

Coverage of Malaysia by The New York Times and  
The Times of London after the May 13, 1969 racial riots

by

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

DAP	Democratic Action Party
DNU	Department of National Unity
GRM	Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia
FEER	Far Eastern Economic Review
MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association
MIC	Malaysian Indian Congress
NCC	National Consultative Council
NEP	New Economic Policy
NOC	National Operations Council
PMIP/PAS	Pan Malaysian Islamic Party/Parti Islam Se Malaysia
PPP	People's Progressive Party
UMNO	United Malays National Organization

## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to analyze the coverage of Malaysia by The New York Times and The Times of London after the May 13, 1969 racial riots between the Malays and the Chinese. Specifically, the study looks into the changes introduced by the government after the riots.

## Historical Setting

The 1969 racial riots in Malaysia marked a clear departure of government policies and standing for that country from previous practices held since its independence in 1957. Malaysia is a multi-racial country comprised of three major races and other indigenous groups. A 1970 census of the population in Peninsular Malaysia showed the Malays who form the majority at 53.2 percent, compared with 35.4 percent Chinese and 10.6 percent "Indians", including Pakistanis (Milne and Mauzy, 1977, p. 3).

During the preindependence period, a verbal understanding had been reached by the Malays and Chinese that while the Malays will hold political power, the Chinese can hold economic power. With this understanding, the British gave independence to Malaysia, then called Malaya. Since that time, three general elections were held, but with no problems for the ruling party, i.e., the Alliance.<sup>1</sup> During the 1969

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<sup>1</sup>The 1955 general election was held under the supervision of the British. After independence, two elections were held, i.e., once in 1959 and later in 1963, before the May 10 General Election of 1969. The Alliance is a coalition of three major political parties, i.e., United Malays National Organization (UMNO), Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), each representing the three major races of Malaysia.

election, communal issues were raised by non-Malays, who formed the bulk of the opposition political parties, as a means of gaining support from other non-Malays (Rudner, 1970, p. 2).

It was clear that the non-Malays, particularly the Chinese, were not satisfied with merely holding economic power and had, through opposition political parties, actually challenged the political power of the Malays.<sup>2</sup>

So as not to split the non-Malay vote, the DAP [Democratic Action Party], GRM [Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia] and PPP [People's Progressive Party] concluded a gentlemen's agreement among them not to contest the same constituencies against the Alliance.

Malaysian opposition strategies evidently aimed not at the capture of power, which in no case was a practical possibility, but at dislodging particular communal and regional supports from under the Alliance (Rudner, 1970, pp. 4-5).

Thus, compared to other elections, the Alliance Party fared badly in the 1969 election. They obtained only 66 seats out of the 103 contested (one seat was uncontested as the candidate had suddenly passed away). Out of these 66 seats, nine went to the Alliance by acclamation. The nine seats went to the Alliance as the opposition had failed to put up candidates in these constituencies. This left 57 seats to be contested at the polls. The election results indicated that although the Alliance could still form the government, they lacked the two-thirds majority needed to pass bills brought before Parliament.

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<sup>2</sup>The involvement of the Indians in the riots was limited. Basically, the May 13, 1969 riots were a clash of Malay and Chinese political and economic interests.

The GRM had major victory in Penang. In the state of Selangor, the Alliance won 14 seats in the State Assembly, the same number as the opposition. In Perak, the Alliance won 19 seats in the State Assembly, while the opposition had won 20 seats!

One important feature of the May 10, 1969 General Election is the deterioration of Chinese support for the MCA. Chinese vote had shifted to the DAP. But it is also true that Malay vote had shifted to the Pan Malaysian Islamic Party (PMIP) or Parti Islam Se Malaysia (PAS). The MCA leadership, upset by the lack of support from the Chinese who it believed it had served so well, withdrew from the Cabinet although remaining in the Alliance (Mohd. Safar Hashim, 1986, p. 24).

On May 12, 1969, opposition political parties led by Dr. Tan Chee Koon and V. David held victory processions in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia. The processions, which were to be peaceful, turned into sessions of provoking, belittling and jeering at the Malays. The Malays counter-reacted by gathering in front of the residence of the Chief Minister of Selangor, Datuk Harun Idris, on May 13, 1969, to hold their own victory procession.

