed in my unshaken loyalty to
the British Crown, with full confidence that my rights
and the rights of my people would not be disturbed.
(Miller, 1966, p. 167)

For Sultan Aziz, it was incongruous that the British as

he knew them would be involved in a scheme to hurt him or

his people. The Sultan of Kedah responded,

I was presented with a verbal ultimatum with a time
limit and in the event of refusing to sign what I call
the instrument of   surrender, my successor who would
sign would be appointed. (Miller, 1966, p. 166)

He saw no way out. The process caused great distress

among the communal and traditionally rural Malays. But, the

process also showed Malays they too had power. Wan Hashim

suggests that the idea of a Malayan Union was the "greatest

force that united the Malays in their nationalist movement."

(Wan Hashim, 1983, p. 45)

In direct opposition to the idea of the Malayan Union,

the Malays established the United Malay Nationalist

Organization (UMNO) in 1946. (Winstedt, 1961, p. 257). The

Malays then claimed victory in the discussion about the

Malayan Union, but the British rulers installed the Malayan

Union just as they had planned. Malaya and Singapore were

separated and a governor was installed in Singapore.

The Malay rulers did not attend the installation,

however, because UMNO called a boycott of the

administration that was to last the two years of the Malayan

Union. Then, instead of a Malayan Union in 1948, Malayans established a Federation of Malaya which restored the power of the Sultans.

In early 1949, the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) was formed as an alternative for Chinese who did not back the communists in Malaya or in China. In 1952, UMNO invited MCA to form an alliance, which won nine of the eleven seats on the Kuala Lumpur municipal council. (Gullick, 1981, p. 94) Shortly before the first national election in 1955, the Malayan Indian Congress joined the alliance. This political convergence of otherwise disparate ethnic groups signalled a turning point for Malaysian history and media.

Eighty-four percent of the registered voters at this time were Malay and only 11% were Chinese. UMNO demanded that based on those figures, Malay candidates should predominate. Tunku Abdul Rahman, the president of UMNO threatened to resign if UMNO persisted in this demand. The Tunku had selected racial unity as the best avenue for an independent Malaya. (Miller, 1966, p. 193) The Alliance won all but one of the 52 seats at stake. (Wan Hashim, 1983, p. 53) The one seat not won by the Alliance was won by the Pan Malayan Islamic Party (PAS) which had emerged from the ranks of UMNO in 1951. PAS leaders sought to unify the

Islamic administration in the Malay states. PAS leaders

also disagreed with UMNO's willingness to include non-Malays

as part of the coalition.[7]

According to Gullick and others, the Alliance

government was soon able to use its clout to negotiate with

Britain for complete independence to take effect in August,

1957. (Gullick, 1981, p. 97)

Malayan Independence

On August 31, 1957, the nine Malay States of Perlis,

Kedah, Perak, Selangor, Pahang, Kelantan, Negri Sembilan,

Johore and Trengganu together with Penang and Malacca became

independent, with Britain still providing defense protection

and some assistance when requested. Winstedt concluded that

British protection encouraged Chinese to pour into Malaya to

become laborers in tin mines and rubber estates, fishermen

and domestic servants. The second and third generation of

Chinese immigrants then became the merchants and

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[7] Only Malays can be members of UMNO, so the only way to have
an integrated coalition was to invite MCA and MIC in.

professionals with English educations. The Malays took the lead in getting independence, but the Chinese Malaysians appeared to benefit the most. This long sought after independence also created Malay and Chinese enmity according to Winstedt. (Winstedt 1961, p. 263

V.S. Naipul, who writes about Islam in Malaysia, suggested that the gentle nature of the Malays lulled them to sleep while the British, with the help of the Chinese and the Indians, built a nation. He asserted,

> The rich Malaysia of today grows on colonial foundations and is a British-Chinese creation. The British developed the (tin) mines and the (rubber) plantations. They brought the Chinese (the diligent, rootless peasants of a century back), and a lesser number of Indians, to do the work the Malays couldn't do. (Naipul, 1982: 227)

Naipul echoed ideas expressed by Richard Winstedt, the former member of the Malayan civil service and a past president of Raffles College in Singapore. Winstedt claimed that, "Without Chinese brains and energy Malaya could not have prospered as it has." (Winstedt, 1935, p. 263)

Clearly, these two authors measured progress and significance differently from the Malays who look at their ancient culture and their ability to survive as important foundations for a nation.[8] This racism practiced by the

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[8] This early treatment of Malays by the British explains many of the decisions abut news that are made today in the newsroom meetings. It is apparent that television station owners want to

British extended into the division of labor. The colonial

economy formed a specialization of economic activities along

racial lines. Most Malays lived in rural areas as padi

(rice) farmers, fishermen and rubber smallholders. The

Chinese who were concentrated in urban and semi-urban

centers, were typically engaged in trade and commerce or as

workers in the tin mines. The Indians worked in rubber

estates, in the Public Works Department or they were

teachers, clerks, lawyers and doctors.(Wan Hashim, 1983, p.

62)

Malays who lived in the rural areas usually lived in

what are called "kampongs"--small villages of families. The

kampongs were and to a large extent remain the primary

economic, religious, political and social unit for Malays.

They have a system of government and rules established over

more than three thousand years where communal efforts are

praised.

Since "to be Malay is to be Muslim" the kampongs are

often run according to the teachings of Islam. Young boys

and girls are taught their roles in the family and in the

community. James W. Gould who writes about the relationship

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exalt the Malay culture to combat the hundreds of years of bad
press that Malays have received in their own country as well as
abroad. Malay owners used the air waves to promote themselves--
even the news programs.

between Malaysia and the United States offers that the first thing a child is taught is that he must not dishonor his family, "The (Malay) father says,'Spit in the air, and it will land on your nose'." (Gould,1969: 11) A precept that takes on new meaning when considering the decisions that Malay journalists make about what to disclose about the country.

MALAYS AS A MINORITY

According to Winstedt, when the Federation became independent of Britain in 1957, Malays accounted for 49% of the population, while the Chinese comprised 37%. In 1959 when Singapore became independent, 75% of the Singapore population was Chinese.

In 1961, when Malaya proposed that Brunei, Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo (Sabah) join together as Malaysia, the issue of racial balance was again raised. The Federation of Malaya was established in 1963 without Brunei, which preferred not to become the smallest member. Singapore withdrew from the Federation two years later.

The problems with Singapore appear to have included the racial imbalance caused by having the mostly-Chinese-Singaporeans and the threat to political dominance by the

Malays. (Gould, 1969, p. 130)[9] The idea that Malays must be politically dominant in Malaysia as the Chinese are politically dominant in Singapore, persists in Malaysia and is often heard from politicians.

Both the Philippines and Indonesia severed diplomatic relations with the newly established Malaysia. The Philippines did not like the idea that Malaysia claimed Sabah. The Philippine government feared that Sabah under Malayan rule might become a center of communist disaffection and of straightforward smuggling on its southern frontier. (Gullick, 1981, p. 111) Historian, Harry Miller, suggests that the Philippines objected to the way the United Nations had conducted the survey of public opinion in Sabah and Sarawak regarding the merger. (Miller, 1966, p. 241)

Both the Philippines and Indonesia also expressed their resentment of what they saw as a "Neo-colonial" Malaya, since Malaya appeared to have many friendly ties with the West. President Sukarno of Indonesia expressed the desire to create an Indonesian Empire to perhaps include Singapore and Malaysia. (James,1971, p. xiii) The Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PAS) shared this idea of a closer association with other Malay territories. (Gullick, 1981)

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[9] See Gullick for a fuller discussion of this.

The Indonesians began what is known as its "confrontation" with Malaysia. Indonesian police and army attacked Sarawak and Sabah. A trade embargo was imposed which did severe though temporary damage to the trade between Singapore and Penang and nearby parts of Indonesia. Indonesians stormed the British and Malaysian Embassies in Jakarta and looted British homes there.

President Sukarno saw the establishment of Malaysia as a strategic threat for it seemed to guarantee the perpetuation of British influence close to Indonesia's border. (Weinstein, 1969, p. 3) In 1966, after many conciliatory attempts made by the United States and finally the United Nations Security Council, Indonesia resumed relations.[10]

Four articles of agreement were accepted by Indonesia and Malaysia:

> 1. Malaysia would give the people of Sabah and Sarawak in Borneo an opportunity to reaffirm as soon as practicable in a General election their previous decision about their status in Malaysia.
>
> 2. Immediate diplomatic recognition by both nations

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[10] Weinstein contributes the idea that the confrontation ultimately was abandoned for several reasons, but the most important was that it lost most of its capacity to fulfill a meaningful political function for any major group or for the system as a whole. The end of the confrontation also meant the beginning of talks between the two South East Asian countries, which led to the forming of ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations).

3. The cessation of hostilities

4. Stipulation that the Peace Agreement should apply from August 11, 1966. (James, 1971: 192)

The end of the confrontation revealed Malaysia's high regard for Indonesia. When the goodwill mission arrived from Indonesia, it was warmly received by the Malaysians who also held highly the idea of an Asian solution to an Asian problem.[11] The preference for an Asian solution explains why the news exchanges supported by ASEAN rarely include unfavorable information about its members and why some countries rarely disclose information without being coerced. Perhaps those decision are more historical than journalistic. There will be more on this point in later chapters.

The inclusion of Sabah and Sarawak brought to Malaysia more indigenous groups, which were non-Malay and non-muslim, but nevertheless "bumiputeras" or "sons of the soil." (a term adopted by the government to cover all indigenous groups) In Sarawak, among others, there are the Ibans, some of whom are Christians and the Penans, who are the aboriginal people and sometimes animists. While in Sabah, the Kadazans are indigenous and from a variety of religious

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[11] This was an Asian solution, however, British forces were on hand to protect Malaysia. The British withdrew following the peace agreement signing.

orientations, including Islam.

The new Malaysia was a tenuous racial mixture and the new "bumiputera" was not going to be left out again.

May 13th Riots

The Malays, the Chinese and the Indians of Peninsular Malaysia, had come together in 1955 to ward off the shackles of British rule. They were galvanized in 1964 by the threat of hostilities from Indonesia. During the latter time period, the Alliance Party won 89 of 104 seats in the Federal Parliament and control of 10 of the 11 state governments. The issue was

the confrontation. (Miller, 1966) In 1969, however, there was no outside threat, the problem was how to come together as Malaysians.

The May 10, 1969 general election witnessed the decline in popularity of the Alliance (UMNO,MCA,and MIC) and a decline in confidence in the parliamentary democracy model inherited from the British.[12] There were also the issues of

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[12]The Dewan Rakyat (similar to the House of Representatives) has 177 members from general elections. The Dewan Negara(Senate) has 26 elected members, two from each state and 32 members

culture, religion and language, which had divided people and new political parties, which had developed along racial lines.

UMNO championed the cause of the "bumiputeras," or "sons of the soil" and the non-bumiputeras were in the Democratic Action Party (DAP) which included both Chinese and Indian Malaysians. There was also the People's Progressive Party (PPP) which urged the use of not only the Malay language, but also English, Chinese and Tamil. Another party that emerged in 1968 began as a multicultural party but soon represented the Chinese. This party was the Gerakan or the Malaysian People's Movement.

The 1969 election was surrounded by tension between Malays and Chinese, a tension that was exacerbated by the inclusion in the Federal Constitution of special privileges for Malays and other indigenous groups. Among the provisions are: first, a system to reserve certain property for Malays; secondly, the operation of quotas within public services for Malays; thirdly, quotas for licenses and permits for certain businesses, chiefly those related to road transportation and quotas for public scholarships and educational grants. (Wan Hashim, 1983, p. 77)

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appointed by the King (who is elected every five years by the sultans. The King is a sultan.

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The Selangor state (then home of the capital city of Kuala Lumpur) election results of 1969 showed the Chinese were gaining political clout to add to their economic influence. But it was the celebration of the early results that erupted into a full-scale riot in and around Kuala Lumpur. The official report from the National Operations Council (NOC) set up after the riot counts the dead at about 200 people. Others say the death toll was a thousand. (Parker, 1979)

Historians say that non-Malays marched through the streets with placards and taunted the Malays, who then retaliated. The official report by the National Operations Council concluded,

> On the 11th and 12th May, 1969, the Democratic Action Party (DAP) and Parti Gerakan Malaysia held noisy, racially provocative and intimidating 'victory' processions in Kuala Lumpur, followed by numerous splinter processions. (National Operations Council, 1969, p. 29)

Some of the shouting included: "Kuala Lumpur now belongs to the Chinese;" Malays go back to your kampongs;" "Malays have lost power;" "Death to the Malays, aborigines go back to the jungle" and "This is not a Malay country."

On May 13th, the police issued a permit for UMNO to have a victory parade beginning at 7:30 in the evening. Many thought Malays were justified in their retaliation of

violence as they were taunted by the non-Malays. Wan Hashim
recounts,

> ...the Malays had no choice but to take the law
> into their own hands. They showed their fangs, ran
> amok and exploded into violence, destroying the
> fragile mechanism of representative democracy in
> Malaysia until it was revived 21 months later as a
> new brand called "limited Democracy." (Wan Hashim,
> 1983, p. 78)

"Limited Democracy," then had to be defined and
practiced. In his book The Malay Dilemma, current Prime
Minister Mahathir Mohamad asserts the government failed to
see that the races were simply living in the same country
separately, but not in harmony. He charges,

> In allowing the procession (celebration) the
> Government demonstrated a failure to judge the
> mood that gripped the opposition as well as the
> supporters of the Government. The Government must
> therefore accept a share in the blame for what
> followed. (Mahathir, 1970, p.14)

Following the rioting, a state of emergency was
declared and the representative government was suspended for
nearly two years. (Parker,1979:1) Malaysia was then ruled
by the National Operations Council under the leadership of
deputy Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak. The constitution was
suspended and the NOC was comprised of Malay political
leaders, civil servants, police and armed forces commanders
and the presidents of MCA and MIC.

The constitutional government was restored in February of 1971. Along with it came a new national ideology, consisting of five statements of belief about the future of Malaysian society. Malaysians pledged themselves to the Rukunegara: belief in God; loyalty to the Malaysian sovereign and to the country; support of the constitution; good behavior and morality. (Gullick, 1981, p. 123)

The state of emergency provided time to reorganize and rethink the events that had led to the disaster of May 13th. Clearly part of the problem was the economic imbalance. The Malays who are recognized as the indigenous Malaysians were still concentrated in the rural areas and in the low paying occupations while the Chinese were better educated and centered in the cities and towns where more money was to be made.

Economist-historian James Faaland contends there were two divergent schools of economic thought about how to restore Malaysia. First the Economic Planning Unit wanted to resume business as usual with the hope that the riots would not return. The second school was the Department of National Unity, which advocated a drastic restructuring of the economy. (Faaland, 1990, p. 26)

In 1970, the Government of Malaysia announced its

Outline Perspective Plan (OPP) to guide the economic

development of the country through 1990. (Government of

Malaysia, 1986, p. v) The Second Malaysia Plan which was

designed to guide economic growth for the country from 1971-

1975 included the New Economic Policy (NEP) with its two

main purposes:

> 1. To reduce and eventually eradicate poverty by
> raising income levels and increasing employment
> opportunities for all Malaysians, irrespective of
> race
>
> 2. To accelerate the process of restructuring
> Malaysian society to correct imbalance, so as to reduce
> and eventually eliminate the identification of race
> with economic function (Second Malaysia Plan, p. 1)

The NEP also stated a goal of 30% Malay participation

in commerce and industry activities within twenty years of

the writing of the plan. The goal was not met, but the

mechanisms put in place to encourage bumiputera

participation in the economy continued. Specialized

institutions were set up to help poor Malays such as the

Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA) and MARA

(Council of Trust for Indigenous People) a lending

institution and the Institut Teknologi MARA, a tertiary

school for bumiputeras only. (Faaland, 1990, p. 21)

Other social problems were addressed in part by an

amendment to the constitution which prohibits media, public

or parliamentary questioning of four sensitive items:

1. The special position of the Malays and other indigenous groups

2. Malay as the official language

3. The sovereignty of the Malay Sultans and the King

4. The citizenship rights of immigrants

Certainly the history of being colonized by so many others encouraged Malays to protect the indigenous people of Malaya and to reestablish ownership of Malaya by restoring the language of Malaya. The idea of the Malayan Union was the first challenge to the power of the Sultans. The British made the mistake of challenging the political, religious and social foundations of the Malay culture. Having survived colonialists for hundreds of years, Malayans were now ready to control their country and its borders.

According to Malaysia scholar, John Lent, the May 13th riot and the NEP did much to shape the content of news. He called the riot,

> ...the culminating point in setting Malaysian Mass Media...the government reacted instituting policies altering laws and restructuring society and mass media to force them to assist in implementing government goals. (Lent, 1979, p. 664)

Certainly the ban on discussion of the "sensitive issues" directly affected what can be reported. Another key impact of the NEP is the provision that Malays participate

as owners and managers. This means owners and managers of media as well. It is probably true that potential owners of the country's first private television station had to be Malay. The government of Malaysia probably would not entrust the electronic media to a different cultural group.

Opponents of the New Economic Policy say it has failed in its overall objective of being the primary instrument for welding Malaysians of diverse races, languages, cultures and religions into one Malaysian people with a common identity, consciousness and sense of purpose. (Lim, 1986, p. 392) They say the special privileges of Malays come at the expense of non-Malays. Supporters of the NEP say, however, that the goal of the policy cannot be missed if Malays are to survive. A member of Parliament in Malaysia told the Singapore Institute of International Affairs in 1986, that Malays must continue to be assisted in gaining more control over their own country. He denied 1990 as a cutoff date,

> The NEP should continue to sustain Malay dominance
> in the political system in line with the contract
> of 1957. Even after 1990, there must be
> mechanisms of preservation protection and
> expansion in an evolving system. (Ahmad, 1986, p.
> 13)

The "Fifth Malaysia Plan," began in 1986 and ended in 1990. It was designed to be the final segment of the Outline Perspective Plan with the overall goal of creating national unity. The Plan called for less government involvement in ownership and operations of vital functions,

"Commerce and industry are best left to the private sector."
(Fifth Malaysia Plan, 1986, p. vi)

According to Malaysian scholar, K.S. Jomo (1990)
privatization as a policy began in 1983 as a result of the
influences of the U.S. President Ronald Reagan and British
Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Since that time many
institutions have been touched by privatization:

1. The telephone department

2. Public issues of shares in Malaysian Airline System
(MAS)

3. Sale of 5% of MAS to Brunei

4. The joint private-public funding of the national
car (Proton Saga). Mitshubishi owned 30% (critics say
the Proton Saga is a Mitshubishi)

5. Private financing of highway construction

6. The privatization of television

TV3 was begun in 1984. It is owned by the New Straits
Times Group which in turn is controlled by the UMNO-led
Fleet Group (Jomo, 1990, p. 212) The government expects
privatization to help especially the bumiputera
entrepreneurship and presence.

K.S. Jomo, a professor of Human Development at the
prestigious University of Malaya, concludes that this new
combination of Malay political power and access to the large
sums of money attached to the new programs proved

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troublesome. In December 1986, the Malaysian Parliament passed amendments to the Official Secrets Act, which extended the definition of official secrets to include government tender documents and any other documents or material which a minister and public officials may arbitrarily deem secret. Such an action made it impossible for journalists to know how the bid was handled. The redefinition of secret then became necessary to stop "money politics." According to Jomo, the old system allowed government officials to establish corporations, mandate quotas, and generally control who would receive government jobs and money. Jomo adds, "It is now widely believed that most new opportunities for wealth accumulation are crucially determined by political access rather than entrepreneurial ability." (Jomo, 1990, p. 231) A claim echoed by representatives of the Chinese communities.

Professor Jomo sees the nation creating similar conditions to 1969--the denial of access to the wealth of the country. The result in 1969 was a riot that killed hundreds of Malaysians. One of the differences in the 1990s is that the political coalition of Malays, Chinese and Indians begun in the 1950s remains intact and in power.

Modern Political Structure

UMNO remains the largest organization in the Alliance (now called Barisan National or the National Front). The other members are Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), Parti Bersatu Sabah,(PBS) Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) (Sarawak), and Gerakan.

In 1988, there were 8,000 branches of UMNO in Malaysia. Each year there are elections of branch leaders and the 133 divisions hold leadership contests each two years. Eleven of the delegates from each division are elected to national leadership every three years. In April, 1988, for the first time the Prime Minister, who is the president of UMNO, was challenged. He won by a mere 43 votes.[13] Additionally, eleven UMNO members challenged the election results in civil court. The court found that 53 of the UMNO branches that voted were unregistered and in violation of the Societies Act.[14] The ruling declared UMNO illegal on February 4, 1988.

Against the backdrop of Malaysia's political and racial history, it is easy to understand the devastation of

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[13] Asiaweek, April 1, 1988.

[14] New Straits Times, January 26, 1988

the Malays as they watched the dissolution of the one thing
that had saved them from losing their country to the Malayan
Union. The solution to this new problem was to form a new
political group appropriately named "UMNO Baru" or "New
UMNO." In the meantime, the next largest party in the
alliance was the Malaysian Chinese Alliance.[15]

Following the reinstitution of UMNO, the current Prime
Minister and president of UMNO regained his post as head of
the National Front. The emergency was over, but the tension
remains.

The Government Crackdown of 1987

In 1987, 106 people were arrested for violation of the
Internal Security Act. Among the arrested was the leader of
the Democratic Action Party (DAP). Problems began when the
unprecedented coalition of the DAP and MCA protested the
appointment of a non-Chinese speaking administrator to a
Chinese medium school. Four newspapers were suspended for
allowing the discussion to appear on their pages. The DAP
leader, Lim Kit Siang was not released until 1989.

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[15] While it was technically true that MCA was the leading party
in the National Front, all of the National Front members publicly
supported Prime Minister Mahathir. Many of them did so on
television.

The government forbade any discussion of the incident among private citizens or in the media. One of the suspended papers, The Star, was the chief rival to what is regarded as the government mouthpiece, The New Straits Times. The both the Star and the NST are English-language newspapers.

Politics and Islam

The Malays have retained political control since independence from the British in 1957 and the official religion is the religion of the Malays, who are Sunni Muslims. Islam holds that Muhammed was the last prophet of Allah and that the Quran and not the Bible is the last revelation. The religion requires devotees to pray five times each day in their homes or in the Mosque. Men are expected to go to the mosque on Fridays where they are able to wash according to Islamic law and to pray. All foods eaten by devout Muslims must be prepared according to Islamic law.

Women may attend a Mosque, but they are not required to attend on Fridays. Both men and women are required to wash before prayers which are scheduled for early morning, about noon, twice in the early evening and once in the late evening. Television newscasts are scheduled around prayer

times as are all concerts and other social gatherings where Muslims are expected to attend.

Malaysian author Chandra Muzzafar, who is Muslim, notes that the announcement of prayer times on television is evidence of an Islamic resurgence in Malaysia sparked in part by the influence of PAS and the rise of the Islamic Republic of Iran. (Muzzafar, 1987, p. 5)

PAS joined the ruling Barisan National in 1973 only to be forced out of the coalition in early 1978, according to Muzzafar. In the meantime, PAS has criticized a number of Government policies, including the NEP. PAS leaders say the NEP has only succeeded in creating a wealthy Malay middle class and "a handful of millionaires, who are the symbol of the true character of the NEP." (Muzzafar, 1987, p. 57) Like many members of the Malaysian press, PAS has also often condemned the government for what it describes as oppressive laws, including the Printing Presses and Publication Act, and the Internal Security Act, under which PAS officials continue to be arrested from time to time . (Muzzafar, 1987, p. 57) PAS members have also spoken out against television programs, concerts, and cultural shows that "disseminate decadent values harmful to Malaysian society." (Muzzafar, 1987, p. 57)

In 1980, there were 6.9 million Muslims in the Malaysian population of 13.07 million. The rest were made up of Buddhists, Hindus, Christians, Sikhs and followers of Confucianism, Taoism and other traditional Chinese religions, together with various folk religions and others. (Muzzafar,1987, p. 1) Muzzafar notes that Islam has been the main religion of Peninsula Malaysia since the 14th Century.

Islam has been the official religion of Malaysia since independence. But as Muzzafar points out, Malaysia is not an Islamic state like Iran, despite the efforts of the PAS party to establish such a state. Malaysia is not an Islamic state because the country is run by civilian law and not ruled by Islamic law or under the administrative systems based upon the Quran and the Sunnah (the way of the Prophet Muhammad). Most of the Muslims in Malaysia are Sunni and not Shiite Muslims like the majority in Iran.

Muzzafar asserts that Malays gain identity by close identification with the Muslim religion. The effect, he says is that non-Muslim groups stress their respective identities and "the nation is slowly becoming polarized along narrow religious lines." (Muzzafar, 1987, p. 99)

Naipul argues that Muslims are using Islam as a weapon, "It is their way of getting even with the world. It serves their grief, their feelings of inadequacy, their social rage and racial hate." (Naipul, 1982, p. 227) Muzzafar laments that the polarization is more clearly seen in the young people of Malaysia, which points to the possibility that the distance between the communities could get wider in the years to come and "may even threaten the peace and stability of the nation." (Muzzafar, 1987, p. 99)

Summary

Malaysia's colonial past, history of strained race relations, and threats from regional neighbors have all contributed to the news style evident on television. Asa Briggs introduced the book _Broadcasting in India_ by commenting on the importance of history and cultural context to any study of the news. He wrote,

> It is remarkable to what a great extent it is necessary to understand the general history of particular countries in order to understand what they have done with their conscious or unconscious communications policies.(Chatterji, 1987:9)

Briggs acknowledges the effect of unspoken communication policies as well as documented ones. Malaysia has no formal communication policy; however, an informal policy works to make the government and private television newscasts more similar than different. (More about this in Chapter 5)

It is essential to good analysis of news content to understand the struggle of the Malaysians to regain and retain control of their own land. One must also develop respect for the significance of UMNO and Islam in Malay and Malaysian life.

The May 13th riot was a turning point for Malaysia and its media. The "Limited Democracy" that resulted was similar to the "Guided Democracy of Indonesia established by Prime Minister Sukarno, who was in office during the Confrontation with Malaysia.[16] Under Malaysia's "Limited Democracy," media were owned and operated by the government. The Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Malaysia Plans were designed to address problems of long standing in Malaysia. Those included the linkage of race and occupation and the persistently bottom position of the indigenous Malays.

If Prof. Faaland (1991) is correct, Malaysia is in danger of recreating the circumstances that gave birth to the riots of 1969. He suggests that efforts to enfranchise Malays have created money politics, corruption and the belief that political rather than entrepreneurial talents are what are needed to succeed.

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[16] Sukarno's successor was Prime Minister Suharto, who established the New Order government. This new government assigned three policy goals for Indonesian television: the promotion of national unity and integration; the promotion of national development; the promotion of political stability (Alfian, 1981: 22-23)

The government of Malaysia has responded to such grim predictions with a Second Outline Perspective Plan for 1991 to 2000. The plan includes the Sixth Malaysia Plan designed to spend about $37.4 billion on infrastructure, social development and defense programs. The New Development Policy (NDP) replaces the New Economic Policy and reflects the administration's thinking on development priorities and racial quotas. The prime minister promises to close the infrastructure gap between cities and towns and eradicate poverty (a goal of the Fifth Malaysia Plan).

The government also plans to continue privatizing industries and services. In all, 56 projects will be privatized (including radio) and 37 public entities are scheduled for divestment by the government by 1993.(Tsuruoka, 1991, p. 57-58) Prime Minister Mahathir promises to create 400,000 factory jobs and allocate about $200 million to combat poverty. This is part of the Prime Minister's "20/20 Vision" to make Malaysia a fully developed country by the year 2020. Chapter 3 continues the discussion about the social and political contexts of the news.

CHAPTER THREE

Malaysian Media: Separate and Unequal

Media development reflects the extent of ethnocentrism
in Malaysia. Despite calls from the Prime Minister for
national unity, a national identity and a national language,
Malaysia has Chinese, Malay and Tamil customs, languages and
presses. In 1989, the thirty-four daily newspapers included
twenty in Mandarin Chinese, three in Bahasa Malaysia, eight
in English and three in Tamil (Idid, 1989, p. 79). Local
magazines show the same diversity. A 1991 study by the
Ministry of Information reports that 56% of Malaysians read
daily papers. The most popular are the Malay *Berita Harian*
with a readership of 1.5 million; the Chinese *Nanyang Siang
Pau* with readership of 721,000; and the English-language
New Straits Times at 596,000 and *The Star* at 567,000.[1]

The electronic media, however, did not begin as ethnic
media. The colonial government established a broadcasting
department in 1946, which served both peninsular Malaysia
and Singapore from Singapore. At the time of independence

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[1] Asian Mass Communication Bulletin, November-December,
1991, p. 7. The New Straits Times is considered the government
mouthpiece, while the Star was suspended as a result of the 1987
crackdown. The Star_ is primarily owned by the Malaysian Chinese
Association (MCA).

for Malaya in 1957, the corporation was divided and Radio
Malaya moved to Kuala Lumpur. There are four domestic radio
networks: National Network (Bahasa Malaysia), the Blue
Network (English), the Green Network (Chinese), and the Red
Network (Tamil).

Radio Television Malaysia (RTM1) began broadcasting in
1963, a year after Indonesia and RTM2 began in 1969. Color
television was introduced in 1972. Mohammed Adnan, former
chair of Mass Communication at Institut Teknologi MARA,
suggests that the television networks were designed to
complement each other while maintaining their individual
identities. Most of the broadcasts over RTM1 are in Bahasa
Malaysia. News is broadcast in Bahasa Malaysia, English,
Chinese and Tamil. RTM2 was designed to transmit local and
imported programs not in Bahasa Malaysia. During the period
of study each network began the broadcast day in the
afternoon and concluded about 1:00 a.m.

The Malaysian government also provides an Educational
Television Service, which airs on RTM2 daily. Bahasa
Malaysia is taught to citizens via the Educational
Television Service. (Adnan, 1985, p. 38) Radio Television
Malaysia is funded by radio and television license fees paid
by consumers each year (a practice begun by and similar to
the British) and by advertising.

Sistem Televysen Malaysia or TV3, which is owned by the investment arm of the United Malay National Organization (UMNO), private corporations and members of the public, demonstrates the government's commitment to privatization.[2] Adnan points out that the government sets guidelines for TV3. It must reflect the principles of Rukunegara (common rule), of Islam as the official religion of the country and of national security.

Political position of the Media

The government Department of Broadcasting was established by administrative decision and not by statute. Unlike the British Broadcasting Corporation, the Malaysia department of broadcasting did <u>not</u> have a legal identity either as a corporation or as a statutory body. RTM was merely a government organization run according to government procedures and regulations, without many concessions made because of its media functions. Often when personnel were needed they could not be hired because other government departments or needs were next in line. (Lowe, 1982, p. 3)[3]

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[2] A special issue of stock in the station was earmarked for bumiputeras or sons of the soil. This is the government affirmative action requirement.

[3] This idea was also expressed by the former news director of RTM during a personal interview in 1987.

Such procedures underscore the idea that television news departments were not designed to inform the public.

Following the 1969 race riot and at the urging of the minister of information, Radio Television Malaysia adopted the following functions (Adhikarya, 1978):

a. To explain in depth and with the widest possible coverage the policies and programmes of the government in order to ensure maximum understanding by the public;

b. To stimulate public interest and opinion in order to achieve changes with the requirements of the government;

c. To assist in promoting civic consciousness and fostering the development of Malaysian art and culture;

d. To provide suitable elements of popular education, general information and entertainment.

Lowe observes that "It is perhaps no coincidence that entertainment should be the last word among these definitions." (Lowe, 1982 p. 6) Disseminating general information also was not a high priority. Television, however, was clearly assigned an active political role in the new Malaysia. [4] Political leaders were counting on television to aid in development by spreading the word from

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[4] See also Newell Grenfell's <u>Switch On Switch Off for more</u> for more discussion of this.

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the top down, a function at odds with the spirit and the

letter of the NWICO.

Local News Coverage

The beginning of television witnessed the "60-40" rule

in news, meaning that the government requirement was sixty

percent domestic and forty percent foreign. Foreign news

was to be selected by importance to Malaysia and relevance

such as news about the ASEAN countries, Southeast Asian

affairs, Asia, the Middle East and the rest of the world in

that order. (Adhikarya, 1978, p. 36; Lowe, 1982, p. 10)

Later in Chapter 5, the results of the content analysis show

little attention to ASEAN and as many stories from the

middle east as from Asia.