By that time, word had reached these already worked-up Malays that some Chinese had attacked Malays in the Kuala Lumpur district of Setapak (Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, 1969).

The demonstrators at Harun's house, many of whom were in possession of, or had quickly acquired, weapons of various kinds, ... had run amok, attacking innocent passers-by, most of them Chinese, killing or maiming men, women or children without distinction (Shaw, 1976, p. 208).

The situation in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur was tense even before election day (May 10, 1969). A youth from the Labor Party had been shot by the police in an accident in Kepong. A funeral procession was held by the Labor Party to mourn the death of the youth.

The riots that started on May 13, 1969, ended six days later, but were confined almost entirely to the capital city.

According to Means, the Malays reacted in this manner because they had for a long time felt "alienation, deprivation and inferiority" as a result of their economic backwardness (1976, p. 408). And now the Chinese had challenged their political power. Certainly the Malays were not about to surrender their political power to the Chinese and thus, the May 13th Incident or Peristiwa 13 Mei as it is called in the Malaysian language.

The May 13 riots occurred for several reasons (Reid, 1969, p. 275):

- (1) Malay dissatisfaction over the nonimplementation of long-standing policies to make Malay the effective national language;
- (2) non-Malay provocation of Malay sensitivities by challenging their privileged position under Article 153 of the Constitution;
- (3) urban and small-town unemployment on the part of school leavers, both Malay and non-Malay;
- (4) and finally,

...the 1969 General Election gave rise to no single overriding political issue. In 1955 the drive for



Merdeka [Independence] easily dominated all else. At the time of the 1959 election campaign, Chinese education and integration constituted burning subjects for political debate. 'Confrontation' with Indonesia similarly emerged as the centre of the electoral issues of 1964 (Rudner, 1970, p. 2).

During the seemingly tranquil situation of 1969, the opposition had resorted to raising communal issues as a means of getting more support. This obviously created tension among the Chinese and the Malays.

After the May 13 riots, changes were introduced by the predominantly Malay government to ensure that such riots would never occur again. These changes although necessary were seen as an assertion of Malay power.

#### The Problem

Malaysia was a former colony of Britain. As such, it would be interesting to study how The Times of London covered these changes in view of Malaysia's "special background and experience of British mechanism" (The Times of London, May 16, 1969).

Coverage of The New York Times is important because it is an elite and major paper of a key democracy. The changes introduced by the government imposed limitations on the process of democracy in Malaysia. Therefore, it would be interesting to see how this newspaper covered Malaysia at the time.

There is little research done on Malaysia in terms of its coverage by Western newspapers. This study hopes to make a contribution in research as it will examine the coverage of events and developments in

Malaysia by two elite Western newspapers, one representing the former colonial ruler of the country being studied in this research.

### Objective

Based on the problem statement, the objective of the study is to determine if there is a difference in the coverage of Malaysia by The New York Times and The Times of London for May 14, 1969 to August 26, 1974. The coverage by these newspapers is expected to be different in terms of the total number of articles on Malaysia, type and number of news categories covered, total amount of space devoted to Malaysia in the period under study, type and number of themes covered, prominence in display to Malaysian news and favorable/unfavorable coverage of the changes.

### Plan of Study

The study is introduced in the first chapter, along with the problem and objective. Chapter II deals with review of suitable literature for the study. Chapter III deals with methodology, which includes statement of hypotheses, coding, etc. The findings are discussed in Chapter IV. The final chapter, Chapter V, will discuss the summary of the study, provide suggestions, look into subjects for further review and draw conclusions.

## CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There is some rationale as to why the coverage given to Malaysia after the 1969 riots by The Times of London is expected to be different than the coverage given by The New York Times.

An analysis of the coverage of Idi Amin in The New York Times, The Times of London, and The Jerusalem Post by Gitau revealed that when Amin first came into power, the British who were the former colonizing power of Uganda gave him favorable coverage, i.e., in The Times of London (1979, p. 57).

Gitau writes that The Times of London's coverage was not only favorable towards President Amin, but that "they go beyond neutrality to suggest what perhaps its reporters thought would occur under Amin's administration" (1979, p. 55). Later, it was discovered that The Times of London's predictions fell short of earlier assessment, and statements which praised General Amin's qualities of natural leadership were one example of misinformation.

The New York Times meanwhile had given a more neutral coverage of Amin.

Gitau's research also revealed that the U.S. received its cues from Britain, "since Britain had recognized Amin and Britain knew best having ruled Uganda," that it was alright for the U.S. to aid Uganda although they did not make any attempts to formally recognize Amin's government (Gitau, 1979, p. 58).

What should be emphasized here is that the U.S. felt that Britain's opinion as the former colonizer would be more reliable. The fact that the "former colonizer knows better" is a potential area of research.

Gitau's research did not establish the fact or conclude that a positive relationship existed between a colonial power and favorable reportage in its media of its former colony, but his research does serve as a basis for this study.

In a study conducted by Peterson, who surveyed stringers, correspondents, and editors of The Times of London with a questionnaire designed to identify both news selection factors and gatekeepers socialization effects, cultural proximity was found to operate as a selection factor at all levels of the organization. Stevenson and Shaw (1984, pp. 220-222) use the terms cultural proximity or relevance interchangeably with cultural affinity which is defined as shared language, migration between countries, and colonial heritage.

With relation to the above, one cannot doubt that Malaysia did inherit much from the British, from the system of government right up to the system of education. And although Bahasa Malaysia, the Malay language, is the national language, the English language is an important second language in the country.

For the first ten years after Malaya attained its independence in 1957, Anglo-Malayan relations were generally very amicable. The transition to independence was made with utmost goodwill. There was a recognition of common interest both in defense and in economic matters. Many of the politicians, senior civil servants and officers of the armed forces of independent Malaya

had spent periods of education or professional training in the United Kingdom... (Gullick, 1969, p. 203).

Therefore, The Times of London, as a British newspaper, and Britain, as the former colonizing power of Malaysia, will more likely be interested in Malaysia's affairs.

The above would also suggest that having ruled multi-racial Malaysia, the British would be more perceptive of the complexities involved in ruling a country such as Malaysia. They would also be perceptive of the cultural, social, political and economic situations of the country.

An example of the above is the perception of the Malay captured in Sir Frank Swettenham's book, British Malaya<sup>3</sup>:

Whatever the cause, the Malay of the Peninsula was and is unquestionably opposed to steady continuous work. And yet, if you can give him an intent in the job, he will perform prodigues, he will strive and endure, and be cheerful and courageous with the best (1906, pp. 139-140).

The British not only ruled Malay, made use of her vast economic resources to enrich the Crown, but also tried to understand, sometimes accurately, the different races that ruled in Malaya. R. O. Winstedt<sup>4</sup> writes:

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<sup>3</sup>Sir Frank Swettenham was the late governor of the Straits Colony and High Commissioner for the Federated Malay States in the late 1800s.

<sup>4</sup>R. O. Winstedt served in the Civil Service during British rule in Malaya. He was a reader in Malay at the University of London.

In affairs, he [the Malay] is not only diplomatic, but intelligent and statesmanlike, with a natural ability to weigh both sides of a question. His domestic life is happy (1969, p. 17).

Without the Chinese, Malay having no surplus population of unemployed Malays, could never have developed. But Chinese national virtues are colonial vices. Against a people so industrious, intelligent and clannish, no other race can stand up. Endowed with the laughter and manners of an ancient civilization, they mix with other races with innate good nature and are delighted to welcome them to their entertainment, but never into their businesses. No trespasser may ever enter their commercial preserves (1969, pp. 19-20).

Of the Indians, particularly those from South India who traded with the earliest Malay kingdom of Malacca, Winstedt quotes Tome Pires:

There were also great Kling merchants with trade on a great scale and many junks. This is the nation that brings most honour to Malacca.

...Though the term (Kling) is a tribute to the greatness of his past, the Southern Tamil now regards it as derogatory.

Today the great majority of Indians in Malay are Tamil labourers from the Madras Presidency, who work on rubber estates, on the railway, and in the Public Works Department....