There was also strict adherence to the state protocol

order. Lowe suggests that one important incident caused

officials to rethink this posture. He writes,

> In one evening newscast observing the protocol order a
> news item about the death of Ho Chih Minh was announced
> last after several trivial news items concerning high
> Malaysian personages were first read. It was so
> obvious that news values should have been used, that
> the higher authority in the Ministry needed little
> persuasion from the professionals to change the rule.
> (Lowe, 1982, p. 11)[5]

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[5] Vincent Lowe and Jaafar Kamin make an excellent analysis
of decision making at RTM. Lowe is a professor of communication
at the University Sains Malaysia and Jaafar Kamin had been an
employee of RTM at the time of the writing. Jaafar was later
appointed Deputy Director General of RTM. The book describes the
cumbersome process of getting shows produced.   It is especially

Adhikarya suggests that preference was given to development-oriented news which promotes the government image and government policies. Very little in depth political news was allowed over RTM. Political news was limited to election results and reporting of hard facts. There is more discussion of these points in Chapter 5.

An illustration of this policy occurred when the UMNO political party was declared illegal in 1988, the New Straits Times carried a headline, "Suit By UMNO 11 Dismissed." Only upon reading the article could one learn that the court had dismissed the suit because the organization was declared illegal. (NST, February 9, 1988:1) The RTM English language news led with another story and used no video in the UMNO story, not even a slide. The slant of the story was that the group known as the "UNMNO 11," which had brought the suit had lost its appeal to the court to have the 1982 election of UMNO officers recalled. The private television station described UMNO as having been declared illegal because it had unregistered branches at the time of the election.[6]

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helpful in understanding the many matters that have to be weighed when making a decision about programming at RTM.

[6] I was in the TV3 newsroom when the producer of the news was called by an UMNO member distressed at the news and disappointed that TV3 would actually say that UMNO was illegal. The producer asked me if he had really done anything wrong.

Organizational structure of RTM

The director of news and current affairs at RTM has a telephone on the desk that connects directly to the Prime Minister's office. Interviews with the news director reveal that the prime minister often influences the content of the news with a phone call. According to Lowe's study of decision making at RTM, staff people know the rules of operation, which include ideas about what is and is not acceptable. The Prime Minister's office, however, may directly influence the coverage of specific issues important to the party or the country.[7]

In 1988, RTM was reorganized into a government corporation with a board of government appointed directors.[8] The news director at RTM reports to the managing director (until 1988 the Director of Television Programs), who then reports to the Deputy Director General of Broadcasting who reports to the Minister of Information, who is part of the Prime Minister's cabinet.

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[7] Such a practice is not necessarily viewed by the Prime Minister or the station employees as press control. It may well be viewed as the role of a news station in a developing country. In my discussions with journalists, it was clear they feel a strong sense of nationalism (especially the Malay journalists) and sometimes see their role as a supportive one to the prime minister and the country.

[8] This arrangement is like the arrangement of Bernama, the national news agency.

RTM is a centrally controlled television system, with programming originating from headquarters in Kuala Lumpur. There are however satellite regional stations around the country including Sabah and Sarawak on the island of Borneo. There are journalists working for RTM in many parts of the country. Most have been trained on the job.

Training of Journalists

Often in the report from the McBride Commission, members referred to the necessity for better training of Third World journalists. Scholars lament the fact that Non-aligned news services miss being effective because of poorly produced copy and inattention to facts. Malaysia has benefitted from the discussion.

Radio Television Malaysia operates its own training facilities. Established in 1970, the National Broadcasting Training Center is supervised by the Broadcasting Training Committee. The stated goals of the training division provide a window to the country's intentions:

 a. To train staff in basic skills so as to equip them to be proficient in their trade and to attain a minimum professional standard.

 b. To train staff so that the Department of Broadcasting can make full use of their capabilities;

 c. To provide staff with comprehensive training programmes to develop their careers and better their prospects

d. To train staff in relation to the role of
broadcasting as a medium of communication which can
assist the government in its overall developmental
efforts or undertakings. (Adhikarya, 1978. p. 45)

There are other training facilities in Malaysia. Four

universities and one polytechnic institute offer courses in

mass communication. They include the Universiti Sains

Malaysia, the University of Malaya, the Universiti

Pertanian Malaysia and the Institute Teknologi MARA. (Adnan,

1989, p. 44) The bulk of journalistic training, however,

appears to come on the job.

Freedom of the Press in Malaysia

 "We have freedom of speech, but not freedom after speech."

                          Malaysian Journalist Ho Sook Han, 1985

     Journalists are regulated by the press laws of the

country, the cultural concerns of the owners, their own

feelings of nationalism and self-censorship. Journalists

readily admit that they are not free to publish the truth if

it violates the law, angers government officials, or exposes

information deemed threatening to the national image or

national security .[9] There appear to be fewer legal

restrictions on the coverage of the personal lives of

government officials, however, television journalists seem

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[9] During my many face to face interviews with journalists,
this was a point often made by them.

to know that such a story could backfire. They may be deterred by the threat of retaliation from a well placed official.

Although newspapers are private enterprises, they are not without restrictions. The Printing Presses and Publications Act of 1948 required presses to have licenses and required newspapers to have government permits. This permit with its attached conditions were renewed annually and could be revoked at the discretion of the Minister for Home Affairs.

Historical events have encouraged additions to the Act. After the 1969 race riot, officials included the idea that stories related to public order in any part of Malaysia should not be distorted and that the presentation of these incidents should not encourage communal hostility. So, in 1988, when a young soldier went on a shooting spree in a Kuala Lumpur open-air market, television news refrained from providing full coverage of events as they were happening. The news manager for TV3 remembers that TV3 used a "news flash" to tell people the army solider who went amok and began shooting at random in a downtown wet market was simply a disturbed man and not the beginning of a race riot in Kuala Lumpur. The New Straits Times produced a full page of

coverage complete with diagrams and photos of the soldier after the man was restrained and taken into custody. Both RTM and TV3 have live capability, but did not use it. So, as Lowe would say, the incident was "played down" because the soldier was Malay and the market included mostly Chinese merchants.[10]

The Printing Presses Act was amended in 1974 to ensure that Malaysian investments in newspapers exceeded those of non-Malaysians and gave the Home Affairs Minister power to refuse suspend or revoke annual licenses when necessary. With the amendment, the government could design the ownership of newspapers to reflect the current national aspirations. (Adhikarya, 1978, p. 12)

Thus, the Singapore Straits Times, which always includes Malaysian news, is no longer distributed in Malaysia. It was replaced in Malaysia in 1972, by the New Straits Times. The New Straits Times was designed to be at least 80% Malaysian owned.

With this move the Malaysian government appears to be protecting Malaysia from unfavorable accounts as well as addressing the issue of ownership. Unlike the Straits Times,

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[10] Ironically the only person shot by the gunman was a Malay man.

the New Straits Times can be counted on to support the
government position. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad
insists the country is more important than journalists
inside or outside the country. So, he says the rights of
journalists must come second.

A new Printing Presses and Publication Act of 1984
strengthens the government's grip on both foreign and local
publications. Not only will compulsory deposits of foreign
and local publication be authorized under it, but the
Minister for Home Affairs will be able to force forfeiture
if publishers fail to attend any Malaysian court action
brought against them. There is also no appeal of the Home
Affairs Minister's decisions. Formerly people could appeal
to the King for clemency. (Adnan, 1987, p. 17)[11]

The Internal Security Act of 1960 allowed the Minister
of Home Affairs to prohibit the printing, publication, sale,
issue, circulation or possession of any document or
publication, which to him stimulates violent disobedience to
laws or which is likely to lead to a breach of the peace or
to be prejudicial to the national interest. (Adhikarya,
1978, p. 13) In October, 1987, 106 people were arrested in
Malaysia for posing a threat to the stability of the nation.

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[11] In 1987, the Prime Minister appointed himself minister for
home affairs.

The publication of four newspapers was stopped and the

arrested included the leader of the major opposition party

and the managing director of the only private television

station. [12]

Section 28 of the Internal Security Act demands that

any person who by speech or in writing or in any newspaper,

periodical, book or other printed publication or by any

other means spreads false reports or makes false statements

likely to cause public alarm is guilty of an offense. The

Prime Minister and the legal authorities in Malaysia

determine when the security of the nation is threatened.

The establishment of TV3 raised the question of control

of broadcasting for the first time. Since RTM is a

government-owned network, there were always numerous ways to

control journalists, managers and the content of the news.

The Broadcasting Act of 1988 brought TV3 under government

control as well. Ranggasamy Karthigesu (1990) makes the

point that the act "merely stipulates various restrictions

and invests the control of broadcasting in the person of the

Information Minister." The Minister can now grant licenses

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[12]Details are chronicled in the New Straits Times and in
issues of the Rocket newspaper published by the Democratic Action
Party. The arrests were ordered after several weeks of
discussion through the newspapers about the selection of several
teachers for a Chinese medium school who the Chinese community
leaders deemed unqualified for the posts. Because the discussion
focused on race, the government felt justified in taking action.

to television stations and then amend or cancel any

conditions on which the license has been granted, or impose

additional conditions. Karthigesu describes the new

provision as "no more than an attempt to solidify the

government's control on the broadcasting media." Although

the Act does not specifically restrict media content, it

does include guidelines for the production and presentation

of programmes, advertising policies, and censorship

guidelines.

The Sedition Act of 1948 is also available to the

administration to control the media. It states that a

person is liable to imprisonment and fine for any act,

speech, word, publication or other things which tend to:

    a. bring into hatred or contempt or to excite
    disaffection against any ruler or against any
    government;

    b. excite inhabitants of any territory to change any
    laws other than by lawful means

    c. bring into hatred or contempt or to excite
    disaffection against the administration of justice in
    the Federation or in any other state;

    d. raise discontent or disaffection against subjects
    of His Majesty (the King) or any other ruler of any
    state and its inhabitants;

    e. promote feelings of ill will and hostility between
    different races or classes of people of the Federation.

The Act was amended by the Constitutional Amendment of 1971,

which made it seditious to discuss:

    a. Citizenship (under Article 113)

b. National language and use of other languages for non- official purposes (under article 154)

c. Quotas for Malays and natives of Borneo and the protection of the legitimate rights of other communities under Article 181)

d. Sovereignty of the Ruler (Malaysian Government document)

Malaysian journalists and foreign journalists working in Malaysia are restricted by the Official Secrets Act (OSA). The OSA was modelled after the British Official Secrets Act of 1911. The Malaysian version makes it an offense

for any person to obtain, collect, record, publish or communicate to any other person any secret official code word, countersign password or any article document or information which is calculated to be or might be or is intended to be directly or indirectly useful to a foreign country. (Government of Malaysia)

In 1985, journalist James Clad of the Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER), was found guilty under the Official Secrets Act of publishing information from a secret government document . He was fined ten thousand Malaysian ringgits or four thousand U.S. dollars. FEER transferred Clad to the Philippines after it was suspected his work permit would not be renewed in Malaysia.

The Cultural Concerns of the owners

The government of Malaysia is in the hands of Malays. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad is president of his party, the United Malay National Organization (UMNO). And since UMNO is the largest party in the ruling coalition, the Prime Minster is also president of the coalition.

Prime Minister Mahathir is Malay and Muslim. His followers are mostly Malay and Muslim. As author Chandra Muzzafar has shown, it is difficult to separate being Malay from being Muslim from being loyal to Umno. In fact, when UMNO faced the possibility of being destroyed, people reacted as if the nation itself were threatened. Both RTM and TV3 used their newscasts to show groups pledging loyalty to the Prime Minister. It was also common to see long interviews with members of UMNO old enough to remember the emotional beginning of the organization in defiance of the British government.

An Asian Communication Theory

Wimal Dissanayake, Associate of the East West Center at the University of Hawaii, describes the difference between Asian and Western approaches to news as a function of the

differences in cultural orientation. He advocates an Asian
communication theory.

Dissanayake counts the idea of Western training for
Asian journalists as a handicap in producing news that
reflects Asian experience and aspirations. In the book,
Communication Theory: The Asian Perspective, Dissanyake
observes that Asian cultures do not share the division of
man and nature held by Westerners. They also do not accept
"the rigid division between appearance and reality."
(Dissanayake, 1988, p. 7) The job of the Asian journalists
is to report only as much as they must to tell the story.
American journalists seek to report all there is. The
untrained observer might incorrectly describe Malaysian
journalists as timid and lacking in critical skills rather
than as simply careful to present the news in acceptable
forms to the target audience.

Islamic scholar Imiaz Hasnain goes further to suggest
that Islamic cultures are distinctly different in their
orientation toward news. He charges Western culture with
failing to acknowledge communication as a social process.
He points to several passages of the Koran, which inform the
decisions of Muslims around the world. The Koran instructs
followers to "speak unto all people in a kindly way" and

reminds them that "God does not like any evil to be mentioned openly unless it is by him who has been wronged."

Ranggasamy Karthigesu holds that these different approaches to news reflect a larger problem. He says Western media generally reflect the wrong values to Malaysians, especially since Malaysian media values are held to a Malay-Islamic foundation. (Karthigesu, 1991, p. 105) Interviews with journalists in Malaysia support this idea. Many list as their journalistic guides the following questions:

1. Is the story appropriate?

2. Will the story hurt any group or any person?

3. Is it accurate?

4. Is it timely?

Unlike Malaysian journalists, American journalists would certainly place timeliness and accuracy higher up on the list of pertinent questions. Third World media scholar Albert L. Hester submits the following values of Western journalists:

1. Timeliness

2. Proximity

3. Personality

4. Unusual events (Hester, 1987: 19)

Majid Tehranian (1988) notes the differences between
journalists in a Christian dominated culture and in a
country, like Malaysia, where the official religion is Islam
and where the more conservative religious leaders would like
for the religious law to replace civic law. Malaysia is not
an Islamic country like Iran. The law of the land is civic
law, not religious law. Tehranian writes,

> Compare the sayings of Jesus, Render therefore unto
> Caesar the things which be Caesar's and unto God the
> things which be God's (Luke 20:25) with the Qur'anic
> injunction, 'O believers, obey God and obey the
> Messenger and those in authority among you' (Qur'an
> IV,62) The unity of the spiritual and temporal
> authorities thus became a fundamental tenet of
> orthodox Islam. The islamic revolution is only the
> latest manifestation of such an inspiration.
> (Tehranian, 1988, p. 194)

Journalists who are Malay and Muslim may find it
difficult to report the wrongdoings of Malay leaders. This
is not to say that Malay journalists or owners of media do
not see the wrong done by Malay public officials, but they
may decide that the matter is not for public (non muslim)
discussion. Malaysia has religious courts, which hear
violations of Islamic law.

Professor Godwin Chu adds to the discussion of an Asian
theory the idea that in the Western perspective "culture is
rarely explicitly taken into consideration in the research
conceptualization, because culture is usually not regarded
as a variable." (Chu, 1988, p. 206) It is clear, however,

that any discussion of Asian communication cannot be understood outside of this context.

What do Journalists think

One can always use the standard joke: " After all, it's still not as bad as in Singapore," according to Malaysian journalist, Tan Boon Kean. Tan insists the elite of Malaysia practice "turn-off" journalism. He says the elite who are advocating the new information order are interested in less not more information, they want acquiescence not participation. (Tan, 1985)   Tan expresses the ideas of many other journalists who say the government makes it difficult to practice good journalism because it restricts the publication of truth with its repressive laws.

Journalist Ho Sook Han adds that journalists often miss telling the story because they are unprepared. He suggests the ability of Malaysian journalists seems hindered in part by the youth and inexperience of many journalists, which means that stories are sometimes written without the facts, or possibly with vested interests and without real comprehension of the issue and its implications. Ho allows that culture may have something to do with it, "inhibiting

an aggressive abrasive Western style pursuit for answers and the truth." (Ho Sook Han, 1985, p. 5) Malaysian gentleness and Asian deference to elders or authority and social conformity rather than individual initiative also belong in the calculation of the Malaysian approach to news.

Haji Subohi Mohd Yatim, news manager at TV3, revealed in an interview that the major difficulty in the newsroom is the lack of trained staff members. He lamented however, "You cannot teach people to be curious." (Yatim,1988) When asked about his greatest disappointment in the newsroom, he replied,"Editorial error," which he later defined as a failure to write well and to match pictures with words.

In talking to journalists, this researcher discovered an unwillingness on their part to risk offending anybody. Their remedies included not reporting what they saw, playing down the implications of a story, and failing to shoot pictures they deemed inappropriate. In other words, journalists admitted self censorship in the field and in the newsroom. One reporter commented "When I have a sensitive issue, I just bring the whole thing back and let the news coordinator decide." Another abdicated, "I would rather do light stories. Why bother with the political stuff, if you can't tell the truth or be objective." Many Malaysian

journalists, like journalists all over the world, are committed to the truth even when they fear reporting it.

Organizational Structure of TV3

Sistem Televysen Malaysia began as an alternative to RTM1 and RTM2. Karthigesu (1990) warns, however, that it is a mistake to interpret this as the government's move to liberalize broadcast institutions. He says there are at least two other reasons: first, the decision was based on economics--political leaders did not want to expand the public sector, but they wanted to expand growth and profits; second, the government wanted to increase entertainment offerings to combat the growing popularity of video recorders and video rentals, especially to the urban Chinese-Malaysian. TV3 was the answer.

It is easy to see, however, why TV3 News would turn out to be very much like RTM : first, RTM is the only role model in the country for national television; second, experienced journalists in the country were probably journalists from RTM; third, emulating RTM would at least keep TV3 on the right side of the restrictive laws and fourth, the largest shareholder of TV3 is the investment arm of UMNO, the political party of the Prime Minister.

Unlike RTM, TV3 chose initially to have a Managing Director. The Director of News and Current Affairs reports to the Managing Director, while the News Coordinator handles the daily news operation and reports to the director of news. Under this position are senior producers of the English and Bahasa Malaysia News programs, the current affairs producer, the assignment editor and an administrative coordinator. Producers are on the next level along with News anchors and senior reporters. Here, since reporters and producers are on the same organizational level, producers have no authority over them. As Lowe (1985) reports, producers receive responsibility, but no power.

The next level includes assistant producers, "Broadcast Journalists", "Newscasters, and "Cadet Broadcast Journalists". The final level includes typists, production assistants, clerks, still photographers, teleprinter or teleprompter operators and the "office boy." Video camera operators and tape editors report to the department of engineering and the news cars belonged to and were dispatched by the transportation department. The news room was quite segmented, however, the news staff did a remarkable job of getting stories reported, edited, produced and on the air night after night.

The News Day

The news day at TV3 begins at the 5:30 p.m. meeting including the assignment editor, producers and news coordinator. Here they decide the next day's line up and assign reporters and photographers. Reporters begin calling about 6:30 to discover what their morning assignments are. The chief photographer will check the board to see what the needs are for photographers and make an assignment. Those who do not call back to the station will simply arrive early enough to get their assignments, meet the reporters or photographers and go out.

At about 11:00 a.m. the News Manager has his editorial meeting with the news coordinator, the assistant manager, the producers, available news anchors and the studio news directors. Reporters arrive at about 9:00 a.m. and check the assignment board for the details of their stories. The board, which was prepared the night before, lists the location and time of the story and the name of the photographer and lighting man.[13] Oftentimes the assignment desk has additional information on the story, which the reporter can take along to the scene. When the reporter returns to the station, the script is to be typed in four

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[13] No women were assigned this job.

copies. One copy goes to the Bahasa Malaysia News desk, one to the English News desk, one to the news coordinator and one to the news manager. Reporters are then often quizzed by people from each of these areas, but especially by the producers of the newscasts who edit the scripts. Assistant producers at the English desk translate the script if it is written in Bahasa Malaysia.

Stories from stringers arrive by taxi, train, or plane and sometimes RTM will allow the story to be sent by satellite or microwave. The stringers themselves meet once each 3 months in Kuala Lumpur, where they are told to get permission three days in advance of covering an event. They receive one price for a story that airs and a lesser amount for an approved story that does not air. Stringers only receive pay for spot news that is aired, so stringers are not encouraged to find unusual spot news stories because they probably will not be aired.

Video packages are voiced by the anchors, so that the voice tracks heard on the air are primarily produced by the same newscaster seen at the desk. Occasionally the reporter voices his or her own story or a third party with a "good voice" will be enlisted to do the voice tracks. So journalists do not always report their own stories.

TV3 gets news from government and other offices, from reporters, from Bernama(the national wire service) and Reuters and from foreign news broadcast services Visnews and Eurovision. Of all these sources, the reporter often is considered the least credible source, according to producers. One TV3 producer admits, "If there is a discrepancy between the reporter's version and the wire service (Bernama), we take the wire service. The reporter probably made a mistake. We have to be concerned about the rural people who might be viewing." Here lies the challenge of Malaysian television news; present a credible newscast, which reports the days events without disrespecting the traditions and culture of a racially and educationally diverse audience.

Summary

Given the colonial and racially charged history of Malaysia, it is not surprising that ethnic media are still very strong, but it is also no surprise that the electronic media are still either run by the government or in the hands of Malays. The fact that TV3 is run by Malays probably provides some comfort to the government because the same religious and cultural guides are more likely to be at work.

The government crackdown of 1987 shows clearly that

television and other media in Malaysia are expected to support government efforts to develop. What is not so clear is how the media should fulfill this expectation. My interviews with journalists show them eager to support the country but interested in being more objective in their reporting. The fear of reprisal, however, encourages journalists to censor themselves. They are also restricted by the numerous media laws in the country.

Malaysians (this probably includes most journalists) say they want to avoid the mistake of developing a few people--a lesson learned from watching the British in Malaysia. They say their affirmative action plans must work and that the development of the nation must include the poorest among them and everybody has a part to play.

The ethnic and religious diversity of the population is at once beneficial and potentially disruptive. So, media organizations in Malaysia can be counted on to make journalistic decisions to preserve communal harmony, but at what cost? The cost is freedom. Malaysian media are not free. Manifestations of the many restrictions both legal and cultural can be read in the newspapers and seen and heard in government produced newscasts. The introduction of private television opened an opportunity for change, but the

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close oversight by the government discourages drastic change.

Karthigesu, a professor at the Universiti Sains Malaysia, laments what he calls the waste of the potential of broadcasting and the betrayal of viewers. He writes,

> In developing Third World countries, a combination of government authoritarianism and open commercialism seem to create a situation that is even worse. These conditions subjugate and deliver the audience to two masters: the advertiser and governments. In so doing, Third World governments opting for these selfish policies, waste the great potential that television holds to cultivate a mind-set among their citizens to help build truly democratic, equitable and enlightened new nations. (1990, p. 136)

If Karthigesu is correct about the motivation and intentions of the Malaysian government, private television networks will find it increasingly difficult to be different or make a difference until the government acknowledges their need to be free or until the people demand the kind of news environment they will be seeing via cable or satellite or video cassette.

The next two chapters outline the methodology and then report the results of a content analysis of RTM and TV3 during 1988.

CHAPTER 4

"Whose Television News?: The Methodology"

Introduction

Malaysians refer to foreigners working in the country
as expatriates or "expats." They are accustomed to seeing
expats everywhere, but most often in and around the urban
centers. American, European and Australian engineers,
business people, scientists and artists are not hard to
find. They arrive for a variety of reasons, but Malaysia is
open to them for only one reason: to help in the develop-
ment of the country for the citizens of the country.

As noted earlier, citizenship is difficult to obtain in
Malaysia. Even people who were born in the country are not
always citizens and cannot challenge the constitution on
this point. Living in this rain forest paradise is a privi-
lege.

Radio Television Malaysia was begun to serve colonial
needs, however, since independence RTM has served the inter-
ests of the ruling governments all headed by Malays. RTM

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made no effort to encourage alternative views or pretend that it was other than a government arm. The introduction of a new private television network again raised the question of who should be served by the media in Malaysia. Many Malaysians hoped that the new network would mean better entertainment programs and perhaps livelier newscasts.

Entertainment lies outside the scope of this investigation, but the content of news stories is examined through the lenses of first-hand experiences with Malaysian journalists.

Procedure

The data for this study were gathered by the researcher during a three-month participant-observer period in 1988 in the television newsrooms of Malaysia. This case-study approach was used because it was possible to observe the workings of the newsroom from the inside. It proved to be a good approach because it allowed the investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. The influences of the many cultures and religions could be observed and accounted for in the analysis of the data.

As Robert Yin (1984) suggests in <u>Case Study Research</u>, the case study method is very useful when the boundaries

between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and when more than one source of evidence is used. The problems with this method are that results are not readily generalizable and do not indicate cause and effect.

The aim of the research was to document the process of newsgathering and to analyze the similarities and differences between the private and government owned television networks in Malaysia. Discussions began with the news managers, who then gave their permission to speak to reporters, producers, photographers (although the photographers at TV3 did not report to the news managers), directors, secretaries and associate producers.

Unfortunately, just after interviews with the manager of RTM, a government crackdown occurred. One hundred and six people were arrested under the Internal Securities Act, four newspapers were closed and the Prime Minister asked the Parliament for more leverage over the media and over public discussion of divisive issues. He received that leverage. [1]

The threat of stricter laws on the media cooled some of the enthusiasm of journalists and cut short the time of the

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[1] The government crackdown is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

researcher's stay in the RTM newsroom. Consequently, most of the observation time was spent in the TV3 newsroom.

Accounts of the inner workings of RTM were gathered from the research of others.

The aim of the study was to understand how newsworkers made decisions throughout the newsday. This meant spending time with them covering and reporting news stories. Additionally, I visited with journalists informally off the job whenever possible.

My access to the journalists was facilitated by the fact that I was not just an observer. I bring to my analysis the experience of having worked for a commercial television station for five years as a reporter, producer, and anchor of the evening newscast. By selecting to conduct research in Malaysia, I have combined two interests of long standing, namely Third World development news and professional journalism.

Entree

Getting into television stations in Third World countries is not easy and often impossible if you want to do

research.   Governments know how powerful the media can be in the hands of people who know how to use them.   The first approach should be to write to the appropriate ministry to request permission to conduct research.   The response may take a long time. Once accepted, however, political events will continue to affect one's work.

Since I was already in the country, I gained access to the government station after being introduced to a television staff person by a Malaysian friend. That staff person introduced me to the news director.   This is where the problem began. Using the American model, I assumed the news director had some authority to say yes or no to my request to observe the workings of his newsroom.   This proved not to be the case.   After several interviews with the director, I received a letter stating that the study could not be done at that time. (The news director said it was because of the government crackdown and arrest of 106 people.) So, a well designed study was put on hold indefinitely. The lesson learned was, start asking people as high up as possible as early as possible and get it in writing. Then hope for the best.

Again I sought the help of a friend. This time a local businessman introduced me to a well respected woman in the

private television station. She submitted my proposal to the managing director of the station, who then agreed to see me. Immediately after our talk, he called the news director and advised him that I would be conducting research in the newsroom. While such an arrangement could be difficult for a researcher, the news manager seemed glad not to have the responsibility of having said yes to me. This way, his helping me was simply carrying out the wishes of his boss.

I must say that I never felt comfortable in the newsroom, however, knowing that a new political situation or disturbance could put me back out on the street again.

Interpersonal acceptance

Getting organizational clearance was easy compared to the job of getting to know the people in the newsroom. Typically, the newsroom is a very large room with lots of desks and typewriters (manual and broken in some way, just like home). The room is divided into two desks, the English news desk and the Bahasa news desk. I was assigned a spot at the English news section by the news coordinator. This was at once helpful and difficult. Helpful because, I felt more comfortable speaking in English and difficult because people with gripes saw me as possessing a sympathetic ear.

Often, I would venture over to the Bahasa news desk and talk to the staff members there, especially the producers. Because Malaysians are usually friendly and accommodating, it was hard to entertain all their invitations to "take lunch" or to go out to dinner. Valuable information can be learned in informal settings that would never come out otherwise.

The newsroom seemed to be made up of "insiders" and "outsiders." For the most part the English desk was made up of outsiders. The insiders were people who worked primarily for the Bahasa Malaysia desk. When big stories came, it was usually the Bahasa Malaysia reporter or producer who covered it for the news. When reporters went out, they always got the story for the Bahasa news at 8 p.m., but a few saw no need to rush stories back for the six o'clock news in English. Then the English desk reporter would have to get the tape and get the story in Bahasa Malaysia to translate it into English for the next newscast.

Once I was caught in a confrontation between an insider (Malay) and an outsider (Chinese-Malaysian). The outsider asked the insider why he had been chosen to accompany the prime minister to Burma when he (the insider) had not been a reporter! The insider replied that he had indeed been a reporter for six months before becoming a studio director

and now for three months a producer of the English news. The outsider let the matter drop.

Access to reporters and settings

Because of the often tense political situation, it was not always possible for me to accompany a reporter on a story. First, although television is national, the news pool is quite small. Ministers learn to know who is and is not in the press corps. Since I am an African American, my presence may not have been immediately obvious, but on second or third glance around the room, I certainly would have been noticed. I did not cause any problems because I was careful not to tag along where I might be disruptive.

My inquiries were received variously. Oftentimes, newsworkers were very forthcoming with their responses to my questions. While others answered guardedly and became nervous if I asked questions and began to write in the newsroom. I learned that a better way to talk was to buy tea for an interviewee at one of the many great stalls out in front of the station. Tea for the two of us would cost about 40 cents. I also did not take written notes during our conversations.

Another hazard is that officials change their minds

sometimes without warning or time for rebuttal. Although
the managing director had invited me to the editorial
meetings, the news manager flatly refused to let me in. But
he did agree to answer all my questions about the meetings
immediately following them. He proved to be very helpful.

Fitting in

Since I had worked as a journalist, I had several
skills that I could exchange for cooperation and
information. Sometimes I simply advised newsreaders in how
to pronounce English words. Sometimes I would help
newscasters come up with phrases to get into or out of a
news segment. Sometimes I wrote stories from the wire feeds,
which were then edited by the producer---it saved him some
time. Sometimes, I commented on the overall quality of the
newscast. But this I did only sparingly, since interfering
with the newscast would jeopardize the results of my
inquiry.

The Content Analysis

Guido Stempel defines content analysis as a formal
system for doing something that we all do informally rather
frequently, drawing conclusions from observations of
content. (Stempel, 1981, p. 119) And Frederick Williams

defines it as "the systematic and reliable coding of

communication content into a theoretically meaningful set of

mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories."

(Williams, 1988: 37). Since the aim of the study was to

identify who and what makes the news, content analysis was

the right choice because it allows the data to be

qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed.

The weakness of this approach is that it strips the

unit of analysis from its context. Combining this approach

then with a period of participant observation strengthens

any conclusions drawn from the data. This study uses the

news story as the unit of analysis and includes historical,

cultural and political perspectives. Whenever needed, then,

the researcher is qualified to supply appropriate context

for the story. Williams contends that early research of

Third World communication was hampered by a lack of

perspective. He concludes,

> Much of the failure of early promises for communication
> technology to assist in Third World development can be
> attributed to the lack of contextualization of much
> research based on experiences of the First world. The
> Third World has different contexts--External contexts
> include position in the world, politically economically
> etc.--internal cultural differences, economic
> differences, political differences. (Williams, 1988,
> p. 45)

These contexts that Williams refers to determine how

the news is produced, presented and disseminated. They are

the same contexts referred to by Elie Abel when he spoke of

the different needs of countries and cultures that must be addressed through a variety of forms of communication.

The research questions grew out of discussions of the 1970's and 1980's about the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). The researcher asks how closely present day Third World media fit the stereotypes held by opponents of the NWICO. Six research questions were posed:

1. Will government and private television news reports include more crisis than non-crisis news items about foreign nations?

2. Will private television news reports feature more main actors who are unknowns than the government television news reports?

3. Will private television news reports include more opposing views than the government television news reports?

4. Will government television news reports use the government as the quoted source of the news more often than the private television news reports?

5. Will government news reports evidence less analysis and fail to provide context for the story more often than private television news reports?

6. Will government television news reports reveal the use of more anchor reports (without video) than the private television reports?

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 provide the background for understanding the people who make and who are the news. A constructed two-week sample of newscasts from both stations yielded three hundred and fifty four stories to be analyzed. The data were submitted to the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS-X).

Chi square measures were obtained as the test of significance. Crosstabulations were also performed to determine the effect of variable interaction. A significance level of .05 was sought[2]. In the cases of 2x2 tables of nominal data, Phi calculations are used. Although Phi, like Chi Square, does not indicate direction of the relationship, it does confirm that a relationship exists. Kendall Tau-C is used for ordinal data that have an unequal number of columns and rows. The Kendall's Tau measures strength and direction of associations among variables.

Televised newscasts from January through April, 1988 were recorded on video tape. All of the newscasts were recorded by the researcher because the government station did not store televised newscasts due to budget constraints. It was also necessary to record the newscasts

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[2] Stempel, Guido. Research Methods in Mass Communication. Englewood cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1981. Stempel concludes that samples of 500 or less should have significance levels of .05. Occasionally, however, results of p<.10 are reported.

rather than to obtain them from the stations to be certain
that the broadcasted version of the news was collected.

Larson (1984) points out the danger of studies of
international news conducted over months rather than years.
He notes,

> This situation leads to potentially incorrect
> inferences concerning the amount and nature of
> international news coverage. In addition it poses
> the difficulty of comparing the results of a study
> done at one point in time with those of another
> conducted at a different time. (Larson, 1984)

The Weaver and Wilhoit (1981) study covered a four-week
period. To the argument that the sample is unrepresentative
because it happened to include long periods of armed
conflict in specific areas of the world, the authors say
that it is difficult to find a time period when events such
as revolutions, conflict or fighting are not going on in the
world,

> Because of this tendency for armed conflict to be
> occurring somewhere in the world at any time , our
> findings are probably more typical than they might
> appear at first. (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1981, p. 62)

The cross sectional approach taken in the current study
includes several weeks of reported unrest in the West Bank
where Palestinians clashed with Israeli soldiers. Hundreds
of people were killed and injured during the exchange. On
the domestic front, the study includes a period of political

infighting among the members of the Malaysian Prime
Minister's party.

Larson is correct that over time, the content of the
news will shift, but the focus of this investigation is on
the difference in approaches of the government and private
television to the coverage of domestic and foreign news
during a period of participant observation. Research has
shown, too, that political issues consistently account for a
large percentage of air time, so a period of political
infighting is not likely to skew the sample. (Gans, 1979;
Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1984)

The sample of news programs broadcast over a three
month period offers for examination material disseminated to
television audiences. It also presents a look at values at
work in the selection of the news.

The government station RTM (Radio Television Malaysia),
broadcasts the news each day, including weekends, in four
languages: Bahasa Malaysia, Tamil, Chinese and English.
News programs in each language are aired at different times
during the day. TV3, the private station, broadcasts the
news daily, including weekends in Bahasa Malaysia and in
English. The Bahasa Malaysia newscasts for both stations
aired at 8 p.m. Monday through Friday. The English newscast,

however, was seen at 6 p.m. for the English News on TV3 and 9:30 p.m. for the English news on RTM. All of the newscasts used for analysis were broadcast originally in English at 6 and 9:30 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Because few if any scheduled news events occur between 6 and 9:30 p.m., a comparison of news content is feasible.[3]

The Sample

A constructed two-week period, including only Monday through Friday, was selected by choosing one day of the week from the 12- weeks recorded. (Carney, 1972, p. 140) There were 120 newscasts recorded from both stations. For the purpose of this analysis, 20 newscasts are used. Each newscast averages about 20 items. This number excludes the sports and weather segments, which are separated from the news segments. Domestic stories focus on events inside peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, Sarawak and the islands belonging to Malaysia. Foreign news is any event occurring outside of those areas. This includes Singapore, which was part of the Malaysia Federation from 1963-1965 and is now an independent republic. The constructed two-week sample includes the following dates:

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[3] Between 6 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., there are two Islamic prayer times. On Fridays, the men of Islam are required to go to the mosque for prayers. A majority of the political leaders are muslim.

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Monday,      January    18, 1988  RTM and TV3

Tuesday,     February    9, 1988  RTM and TV3

Wednesday,   February   24, 1988  RTM and TV3

Thursday,    April       7, 1988  RTM and TV3

Friday,      March      18, 1988  RTM and TV3

Monday,      April       4, 1988  RTM and TV3

Tuesday,     March      15, 1988  RTM and TV3

Wednesday,   January    20, 1988  RTM and TV3

Thursday,    February   11, 1988  RTM and TV3

Friday,      January    15, 1988  RTM and TV3
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The news stories were coded by the researcher and two
graduate journalism students. The following categories were
used: origin, type of news, topic, actors, packaging,
video source, nature of the story, balance of the report,
type of sources, reporter sources, item source and seven
measures of development news. The origin of the story
includes four categories for domestic Malaysian stories
(urban news, rural news, foreign news at home and home news
abroad) and categories for twenty countries and areas of
the world.   Nations in liaison with Malaysia economically
and other Islamic nations are included as well as areas of
the world likely to have been part of the international news
scene during the period of study. The domestic news
categories are to record the percentage of the news directed

toward the urban or rural areas of the country. [4]

A. DOMESTIC NEWS (Malaysia)

   1. urban Malaysia (cities or towns and not rural
   areas)

   2. rural Malaysia (farmland areas, villages, and
   areas outside city limits)

   3. Foreign news at home (visiting foreign
   dignitary in Malaysia)

   4. Home news abroad (Prime Minister visiting
   other country, other ministers visiting a foreign
   land, the winning of an American award by Malaysia
   in the U.S., etc.)

The "type of news" category asks if the news is to
inform, to instruct or to entertain. The topic or theme of
news stories has been quantified in previous studies (Weaver
and Wilhoit, 1981; Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1984; Larson,
1983,1984; Kitatani, 1981; Gans, 1979) The idea is to
describe the subject matter discussed in the story. The
topic or theme category is designed to account for the
subjects that attract the attention of the editors and
producers of the evening news. Topics include: unrest,

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[4]The categories "Foreign news at home," and " Home news
abroad" were used by Sreberny-Mohammadi (1984) in the
international news study of 29 countries.

dissent and coups; war and terrorism; crime; disasters (fires, floods, earthquakes, etc.); accidents (auto, drownings, involving 10 or fewer people); political/military affairs; economics, trade; environment; technology, science and education; human interest; religious affairs, ceremonies and peace.

These categories are similar to the ones used by Larson and Storey (1983) in their ten-year analysis of the coverage of Asian news by United States television networks. The addition of the category of " ceremony" is to include the ceremonies often seen on Malaysian television because of the presence of the king and eight other religious sultans and their royal families. There are also religious ceremonies involving the variety of religious groups represented in Malaysia. "Peace," was also added .

The category of "unrest, dissent and coups" includes acts of civil disobedience, organized riots, protests and forcible attempts to overthrow the government. "War and terrorism" include declared and undeclared fighting between identifiable groups within a country or between countries; acts of terrorism, including bombings, hijackings and shootings. "Crimes" include shootings, robbery, burglary, murder, drug busts, arrests, court appearances.

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"Disasters," include floods, droughts, fires, famines, storms. "Accidents" include auto accidents, and drownings. "Political-Military Affairs" include items concerning the Prime Minister, cabinet members, parliament, party members and spokesmen for political parties and the armed forces. "Economic" issues are identified as concerning monetary matters, business growth, business seminars, agricultural growth. "Environment" includes items concerned with clean air and water, the ozone layer, and deforestation. "Science Technology and Education" includes scientific breakthroughs, innovations, new systems and schools and universities. "Human interest" items include humorous stories, "ordinary man" stories, and entertainment stories. "Ceremony" stories include the installation of officers, and religious and awards ceremonies. "Peace" stories that focus on achieving peace rather than war in a peaceful manner. This would exclude fighting for peace.

ACTORS

The works of Herbert Gans (1979) Drew McDaniel (1986) and Sreberny-Mohammadi (1984) and others indicate the main actors most often are political figures or the "knowns " rather than the "unknowns" and the top themes are politics, political scandal, and corruption. (Gans, 1979). In his study of two Malaysian dailies, Othman reports that 32% of total items studied involved government officials. (Othman,

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1982, p. 62) This coincides with the findings of Larson and Storey in the investigation of U.S. network coverage of Asia. They say, "News is what governments do. Nations are the actors, not people. Very little effort is made to create awareness and understanding of the people behind the news." (Larson and Storey, 1983, p. 18) Sreberny-Mohammadi report in the news study of 29 countries, "political figures dominate embracing 25% to 60% of all actors in international news." (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1984, p. 127)

The three independent coders used the categories of "Knowns" and "Unknowns," as described by Gans (1979):
Knowns
1. Political leaders (cabinet members or ministers, congressmen, party spokesmen)
2. Kings, Queens and Royal Family
3. Religious leaders
4. Business and labor leaders
5. Educators and professionals
6. Police or Military personnel
Unknowns
1. Protesters, strikers, rioters
2. Victims
3. Ethnic minorities
4. Crime participants
5. Participants in unusual activities

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Packaging

Coders recorded the packaging of news items used by the stations. In television, it is a measure of importance when an item leads the newscast. It also matters whether the anchor person simply reads the story or whether that reading is accompanied by tape or a slide. The use of a slide or tape also indicates an added amount of time devoted to the production of the story. If the story includes graphics, the effort required post production techniques and more news personnel and included more decisions about how the news item was to be presented. It could mean that the item was very important despite the lack of film or video tape.

In his ten-year study of United States television coverage of international affairs, Larson examined packaging by looking at anchor reports, domestic video reports and foreign video reports. When analyzing 7000 international items, 41.6% were anchor reports and 58.4% were video reports. For Asia, 41.7% were anchor reports, 31.1% were video reports from American correspondents in the U.S and 27.3% originated outside of the U.S., presumably by correspondents. (Larson and Storey, 1983, p. 7)

Ohio University Professor Drew McDaniel (1986) also examined packaging in his study of development news reports on Malaysian and Pakistani television. He assumed that "an

emphasis accorded development stories would be reflected in placement near the beginning of the newscasts, in presentation of longer stories and in more extensive visualizations. McDaniel concluded from his sample of 183 Malaysian television reports that 89% of the development stories and 84% of the non-development stories included use of visuals from the field, slides or graphics in addition to the newscaster. Perhaps the most significant finding of McDaniels investigation was the high frequency of political officials in development stories. In Malaysia, 91% of development stories involved political figures while only 42.6% of the non-development news included political figures. Overall, however, 55.7% of stories studied featured government or political personalities. (McDaniel, 1986, p. 169)

This study examined anchor reports, anchor reports with slide, anchor reports with graphics and video reports with reporter identified, or video reports with anchor slides or graphics. As Larson suggests, an anchor reading a news story may indicate that the story came from a wire service. In Malaysia, an anchor reading the news without tape could mean that the item came from the government owned news agency, BERNAMA, which receives all wire feeds. A local or regional news story with tape indicates that a photographer was sent to the scene of the event or that tape was

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provided.   A news story with a reporter identified by name
or picture indicates that the reporter covered the story for
the station and provided on-the-scene insights.

The packaging categories are:
A. Anchor reports

    1. alone

    2. with slide

    3. with graphics

B. Video reports

    1. only one setting for visuals

    2. more than one setting

    3. soundbites (interviews with a source)

    4. stand-up by identified reporter

    5. none

Nature of the Story

Coders determined whether stories included opinion or
unanswered charges or allegations (excluding legal opinion).
The attempt was to show whether the private television
station would move toward a more dialectical approach and
move away from the traditional government approach of
stating a position and then bolstering it.

As an example, in February , 1988, the political party
of the Prime Minister of Malaysia was declared illegal after

being found to have unregistered branches. Both the
government and private media covered this major event. Many
people at the time were calling for the Prime Minister to
step aside since he did not represent a legal party.
Additionally, members of the Prime Minister's party opposed
his assumption of the party's assets in starting a new
party. If the news story presented only the Prime Minister
being supported and no opposition statements, the "balance
of report" is "Presents one side of the issue." If the
newscast identifies those opposing the Prime Minister by
name or as "those opposing the Prime Minister," the "balance
of the report" is "Presents more than one side."

During discussions of the NWICO, opponents insisted
that Third World governments merely wanted to control the
national media by making them government mouthpieces.
Proponents of the NWICO asked for the right to determine
their own news. They also insisted that Western accounts
were negative toward the Third World. They wanted
development news, which the West interpreted to mean good
news or government say-so news and the East saw as news
about the biggest story in the Third World--development.

Context

Employing a category used by Ogan (1984), this study
seeks to measure the number of development news stories on

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television in Malaysia. When the story item provides context or background material, describes a process rather than an event, answers 'how' or 'why' questions or explains the

consequences of an event or process, coders were asked to indicate that the story "provides context or analysis."

Item provider

Since a major complaint from the West has been that government controlled news produces government announcements rather than information about people, the study investigates whether the government station relies on the government as the news source more often than the private station relies on the government as source. The "Government" category includes government documents and pronouncements by cabinet ministers. The transnational news services include AP, UPI, AFP, Tass, Reuters, EUROVISION, Visnews, NBC, and CNN. Third World news services include: NANAP (Non-Aligned News Agency Pool), ASIAVISION, Arabvision, ANEX(Asia News Exchange), and ANN(Asia News Network). The category "national news agency" is to account for the number of times the reports attribute information to "Bernama" in Malaysia. Bernama has been designated by the government to receive wire copy from foreign services and to feed it to local outlets in English.

According to Jim Richstad (1988), it is common in the
region for national news agencies to handle all
international wires for a country. Sonaike (1988) submits
that it is also common among some non-Third World countries
such as Australia. In 1980, Leonard Sussman at Freedom House
counted 104 government news agencies which equals 68% of all
the nations in the world. A 1978 study by Edward Pinch
showed 70-80% of Third World (except Latin America) wires
are sold to National news agencies. (Robinson, 1982, p. 2)
It appears then that government controlled news agencies
traditionally have been the rule rather the exception.

Coders indicated when the news item used:
1. Government source (Malaysian)
2. Government source (foreign)
3. Non-government source (Malaysian)
3. Non-government source (foreign)

    Sources used by the reporter to present the story
included:
1. documents provided by private or government sources
2. human sources(interviews, press conferences, human
attribution)
3. combination of documents and human sources

    Coders were also asked to identify the provider of the

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news item when identified. The choices were:

1. Big Five (AP, UPI, AFP, Reuters, TASS)

2. Regional agencies (Asiavision, ANN, Anex, Antara, etc.)

3. National news agency (Bernama)

4. Other Third World news agencies (PANA, CANA, NANAP,
DEPTHNEWS, IPS,)

5. Own reporter

6. Other news outlet (EUROVISION, VISNEWS, etc.)

7. None given

Development Measures

Finally, coders indicated whether the following development variables were present:[5]

1. Does the news item emphasize a process rather than an event?

2. Does the news item contain content critical of the government?

3. Does the news item include content critical of non-government organizations or people?

4. Does the news item discuss the <u>relevance</u> of issues or

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[5] These descriptions of development news are offered by Hemant Shah. The ideas,however, are the result of the writings of Aggarwala(1980) Sinha (1981) Vilanilam(1979) and others.See Shah,Hemant, "Some methodological considerations for the study of development news: An examination of Three Indian daily newspapers," Gazette 45:33-48,1990.

problems to national, regional or local needs?

5. Does the news item provide contextual or background information?

Two variable were added to assess the extent of minority involvement in news stories.

1. Does the news item use ethnic minorities as sources?

2. Does the item use women as sources?

Procedure and Analysis

Three coders were used for the analysis, the researcher and two graduate students in the School of Journalism at Indiana University. One of the coders had visited Malaysia while he served as a Peace Corp volunteer in Thailand. The third coder was a broadcast major, who said the project sounded like something fun to do. Coders worked independently after two sessions of coaching. Reliability coefficients were determined from the results of the sessions. Each coded the first story on composite tapes number "1" and number "2." Overall coder reliability was .81.[6]

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[6] Coder reliability was checked using the Scott's Pi formula from W.A. Scott, "Reliability of Content Analysis," Public Quarterly, Fall, 1955, 321-325. The analysis yielded an average reliability coefficient of .72 for coders 3 and 2; .80 for coders 3 and 1; and .90 for coders 2 and 1. Scott"s Pi computes the observed percent of agreement of two judges minus the percent of agreement expected by chance divided by 1 minus the percent of agreement expected by chance. Pi is the extent to which coder reliability exceeds chance.

Coders were taught to identify a story item, to identify packages of news, to read superscripts that indicate location and to detect the presentation of one or more sides of an issue or event. The coders also analyzed the twenty newscasts in the sample over a two week period. The time period allowed each coder to rest when fatigued and to code the tapes at his or her leisure in the viewing room of the Archives of Traditional Music at Indiana University.

For each domestic and foreign news story in the sample, coders recorded their answers on worksheets. The data were later entered into the computer for submission to the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Summary

The interpretation of the statistical data is informed by my experience of being an expat in Malaysia for two and a half years. During that time, I watched television news almost daily. The period of participant observation in the newsrooms was during the last six months that I was in the country. Chapter 5 presents the results of the analysis.

CHAPTER 5

Results of the Content Analysis

"Central (USSR) TV to be privatized," was the headline for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) radio December 31, 1991. Russian President Boris Yeltsin announced the formation of a new company, the Ostankino All-Russian Television and Radio Broadcasting Company. By the end of 1992, the Company is expected to develop a share issue plan to make its own way without the formerly deep pockets of the government. After decades of control, perhaps some of the electronic media may be set free. But, how free will they be and what will they be free to do?

"Polish Radio and Television; Uphill Road to Privatization" rang the headline for the Warsaw Voice on March 24, 1991. For decades radio and television had been operated by the state. Then the experiment--frequencies were allocated on a temporary basis. But the temporary licensees quickly made permanent moves to stay on the air with very little original programming, few if any trained personnel and a desire to exercise their new freedom.

People who used to count on government television were counting the ways they could access this powerful medium quickly. In Hungary, Nap TV (Sun Television) went on the air by renting time on the state-owned Channel 1 because people can prepare for change much faster than governments can provide structures for change. So, the transition period from government monopoly to private media will look variously depending upon the socio-political context, but the difficulties will have a familiar ring to them. There will always be questions of ownership of formerly state properties, decisions about access to information formerly kept secret by the governments, discussions about who can own the media, uncertainty about what journalists should be allowed to do and how much restriction the government can reasonably place on non-government employees, and talk of how to guarantee access to the media for the masses. Perhaps public television is a better choice than private TV, but whatever the choice, the competition is likely to include the ability of people to switch off local offerings to switch on cable, video cassette or satellite delivered television. Many in Hungary, for example, belong to community antenna television systems or get programming through individual downlinks.

For decades governments that owned and controlled all of the electronic media have chosen when to broadcast what

about whom. Audiences have had little say about what the news would be and often were prevented from responding to the government.

As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, Malaysia's history of colonization, wars and racial tension instruct the governments decisions about television. Prime Minister Mahathir was quite clear in his address to the World Press Convention in 1985 when he said the needs of the people of Malaysia would have to come before freedom of the press for journalists. It apparently also comes before freedom of speech since the crackdown of 1987 saw the closing of four newspapers and the jailing of journalists and opposition leaders.

At least for the Malaysian government, the socio-political context for journalists seems to include the responsibility to work on behalf of the country regardless of the ownership structure of the media. The government wants "developmental" news. Aggarwala (1978) describes this approach as using mass media for economic development and national integration. In the case of Malaysia, it is news designed to show the country catching up with the first world in terms of reliable infrastructure, economic growth, racial harmony and variety in entertainment. The news is

used to display wealth, strength, and economic, political, social, and cultural independence.

Prime Minister Mahathir once adopted a "Look East" policy to encourage Malaysians to emulate the Japanese, now the policy might be better termed "Show the East, show the West, show the world." Mahathir calls it his "20/20" vision--he plans to turn Malaysia into a fully developed nation by the year 2020. (Tsuruoka, 1991, p. 57)

The content analysis reveals that Malaysian news mangers use television to promote the country's progress, independence and capabilities. The choice to promote the country sometimes comes at the expense of some of the historically cultural needs of Malaysians. Television news is first a tool of development and only secondarily a tool for general education or entertainment.

Tactics available to television editors in a government controlled broadcast environment include delivering all the information there is for the consideration of citizen-viewers, using media to teach people a prescribed political stance or simply using media to entertain people. [1]

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[1] These are all tactics used by the Malaysian media. See a good discussion of the options and how they have been used in several Asian countries in John Lent's "Mass Communication in Asia and the Pacific: Recent Trends and Developments, Media Asia Vol. 16 No. 1, 1989

Governments through legal and social restrictions of the media are also poised to use television pictures to emphasize or to avoid an issue.

The decision making study of RTM conducted by Jaafar Kamin (currently the Director General of Radio Television Malaysia and President of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union) and Vincent Lowe (1982) describes a time when the television station was ordered to put the news of local government dignitaries first regardless of other important national or international news of the day. Other ways were also used to play down significant issues or people. These ways include not showing the faces of people representing opposing sides; not using interviews of people opposed to the government; relying on government sources for information; using slides or maps instead of video of events and reserving the live capabilities of television for ceremonial events. The result is generally less than exciting news stories.

Malaysian journalists submit event-oriented stories, but rarely is there a "spot news" story in the Western sense[2]. This study does not ask coders to determine spot

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[2] "spot news" is defined here as the coverage of unplanned events. These would include an accident, a crime in the making or the coverage of a disaster as it is occurring.

news versus features.[3] Coders had the choices of "news to inform," when journalists tell Malaysians information; "news to instruct" when viewers are encouraged to act by way of words such as 'you must' or 'you should'; or "news to entertain," which includes human interest stories or 'good news' stories. Table 1 shows that 97% of stories for RTM were judged to be "news to inform," that is stories were written to tell Malaysians about events inside and outside of the country and not to tell them what to think or do about those events. For TV3 it was 92% "news to inform." Three hundred and fifty four stories were examined. Each network had 177 stories.

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[3] The coding booklet used for this study was based in large part on the booklet used by Christine Ogan in her study of Third World newspapers. Ogan reported difficulty with this variable when she asked coders to identify "spot" news.

TABLE 1

TYPES OF NEWS
N=354

	INFORM		INSTRUCT		ENTERTAIN		TOTAL	
	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%
RTM	171	48.3	3	.8	3	.8	177	50%
TV3	162	45.8	4	1.1	11	3.2	177	50%
	333	94.1	7	1.9	14	4.0	354	100%

$X^2=$ 4.958

Significance level .0839 <p.10

Malaysian television stations are not focused on entertaining their viewers, at least not in the context of the news. Only 4% of the stories examined were coded as entertainment. When looking at the percentage of stories on each network, TV3 devoted 6.2% of its stories to entertainment and RTM allowed only 1.7% of its story to be entertainment. The stations did not choose to use the news to instruct viewers either. Coders were asked to listen for the key terms "you must," "you should" or equivalent language in the stories. If such terms were detected, the story was coded "to instruct." This is a strict operational definition to limit misclassification of types of news.

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The newscasts for RTM and TV3 are divided into domestic news and foreign news. For TV3, there is usually a foreign news segment, which comes after the second commercial break. This pattern is interrupted for foreign stories with world wide implications or for foreign stories with a strong local angle, such as a drug bust that includes Malaysians. When there is a strong local angle, foreign news could come in the first segment on TV3.

RTM is less predictable, however. During many newscasts, RTM presents additional domestic stories after the foreign news and often foreign news is included in the first segment. Journalists at RTM followed closely the "60-40" rule discussed by Lowe (1982) and others.[4] Looking at Table 2, 61.6 % of the news on RTM was domestic and 38.4% foreign. For TV3 the percentages were 55.4% for domestic news and 44.6% for foreign news. Table 2 shows the percentage of the total number of stories assigned to the domestic and foreign news categories.

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[4] Vincent Lowe and Jaafar Kamin suggest in their examination of RTM that the government established the 60-40 rule (60% domestic and 40% foreign) to ensure the news was not dominated by foreign news (especially Western news).

TABLE 2

DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN NEWS ON BOTH NETWORKS

	DOMESTIC N=	%	FOREIGN N=	%	TOTALS N=	%
RTM	120	33.9	57	16.1	177	50
TV3	98	27.7	79	22.3	177	50
	218	61.6	136	38.4	354	100

X^2=5.779; DF=1;
P<.05

Cultural and economic ties appear to determine the specific origin of stories as illustrated in Table 3. There were 33 stories originating in the North Africa Middle East region. The fighting between the Palestinians (Muslims) and the Israeli soldiers in the West Bank accounted for nearly all of the stories.

Japan is a key economic partner, but there were only two stories from Japan. The small number might reflect an historical relationship with the Japanese.[5] Chinese Malaysians are one- third of the population, but there were only five stories originating in China. China is a communist country, so the twelve- year war with the communists may make them unlikely candidates for Malaysian airwaves.

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[5]The Japanese occupied Malaysia from 1942-1945.

Clearly most stories originated in urban Malaysia informed by Malaysian culture and history. More specifically, the news reflects urban Malaysia and its Malay population. Ranggasamy Karthigesu, a Malaysian scholar, takes a similar position concerning television by noting that, "On top of the idea of Rukunegara (the guiding national principle of common rule) is also an advocacy of a Malaysian culture having a Malay/Islamic foundation." (Karthigesu, 1991, p. 107) The racial diversity of the country is not often seen on Malaysian television unless the news item is specifically about a minority group celebration or cuisine.

TABLE 3
ORIGIN OF STORIES

	N=	%
URBAN MALAYSIA	158	44.6%
RURAL MALAYSIA	13	3.7
FOREIGN NEWS AT HOME	43	12.1
HOME NEWS ABROAD	3	.8
USA	18	5.1
LATIN AMERICA	9	2.5
BRITAIN	7	2.0
WESTERN EUROPE	14	4.0
CHINA	5	1.4
JAPAN	2	.6
SINGAPORE	3	.8
INDOCHINA	1	.3
INDIA	5	1.4
SOUTH ASIA	9	2.5
SOUTH EAST ASIA	7	2.0
USSR	4	1.1
AFRICA	2	.6
SOUTH AFRICA	5	1.4
NORTH AFRICA MIDDLE EAST	33	9.3
AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND	5	1.4
OTHER	8	2.3
	354	100.0%

Domestic news receives most of the attention on the
Malaysian networks presenting 61.2% domestic and 38.8%
foreign news stories. Most foreign news originated in the
North Africa Middle East region (33) followed by Asia (32),
other (22), Europe (21), USA (18), Africa (7) and USSR (4).
This listing is inconsistent with the findings of Sreberny-
Mohammadi (1984) in the 29 country study, which predicted
that the region of the country in question would receive
most of its media attention. The findings are also contrary
to the goals for television prescribed by the Malaysians.
The members of ASEAN should be receiving more coverage as
well as the rest of Asia. It would appear that religious
tie persuade the selection of stories to include.

Urban vs Rural News

   The private station broadcasts more foreign news than
the government station, however, both stations evidence more
interest in urban over rural news. For RTM, 63.9% of its
stories were reported from the urban centers and most of
those stories were from Kuala Lumpur, the capital city.
This figure includes stories coded as "foreign news at
home." The story usually featured visiting dignitaries
greeting the political elite in their offices. Rarely was
there any other footage included in the story. For TV3,

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49.7% of its stories were urban, while only 5.1% originated
in the rural areas.

The combined coverage by RTM and TV3 reveals urban
Malaysia as the origin in 44.6% of the total 354 cases while
rural Malaysia is 3.7% or only 13 cases. The category of
"Foreign news at home" accounted for 12% of the sample.
Table 4 is the order of origins observable on the evening
Television news:

TABLE 4

ORIGINS OF THE NEWS ON BOTH NETWORKS

	n=	%
DOMESTIC	216	61.2%
NORTH AFRICAN MIDDLE EAST	33	9.3
ASIA	32	9.1
OTHER	22	6.2
EUROPE	21	5.9
USA	18	5.1
AFRICA	7	2.0
USSR	4	1.1
	N=353	100%*

*Rounded

Sreberny-Mohammadi (1984) talked about a "prominence of regionalism," that encourages countries to report events of their region more than news from other countries. That same study listed the news preferences for Asia as:

1. Asia

2. Western Europe

3. North America

4. Middle East

5. Africa

6. Eastern Europe

7. General

8. Latin America

One difference appears to be the position of the Middle East. The current study shows increased interest in that region. Another difference is the lowered position of Western Europe and North America on the list. Findings which may signal a shift in attention away from regional to more global and cultural concerns and away from the West.

Crisis

The first research question asked whether foreign news stories on Malaysian television would tend to be crisis-oriented. Robert Stevenson (1984) declared in his review of

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the Sreberny-Mohammadi study that Third World countries criticized the Western approach to newsgathering but presented nothing different when it came to their own newsgathering. This research question was aimed at determining if Malaysian journalists were as interested in crisis news as Westerners appear to be. Crisis news is defined for this study as stories of unrest, war, crime, disasters and accidents.

Findings show eight of the seventeen (47%) stories originating in the United States were crisis stories. Of the stories originating in Latin America, eight of nine stories (88%) were crisis. Ten of the 14 stories (71%) of Western European origin were crisis; five of five stories (100%0) from China were crisis oriented; four of five or 80% of stories originating in India; six of nine stories (66%) from South Asia and 26 of 33 stories (79%) with origins in the Middle East were crisis oriented. Other countries were not considered because they had fewer than five stories. In countries from which a minimum of five stories were coded, an average of 75% of the stories were crisis oriented.

RTM had more "foreign news at home" stories, which generally consisted of video tape of foreign dignitaries meeting with the Prime Minister or with other cabinet members in an office setting. Both RTM and TV3 used foreign

video and wire services for foreign news.[6] Perhaps the
number of crisis stories is merely a reflection of what was
available about foreign countries from foreign wire and
video services. Proponents of a new order routinely accuse
the Western wires services of peddling bad news. These
findings would support such a notion, since there are no
Malaysian foreign correspondents station anywhere in the
world.

When these crisis measures include the domestic news,
TV3 shows a higher percentage of crisis stories than RTM.
As indicated in Table 5, TV3 had 22 or 68.7% of the stories
about unrest, 12 or 48% of the war stories, 23 or 53.5% of
the crime stories, 12 or 52% of the disaster stories, and 5
or 62.5% of the accident stories.

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[6] Hachten (1991) reports that Visnews and WTN via tape and
satellite provide service to almost every station in the
world,but there is usually no attribution so people do not know
of the service or the monopoly.

TABLE 5

CRISIS STORIES ON RTM AND TV3
N=131

	UNREST n=	WAR % *	n=	CRIME %	n=	DISASTER %	n=	ACCIDENT %	n=	%
RTM	10	31.3	13	52	20	46.5	11	48	3	37.5
TV3	22	68.7	12	48	23	53.5	12	52	5	62.5
	32		25		43		23		8	

*Percentage of stories in the category

Table 6 allows a look at the topic compared to the total number of stories from each network. Unrest accounted for only 5.6% of the total stories on RTM, while it accounted for 12.6% of stories broadcast over TV3. War stories were 7.3% of RTM stories and 6.9% of TV3's. Crime was featured in 11.3% of RTM stories and 13.1% of the stories on TV3. Disasters accounted for 6.2% of RTM stories and 6.9% of TV3's and accidents were 1.7 percent of RTM stories and 2.9% of TV3's.

TABLE 6

Networks and Crisis Stories

	UNREST n= 32 %*		CRIME n=25 %		WAR n=43 %		DISASTER n=23 %		ACCIDENT n=8 %	
RTM n= 177	10	5.6	13	7.3	20	11.3	11	6.2	3	1.7
TV3 n= 177	22	12.6	12	6.9	23	13.1	12	6.9	5	2.9

*Percentage of stories per network

TV3 shows more crisis than non-crisis news than RTM as indicated in Table 7. TV3 included 74 or 56.5% of crisis stories while the number for RTM was only 57 or 43.5%. Also clear from this table is that Malaysians spend much more time reporting non-crisis news.

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Table 7
Crisis and Non-Crisis Stories
N=351

| | CRISIS | | NON-CRISIS | | TOTAL |
	N=	%	N=	%	N=
RTM	57	43.5	120	54.5	177
TV3	74	56.5	100	45.5	174

*Three cases were lost from
the TV3 category

x^2=3.99893
DF=1; P<.05
PHI= .1067

Unlike most Western news programs, Malaysian newscasts do not begin with bad news. In fact both RTM and TV3 reserve the first few news story slots for non-crisis news. Not until the tenth or eleventh story do we see large numbers of crisis stories. There is little difference between TV3 and RTM on this point--evidence that regardless of ownership of media, Malaysian journalists generally choose to report the country favorably. This is not to say that all the news in the first few slots is good news, it's just not crisis news.

Consistent with the mission that Malaysian political leaders have articulated for the country, there are very few instances when a crisis story occupies the first positions

in the newscast at RTM. Only once during the period of study
did a crisis story lead the newscast and only once did a
crisis story hold the second spot. Crisis stories seem to
be relegated to positions after the ninth or tenth position
on RTM. ($X^2 = 52.4368; DF=23; P<.001$)

Analysis of TV3 shows a similar pattern. TV3 also had
only one instance of a lead story that was crisis oriented.
After the lead story, however, TV3 appears a little more
likely to select a crisis story for the next few positions
$X^2 = 34.5252; df=20; P<.05$)

Actors

The second research question asked if private
television news reports would feature more main actors who
are unknowns than the government television news reports.
Actors in the stories included "knowns" or people who are
leaders or famous in the country and the "unknowns," who are
not leaders or famous. The results show 66% of the actors
in the stories were political leaders, kings, religious
leaders, business leaders, economic leaders, police or
military leaders.[7] Discussions with Malaysian reporters,
photographers and editors suggest that news is defined in
Malaysia by the level and number of dignitaries involved in

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[7] These categories are consistent with those identified by
Herbert Gans in Deciding What's News.

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a particular event. This is not unlike the United States, according to the investigations of Gans (1981) and others.

Three categories of actors were examined: the "leaders," which include political leaders, kings, religious, police/military, and non-Malaysian political leaders; the "professionals," which include business professionals, educators, health professionals, entertainers, non-Malaysian entertainers, legal professionals, organizations, and groups; and "ordinary," which include people involved with crime or criminal acts, ordinary people, kompong dwellers, government workers, people involved in traffic related problems, women, non-human actors, and accident victims.

There is no perceptible difference between RTM and TV3 when examining the kinds of actors who dominate the news in Malaysia. Clearly "leaders" are the most prominent group followed by "professionals," and lastly "ordinary" people. "Leaders" dominate the news of Malaysia and the news of foreign countries reported by Malaysian journalists. Malaysian journalists prefer leaders over non-leaders except when there is a crisis story. Table 8 shows the relationship between leaders as main actors and crisis/non-crisis stories.

TABLE 8

THE TOPICS OF STORIES FEATURING LEADERS AS MAIN ACTORS

	RTM		TV3		TOTAL	
	n=	%	n=	%	N=	%
CRISIS	16	10.3	23	14.7	39	25.0
NON-CRISIS	66	42.3	51	32.7	117	75.0
	82	52.6	74	47.4	156	100%

$X^2=2.7765$
DF=1; P<.10

In a country where the government has laws and rules restricting the movement of all journalists, it is surprising that leaders are not sought out for crisis stories. Malaysians seem reluctant to be the bearers of bad news to officials or the politically powerful. The more likely explanation is that journalists prefer to present leaders in a favorable light.

TOPICS

The frequency of news topics is seen in Table 9. RTM had more economic news 64.9% to 35.1% for TV3. But TV3 had more human interest stories. Perhaps the number of human interests stories reflects the private stations desire to distinguish itself from the government station or simply to appear more interesting to viewers. The important point here is that there is no significant difference in the topics selected by the government or private networks.

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TABLE 9
TOPIC BY NETWORK

TOPIC	RTM		TV3	
	N=	%	N=	%
UNREST	10	5.6	22	12.6
WAR	13	7.3	12	6.9
CRIME	20	11.3	23	13.2
DISASTER	11	6.2	12	6.9
ACCIDENT	3	1.7	5	2.9
POLITICAL MILITARY	42	23.7	37	20.7
ECONOMY	43	24.3	26	14.9
TECHNOLOGY	18	10.2	17	9.8
HUMAN INTEREST	11	6.2	17	9.8
RELIGION	4	2.3	4	2.3
PEACE	2	1.2	- - - - -	
TOTALS	177	100%	174	100%

$X^2 = 13.2323$
DF=10 P<.21 N.S.

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Nature of the Story

The third research question asked whether the private
television news reports would include more opposing views
than the government television news reports. Only 32.4% of
TV3 stories included opinion, but that was more than RTM at
23.7% (See Table 10). The results are not statistically
different, however, they do point to the idea that Malaysian
television is more likely to air stories that do not present
opinion. Of the RTM stories projecting an opinion, 85.4%
presented only one side of the story. For TV3, 53.6% of the
stories including opinion presented only one side of an
issue (See Table 11). At TV3, 46.4% of the stories presented
two or more sides or positions. Two or more sides were
heard in only 14.6 percent of the opinion stories on RTM.

TABLE 10

NATURE OF THE STORY

OPINION   NO OPINION

	n=	%	n=	%	TOTAL	%
RTM	42	23.7	135	76.3	177	100
TV3	57	32.4	119	67.6	176	100

$X^2 = 3.2778$
DF=1; P<.07 n.s.

TABLE 11

BALANCE IN STORIES WITH OPINION

	ONE SIDE OF STORY		MORE THAN ONE SIDE		TOTAL	
	n=	%	n=	%	n=	%
RTM	35	85.4	6	14.6	41	100
TV3	30	53.6	26	46.4	56	100

X^2=10.8239
DF=1; P<.OOl
PHI=.3341
The category "can't tell" was
combined with "one side of story"

One TV3 reporter revealed in an interview that she

feared getting both sides of a story because she remembered

a person who had spent time getting both sides of the story.

"He's gone now," she said. Some tapes of newscasts before

1988 revealed a time when TV3 journalists were reporting

controversial issues and presenting more than one side of

the argument. Journalists report that the period was short

lived and many of the journalists who were employed then

have been transferred or fired. It appears that the

remaining journalists were told to tone down their approach

to newsgathering. They did.[8]

Quoted source of news

The fourth research question asked if government

television news reports would use the government as the

quoted source of the news more often than the private

television news reports. The government network (RTM) did

rely on the Malaysian government as primary source of

information for 52.3% of its stories compared to 39% for

TV3. The next most frequent source for RTM was foreign

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[8] Personal communication with journalists at TV3 during the participant observer period of January through April, 1988. During that time, I reviewed some tapes of newscasts from earlier years, but I was unable to code those tapes in a systematic fashion.

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governments (19.1%). TV3 relied on foreign governments for 26.2% of its stories and foreign private industry for 12.0%.

It is often the case that item providers are not identified in the stories of either of the networks. There was negligible citing of regional, local, national or Third World news agencies, but also little to no mention of international agencies in the West. In 95% of the cases either the "reporter" or "none" was selected as the item provider. These findings are consistent with the conclusions reached by Ogan (1984) in her study of Third World newspapers. They are also not inconsistent with the reporting conventions used in the United States.

RTM uses information from regional and Third World sources more readily than TV3. According to the manager, TV3 did not belong to Asiavision because of the expense. Perhaps expense also kept the network from getting other Third World information.

Reporters tended to attribute information to human sources. This conclusion is similar to the findings of Hemant Shah (1990) in his study of three Indian dailies. It is not a habit of Indian journalists to cite documents as sources. Table 12 shows this same tendency in the current data.

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TABLE 12

REPORTER SOURCES

	n=	%
DOCUMENTS	7	2.0%
HUMAN	179	50.6
DOCUMENTS+HUMAN	3	.8
CAN'T TELL	165	47%
	354	100.4*

SMALL OVERLAP
OF CATEGORIES

Anchor reports

The fifth question asked if government television news reports would reveal the use of more anchor reports and less video than the private television reports. Those who oppose the NWICO often have described government controlled news as stiff and dull government propaganda. The perception is that very little effort is made to get pictures or to make the news interesting to viewers. News packaging on television is instructive. It indicates the importance of particular pieces or issues to the gatekeepers.

It is interesting that although 35% of Malaysia's population is Chinese, only 15 stories are from or about China in this sample covering three months. Also noteworthy is that 53% of those stories carried no video. One might

conclude Malaysia had a lack of interest in China. But, the fact that stories were included that did not have video may indicate how important China is. China is a communist country. Historically, Malaysia has shown herself to be anti-communist.[9] So, Malaysians may not want to *show* China.

Twenty-seven (27%) percent of the North Africa/Middle East stories were without video. Here again the explanation may be that the stories were more important than whether they had pictures. It is also possible that a lack of pictures allows the story to be told however the storyteller chooses. The sample includes times of great tension in the West Bank with almost daily clashes between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians (Muslims). It is likely that other stories with pictures of Palestinians were seen in the same newscast.

The "video" variable was designed to show how much effort is made to tell the story. The variable shows whether the news is dull or uninteresting. The popular image of foreign news by Westerners is one man sitting at the anchor desk reading announcements. This investigation acknowledges that much more attention is placed on the presentation of the news.

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[9] Barbers' The War of the Running Dog is a vivid description of the war against communist guerrillas, which lasted for 12 years (1948-1960)

Video was used in 227 or 64% of the total number of stories. For RTM, 48% of its stories included pictures as did 52% of the stories on TV3. More telling is the fact that RTM included video on 69% of its domestic news compared to 54.2% for TV3. This is probably a reflection of the larger number of RTM employees that might be assigned to the street on any given day. TV3, however, shows more video attention to foreign news than RTM ($x^2=5.7498; DF=1; P<.05$).

Such findings do not indicate the quality of the video used in stories. Most of the time the shots are long and offer very little variety. Although training is available for reporters and photographers at universities and at workshops sponsored by the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union, most journalists learn on the job. Malaysian journalists learn how to bring back pictures that can be used without embarrassing or offending people.

Reporters are not urged to get the whole story--to show and tell all that is known. Malaysian journalists are more likely to show and tell as much as necessary. As an example, they are not usually told to leave a news conference and find additional pictures to help explain the issue raised in the news conference. In effect, reporters still are taught to be event-oriented. The press conference then is the event.

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In the stories from rural Malaysia, it appears that care is taken to disseminate useful information using the best technology. Only 10% of rural Malaysia stories were without video and most of the stories (56.4%) were about the economy and technology. In other words, stories that originated in the rural areas were more likely to be development oriented stories.[10]

Timeliness is not a high priority for television journalists in Malaysia. According to the news managers, sometimes stories are held by authorities to lessen the likelihood of sensationalizing or hurting some segment of the population. Both RTM and TV3 can produce live telecasts, but they use this technology sparingly. The sample used in this investigation includes the live coverage of the opening of a mosque in Shah Alam, which attracted dignitaries from all over the Muslim world, but the live coverage is rarely used to cover breaking events.

When a reportedly disturbed soldier began shooting in a downtown market in Kuala Lumpur in 1987, the television stations used news flashes rather than setting up live cameras because, as the TV3 news manager explained, "We don't want to alarm people."

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[10] It may be more correct to call these "developmental news"

Training of Malaysian Journalists

Malaysian journalists are trained on the job or in one of four post secondary schools in the country. Television reporters and photographers, however, learn a great deal from watching veterans. Staff training appears to be a problem for both networks. Managers complain that reporters are not well prepared. The news manager of the private station counts it as one of his biggest disappointments. Another is the lack of initiative to learn. He suggests,"You cannot teach people to be curious." He sees the good reporter as one who can do all the jobs in the newsroom. (Yatim, 1988) This explains why people move around to a variety of positions in the newsroom. Reporters are sometimes producers, associate producers are sometimes directors. The needs of the newsroom are met variously.

Development Measures

When Second and Third World proponents lament the event-oriented approach of the West, they usually call for more process-oriented news--more development news. Five development measures were used on the current data. An affirmative answer to any one of the following qualified the story to be called development news:

1. Does the news item emphasize a process rather than an event

2. Does the news item contain content critical of the government?

3. Does the news item include content critical of non-government organizations or people?

4. Does the news item discuss the <u>relevance</u> of issues or problems to national, regional or local needs?

5. Does the news item provide contextual or background information?

Two other questions were asked to determine the breadth of access to the media for Malaysians. The questions are:

1. Does the news item use ethnic minorities as sources?

2. Does the news item use women as sources?[11]

For those stories originating in urban Malaysia, 84.3% evidenced no process information, that is the story did not connect the event reported to any on-going, promised or planned activity. Seventy-nine percent of stories originating in rural Malaysia showed no process orientation.

The foreign news at home category showed that 88.1% of those stories included no process . The category "home news abroad," showed 78% of the stories lacked process information. Such findings support the idea that reporters

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[11] Hemant Shah used these variables in his 1985 study of Indian newspapers. In 1991, Shah adopted an expanded definition of development news drawing on the earlier work of Aggarwala and others.

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are trained to document events rather than to interpret them. Rarely do reporters connect events to any process.

Critical

Criticizing or being critical is not a habit of Malaysian television journalists. Perhaps the Asian theory of communication offered by Dissanayaki illuminates this point. He contends that Asians do not share with Western culture the rigid division between appearance and reality and interpretation in the Western sense requires such a division.

Imiaz Hasnain goes further to point to Islamic influences on journalistic decision-making. He contrasts Asian with Western approaches by offering,

> Th[e] individually oriented positivistic and functional Western perspective on communication does not treat communication as an act of social process and hence, does not take into consideration the entire gamut of socio-cultural structure and function, imperative for stimulating any social change. (Hasnain, 1988: 184)

According to Hasnain, the Western approach to communication underestimates the societal function of communication and ignores the role of social structure and culture, instead it puts emphasis on individuals.

The idea of society over individual needs appears to guide Malaysian news managers and journalists. There were

very few stories which contained information critical of the Malaysian government. These few stories usually highlighted the government's failure to provide something for a rural community. Such stories are not really critical of the government. They show that the system works most of the time, but there are occasional glitches. The story usually concludes with an announcement of the government's plan to fix the problem.

There was little to no criticism of non-government institutions. Rather than criticize institutions, no mention was made of them. Here, the option chosen by television editors was to render the institution invisible to the viewing public. An excellent example of this occurred when the eleven members of UMNO sued the party over an election dispute. The story on the government station contained no pictures and did not identify the eleven by name or still pictures. The private station also did not show the faces of the UMNO 11.[12]

Relevance

For the relevance variable, coders were asked to count items somehow connected to daily and ongoing social and

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[12] Marsden Epworth relates similar stories about Indonesia in her article, "Why Chernobyl was a Nonstory and Other Tales of Indonesian Journalism," <u>Columbia Journalism Review</u>, September/October 1988, pp.41-43.

political life in Malaysia. Stories originating in rural

Malaysia appeared to be relevant more frequently than urban

news stories. For rural Malaysia, stories were judged

relevant 61.5% of the time. This could be because more of

the rural stories involved developmental themes.

Context

The fifth research question asked whether government

news reports would evidence less analysis and fail to

provide context for the story more often than private

television news reports. Results show that some context for

the story was recorded 80% of the time for RTM and 88.7% for

TV3. Coders were asked to indicate when a "why" or "how"

question was answered (Ogan, 1984). Context was provided

for 84.8% of the urban Malaysia stories, 92.3% of the rural

Malaysia stories, and 79.1% of foreign news at home stories.

Although there is no significant difference between the

handling of context for RTM and TV3, it is instructive to

see that both networks provide context most of the time.

More than 83% of all stories included some context, some

general background for the story. The provision of this

background shows the television networks are not just making

government announcements. It also shows that journalists

try to include answers to the "how" and "why" questions in

addition to finding the dignitaries who may be present at a

news event.

Women

The presence and importance of women were measured by
their appearances as sources of news. Women were counted in
15% of rural Malaysia stories and about 10% of home news
abroad stories. Looking at this measurement for all of South
East Asia, women appear less than 5% of the time as sources.

Summary

The findings of this investigation suggest that
although Third World representatives say they support the
ideals of a New World Information and Communication Order,
they may not practice those ideals inside their own country.
The findings are consistent with Robert Stevenson's (1984)
observation that the domestic television news of developing
countries is likely to be event-oriented just like the West.

Malaysian journalists are event-oriented because
managers reward event-oriented reporting. Perhaps it is
more accurate to say that managers do not punish event-
oriented reporting. Journalists are encouraged to find the
dignitary before determining the story, a perfected practice
in the West as well. Such an approach usually produces
stories about events rather than people. In Malaysia, the

approach yields newscasts filled with items projecting an official, non-crisis-oriented, Malay-Muslim identity.

RTM and TV3 have found their niches in the news of Malaysia. RTM has cornered the economic news because most economic reports originate with the government. TV3 includes more human interest stories, in part because something has to fill the air time, but also to distinguish itself from the government network.

The government as source of the news occurs more often on the government station. This variable also shows the second news source for the government station was foreign governments. This suggests the idea that governments, regardless of country, are more reliable than private citizens or corporations. TV3 also considered governments as better sources than non-government sources.

Visuals are important to the television managers of Malaysia. Photographers are encouraged to get the basic shots, but not more than the basics. The result is the adequate presentation of the essential visual and verbal facts of the story.

The nearly imperceptible differences between government and private television news on the "order" and other

variables can be attributed to several conditions: journalists have the same socio-political-religious constraints; they have the same legal constraints; they are using the same sources for news, which include the government corporation ownership of the national wire service (although RTM had more variety because it used more Third World sources); and they are the products of the same training and the same models.

The good news is that each of these conditions is available for change. When Malaysia releases control of television to ethnic groups other than Malay; when the laws reflect a growing spirit of inclusion in Malaysia; when networks can feel free to gather their own information from a variety of sources; and when journalists are treated as professionals because they have been professionally trained, the difference between private and non- private television may be much greater.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The Malaysian government retained control of Radio

Malaya after independence from the British in 1957, because

the government feared relinquishing that power. The country

was beginning a long journey toward development and

government leaders reasoned the mass media were needed to

assist in that development.[1] A. Adefemi Sonaike (1987)

encouraged a similar kind of media control for his native

Nigeria,

> The goal of development suggests a need for a
> coordination and use of the mass media in
> mobilizing the citizenry for the serious task
> ahead. And government appears to be the only
> state apparatus capable of ensuring that the mass
> media are used for the good of all. (Sonaike,
> 1987, P. 92).

Malaysian television journalists show their allegiance

to the idea of using the media for the "good of all." It is

this allegiance that helps them to decide not to begin the

newscast with bad news, not to report unfavorable stories

about the country or the leadership and not to use the live

capabilities of the networks to cover controversial issues.

The journalists have help, however. Some of the help comes

from the very restrictive media laws in Malaysia, some help

comes from foreign journalists who write at the risk of

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[1] There was only Radio Malaya because television was not seen
until 1962.

being expelled from the country and some help comes from their own acceptance of the traditional role of media in the country. Consider that Malaysian television was set up by the government:

a. To explain in depth and with the widest possible coverage the policies and programmes of the government in order to ensure maximum understanding by the public;

b. To stimulate public interest and opinion in order to achieve changes with the requirements of the government;

c. To assist in promoting civic consciousness and fostering the development of Malaysian art and culture;

d. To provide suitable elements of popular education, general information and entertainment. (Adhikarya, 1978)

Karthigesu (1990) insists that very few countries in the world defined their objectives so narrowly. But he says that narrow definition has given the government the authority to use RTM as part of the executive branch. The beginning of TV3 was promising. Managers targeted the urban Chinese and Malay markets and soon used TV3's entertainment programming and aggressive advertising push to shoot ahead of RTM in viewership and sales, but the news lagged behind.

Karthigesu (1990) refers to an unpublished study of television news in Malaysia, which reports that RTM and TV3 take a similar approach to newsgathering. According to the

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principle researcher Chiang Khai Lin, each network spent a
major portion of its air time in 1988, speaking favorably
about the government and the ruling parties.

This researcher's content analysis of television news
also shows the government is getting what it wants. Both
RTM and TV3 are broadcasting in line with the government's
wishes. As was seen in Chapter 5, there are a few
differences between the government and private television
news programs. RTM has cornered the economic news because
most economic reports originate with the government and TV3
includes more human interest stories, in part to distinguish
itself from the government station. TV3 also distinguishes
itself by having more foreign news than RTM and, thus, more
crisis news. Crisis news, however, is not a domestic
preoccupation.

The idea of a group called the "Third World" when
talking about communications is brought into question if the
results of this study can be duplicated in other developing
countries. Journalists across the Third World could be
choosing to promote their own country and not their
neighbors nor their former colonial powers. The emphasis
for Malaysia is domestic concerns followed by interest in
events affecting muslims in the North Africa- Middle East
region. This finding is in contrast to the finding of the

Sreberny-Mohammadi (1984) study which reported that 54% of the English language news on RTM was foreign. The percentage in the present study was about 38%. In the 1984 study attention to foreign news by Asian countries came in the following order:

1. Asia

2. Western Europe

3. North America

4. Middle East

5. Africa

6. Eastern Europe

7. General

8. Latin America

The current content analysis showed that Asia was not the first priority for foreign news and the United States (North America) was no longer third but fifth. The order was:

1. North Africa/Middle East

2. Asia

3. Other

4. Europe

5. USA

6. Africa

7. USSR

The findings suggest that Third World supporters of
the ideals of a New World Information and Communication
Order may not practice those ideals inside their own
country. In fact, the findings here echo the Sreberny-
Mohammadi (1984) study in showing that Malaysia's television
news tends not to be process- but event-oriented and the
foreign news tends to be crisis-oriented.

Malaysian Journalists are event-oriented because
trainers and managers encourage event-oriented news.
Journalists are encouraged to find the dignitary before
determining the story. Rarely did journalists at the
private station initiate story ideas or suggest follow-up
stories. They usually arrived at the station as they would
to any other job, collected their assignments and went out
to cover them. If an official of any kind was present, the
angle of the story was in many ways set.

Observation and interviews of journalists show them
loyal to their country and respectful of their leaders. This
loyalty and respect often allowed journalists to not only
accept the word of leaders as fact, but to believe that
leaders know the facts and have better access to truth.

The most reported topics on Malaysian television are
the economy, political matters and technology. All issues
which fit at least Lent's (1979) and Vilanilam's (1979)

definitions of development news. The treatment of these topics, however, usually include only the criterion of providing context or background. In spite of suggestions from scholars like Ogan (1984) and Aggarwala (1979), who called for more critical analysis of the news, most Malaysian news items stopped at description.

The most striking difference between RTM and TV3 is in their attention to foreign news. TV3 showed more interest in foreign news because that news was available from outside sources and did not have to be gathered by its smaller-number- but-bettered-paid-reporters and because the network was targeting the urban upwardly mobile. Unfortunately the information that accompanies the video tapes rarely provides enough facts to adequately tell the story. RTM had access to more sources of foreign news, but opted to devote its evening news time to domestic news.[2]

The government as the quoted source of the news occurred only slightly more often on the government network. This variable also showed that the second source for the government station was foreign governments. This presents the idea that governments regardless of country are perceived to be more reliable than private citizens or

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[2] RTM2 also had a weekly news show that presented only foreign news. Again the sources were foreign.

corporations. TV3 also considered governments as better than non-government sources. These practices threaten to duplicate the problem seen with Third World wire services-- the idea of government generated news.

Malaysian journalists respect their country and the power of the government to punish them for breaking the law or becoming overly aggressive. Certainly reporting what government or other officials say is among the safest ways to do your job and show respect for the country. One of the ways used by TV3 journalists to stay out of trouble with the government is watching government television and its journalists. If it comes on RTM, it must be available to be reported. Another tactic of TV3 journalists is to get a political leader or government official to comment on camera rather than reading a document and checking and reporting their own conclusions. Whatever the official says is presented as fact rather than opinion, most of the time without comment by the journalist.

Talk of the New World Information and Communication Order left the American agenda in 1984 when the U.S. left UNESCO. U.S. leaders clarified that NWICO was synonymous with suppression of press freedom. William Hachten (1992) offers that the discussion also has been moved away from center stage by the growing access to satellite

communication by Third World countries. Although several countries do not have satellites, many , including Malaysia, have access to INTELSAT and satellites owned by countries in their region.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the political realignment of nations, especially the poor and less democratic Third World is concerned about being misrepresented or left our of the world's conversation. Those nations fear the combination of a growing technology gap and a shift of interest now that the demon of the West is dead and the people are free. Wallis and Baran (1990) have correctly warned us about blaming new technologies for communication problems, however, more needs to be known about the affect of new technologies on the coverage of the developing world. A new question may be,"Does faster mean better?"

Although the results are not generalizable, the content-analysis-participant-observer model was appropriate for this investigation. Content analyses without the benefit of on-sight information would have missed the point in Malaysia. The dynamic racial interaction, the attention to tradition both cultural and religious and the hunger to succeed all drive Malaysians and contribute to a new definition of news.

The restrictive press laws and rules of Malaysia make
it hard for a private medium journalist (especially Malay
journalist) to perform differently from his government
employee colleague. This is not to say that all
journalists should become like United States journalists.
Quite the contrary, effective journalists must read their
audiences and their governments. Broadcast journalists
traditionally have been under the direct supervision of the
government. In Malaysia, the corporation model for the
government radio and television networks and the new
Broadcast Act keep broadcasting under close government
scrutiny.

Malaysian and other Third World leaders lament that
press freedom costs too much for developing nations. In an
article about Indonesian journalism, Marsden Epworth
describes why Indonesian officials do not want freedom of
the press for their own journalists. The officials suggest,

> A free press like the Western press, they say, which
> would write about attacks on Chinese Indonesians,
> student demonstrations and wasteful government-arranged
> import monopolies, would create dissension and chaos in
> Indonesia. This country has seen factions and conflict
> and bloodletting they say. It has seen riots and coups
> and plots and the murder of children. Now the
> country has order. And the press has a responsibility
> to help the government preserve that order." (Epworth,
> 1988, p. 269)

Third World officials cry for time to loosen the reins
gradually on journalists. Western leaders must accept that

the full extension of those reins, however, is not likely to occur quickly nor will the eventual change mean another step toward American-styled broadcast news. The news will be a reflection of social interaction, national identity, economic strength and cultural orientation. It will be new and different. The Western challenge is to broaden its perception of news. The Third World challenge is to redefine the power of news media to include taking off the reins.

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APPENDIX

Run Name: Malay
<div align="center">Codebook for
Final Version Revision III/Last

Private vs Government Television News:
Malaysia

Lillian Rae Dunlap</div>

Col. 1-3	Case		V1
Col. 4		Network	V2.

       1= RTM
       2= TV3

Cols. 5-6	Order number	V3.
Col. 7	Month	V4.
Cols. 8-9	Date	V5.
Col. 10	Day of story	V6.
Col. 11	Coder I.D. Number	V7.

Skip cols. 12,13,14,15,

         o

Col. 16   Setting   V8.

      1= domestic (Malaysia including Sabah and Sarawak)
      2= foreign (outside of Malaysia)

Cols. 17-18   Origin   V9.

      01= Predominantly urban Malaysia
      02= Predominantly rural Malaysia
      03= Foreign news at home (Visiting dignitary to
Malaysia)
      04= Home news abroad (Malaysian visit to another
country)
      05= United States
      06= Canada
      07= Latin America (Cuba, Haiti, Bahamas, Jamaica,
Grenada,   Dominican Republic, Barbados,
Antiqua and Barbuda   Mexico, Nicuargua, Costa
Rica, ElSalvador,Honduras,   Panama South America)
      08= Britain (Great Britain and not Ireland)
      09= Western Europe(France, West Germany,
           Sweden,Switzerland, Italy, Ireland, Norway,
Austria,   Holland,Iceland, Spain, Greece, Portugal,
Finland,   Denmark)
      10= Eastern Europe (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary,
           (former)Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria)
      11= Hong Kong
      12= China
      13= Japan
      14= Singapore
      15= Indo-China (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos)
      16= India
      17= South Asia (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Burma,
           Bangladesh, Bhutan, Tibet, Sri Lanka)
      18= Southeast Asia (Thailand, Indonesia, Brunei,
           Philippines)
      19= Pacific Islands (Fiji, Solomon Islands, Guam, Samoa,
           Papua New Guinea)
      20= U.S.S.R. (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
      21= Africa (Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Chad, Gabon
           Central Africa (Congo) Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia,
           Rep.of Benin, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Togo,
Senegal,   Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, Angola, Zambia,
Botswana,   Namibia Mozambique,
           Zaire,Tanzania,Malawi,Madagascar,Mauritius)
      22= South Africa
      23= North Africa-Middle East (Lebanon, Israel, West
Bank,   Syria, Turkey, Jordan, Saudi

Arabia,Iran,Iraq,Kuwait,Cyprus,Egypt,Libya,Algeria,Morocco,
Mauritania, Mali, Niger)
      24= Australia and New Zealand
      25= Other

Skip cols. 19, 20
Col.21   Type of News
V10.

    1= news to inform (no directive to viewers to respond)
    2= news to instruct (may include directive 'should',
      'must', 'has been ordered to, 'has been urged to')
    3= news to entertain (human interest, arts etc)

Col. 22-23   Topic
V11.

    01= unrest,dissent, coups
    02= war, terrorism, espionage
    03= crime
    04= Disasters (fires, floods, earthquakes,etc.)
    05= Accidents (auto, drowning, etc. with few casualties)
    06= political/military affairs
    07= Economics, trade
    08= Environment
    09= Technology, Science, Education
    10= Human interest
    11= Religious affairs, ceremonies
    12= Peace

Cols. 24-25, 26-27, 28-29, 30-31   V12.v13 v14
v15

                        Actors
                                    (code up to 4)
    01= political leaders
    02= Kings, Queens, royal family (Tunku, Tun)
    03= Religious leaders
    04= Business and labor leaders
    05= Educators
    06= police or military
    07= protestors, rioters, strikers
    08= crime participants (victims
        witnesses, alleged crime violators
    09= Ethnic minorities (Malaysia and U.S. only)
    10= Ordinary people in usual activities
    11= Fishermen,Farmers, Kampong dwellers
    12= Gov. workers
    13= Health professionals
    14= Entertainers-Malaysian
    15= Entertainers-Non-Malaysian
    16= Traffic participants (Taxi drivers
        motorcyclists, automobile and truck drivers,

17= women
        18= non-human actors (animals, floods, fire,
earthquakes)
        19= non Malaysian politicians
        20= legal counsel (judges, lawyers)
        21= professionals (firemen, accountants, engineers, etc)
        22= accident and diaster victims
        23= organizations
Skip Cols. 32,33,34,35

Cols. 36, 37, 38   Package   (Code up to 3)
V16 v17 v18

        1= Anchor
        2= Photo (slide)
        3= Graphics (maps, charts, etc. generated by the
station)
        4= Video
        5= Identified reporter

Cols. 39, 40, 41   Video sources   (code up to 3)   V19 v20
v21.

        1= only one setting for visuals
        2= more than one setting for visuals
        3= cutaways (only with soundbites)
        4= stand-up
        5= none

Col. 42   Nature of the story
V22

        1= Includes opinion, answered and
           unanswered charges or allegations (excluding legal
        opinion)
        2= Does not include opinion, answered and unanswered
           charges or allegations
        3= can't tell

(If you selected "2" or "3", skip to item number 34)

Col. 43   Balance of Report
V23.

        1= presents one side of issue or problem
        2= presents more than one side of issue or problem
        3= can't tell

Col. 44, 45, 46   Types of Sources (Code up to 3)

V24 v25 v26.

    1= government source (Malaysian)
    2= government source (foreign)
    3= non-government source (Malaysian)
    4= non-government source (foreign)
    5= organizations (national or international)
    6= can't tell

Col. 47   Reporter Sources   V27

    1= documents provided by private or government sources
    2= human sources (interviews, human attributions)
    3= combination of documents and human sources
    4= can't tell

Skip 48,49,50

Cols. 51, 52   Provider of Item (code up to 2)
V28 v29.

    1= Big Five (AP, UPI, AFP, Reuters,Tass)
    2= Regional Agency (Asiavision, Ann, Anex, Antara)
    3= National news agency (Bernama)
    4= Other Third World News Agency (PANA, CANA,NANAP,
          Depthnews, IPS etc.)
    5= Own reporter
    6= Other news outlet (Eurovision, Visnews, etc.)
    7= None given

Col. 53   V30

Does the news item emphasize a process rather than an event
    1= yes   3= no

Col. 54   V31.

Does the news item contain content critical of the
government?
    1= yes   3=no

Col. 55   V32.

Does the news item include content critical of non-
government organizations or people?

Col. 56   V33.

Does the news item discuss the relevance of issues or
problems to national, regional or local needs?

1= yes   3= no

Col. 57   V34.

Does the news item provide contextual or background
information?
        1= yes   3=no

Col. 58   V35.

Does the news item use ethnic minorities as sources?

        1= yes   3= no

Col. 59   V36.

Does the news item use women as sources?

        1= yes   3= no

VITA

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TELEVISION NEWS REPORTER, PRODUCER AND ANCHOR FOR WTTV-CHANNEL 4, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA AND CONTRIBUTOR TO INDEPENDENT NETWORK NEWS (INN) 1980-1985.

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AWARDS:
Teaching fellowship from the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, St. Petersburg, Florida, May 1990.

Citation from Blackside Production for work as music consultant to the PBS documentary "Eyes on the Prize II", 1990.

Citation from the Indianapolis Black Media Alliance for outstanding work as a journalist in Indianapolis, Indiana, 1985.

PAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS:
"Development Education and Mass Media," with James Gentry in *Teaching Global Development: A Curriculum Guide for Undergraduate Educators*. New York: Interfaith Hunger Appeal (in press)

"New and Different or Simply New: Government and Private Television News in Malaysia," presented at the World Communication Association Convention, August, 1989, Republic of Singapore.

"President Reagan vs The American Press: A Conflict of Ideals," Paper presented at the Sino-American Symposium on Speech Communication, May 1987, Tamkang University, Tamsui, Taiwan.