Most Tamils of the second generation are clerks, overseers and schoolmasters. Malay also has Indian doctors, lawyers and merchants (1966, p. 21).

In 1969, Britain's economic interest and involvement in Malaysia was still high. Although the British had decided to complete the withdrawal of troops from Malaysia by 1971, "Britain cannot afford to leave its very valuable investments in Malaysia quite unprotected" (Gullick, 1969, p. 199).

Britain still has a larger stake in the rubber and tin industries, and in the banking and foreign commerce, shipping and insurance, than any other Western country [in Malaysia] (Gullick, 1969, p. 203).

In 1969, the British were still engaged militarily in Malaysia. This began in 1957, when the Anglo-Malayan Defense and Mutual Assistance Treaty was negotiated between Malaya and Britain.

The main points of the treaty were: (1) Britain was to assist Malaya to expand its armed forces; (2) British forces (including a Commonwealth Strategic Reserve) and bases would be maintained in Malaya; (3) in the event of armed attack (or a threat of such attack) against Malayan or British territory in South-East Asia the parties would consult and take action together; (4) Britain would not use forces stationed in Malaya in operations outside Malayan or British territory without prior agreement of the Malayan government (Gullick, 1969, p. 198).

Even after her troops had left Malaysia in 1971, Britain made arrangements with Malaysia, Singapore, New Zealand and Australia to form the Five Power Defense Arrangement which replaced the Anglo Malayan Defense Agreement (AMDA). The security of Southeast Asia, specifically Malaysia and Singapore, came under the British sphere of influence.

For the above reasons, the research expects The Times of London to give wider coverage and greater prominence in displaying news about Malaysia.

But The Times of London is also expected to give a more favorable coverage of Malaysia. An example of favorable coverage in The Times of London is its coverage of the advent of the National Operation

Council (NOC) after the riots.

In any other Afro-Asia country, this could be taken as a virtual seizure of power by politico-military forces, but with Malaysia's special background and experience of British mechanisms, it would be wrong at this stage to imagine things have gone that far (The Times of London, May 16, 1969).

Coverage of Malaysia by The New York Times is expected to be less, except where issues such as democracy, freedom of expression, etc., i.e., principles entrenched in the American Bill of Rights are affected. Indeed, the changes introduced by the Malaysian government after the 1969 riots imposed some limitations on these principles.

When faced with issues limiting the process of democracy, The New York Times would probably give negative reportage. This can be explained by Heider's balance model which is part of the consistency principle. Every individual has the desire for consistency in information. If the information received is inconsistent with what one believes, then three things can happen. One can stop thinking about it, discredit the source that provides the disturbing information, or one can change one's attitude and accept the information (Brown, 1965).

In the same way, one often wants the values of other societies (or in this case, country) to be consistent with the values in one's society. Negative reportage may be given by a newspaper when the values of its society are undermined in another society, as was the case in Malaysia after the 1969 riots.

One must also consider that in 1969 the U.S. was probably more interested in another neighboring Southeast Asian country, i.e.,



Vietnam, and its struggle against communism mainly because of direct U.S. involvement.

In 1971, Hester's study of the determinants of foreign coverage in U.S. newspapers revealed that foreign relations news was overshadowed by war news from Vietnam (Stevenson and Shaw, 1984, p. 222).

A study of three newspapers, i.e., The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Christian Science Monitor, by Haque (1983) suggested that U.S. diplomatic interest in a country can greatly influence news attention. "It (i.e., political and diplomatic interest) may be a more important factor in coverage decisions than the internal situation of a country itself over a period of time" (p. 524).

The New York Times is, therefore, expected to give less coverage of Malaysia at that particular time. If coverage was given to Malaysia, it probably dealt with Malaysia's struggle against communism. Coverage of Malaysia is expected to increase where principles such as equality, democracy and freedom of expression are affected.

Coverage by The New York Times is also expected to be less favorable compared to The Times of London. An example of this is its coverage of the NOC:

Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Razak assumed the task today of suppressing Malaysia's three-day old communal rioting with what appeared to be unlimited powers. ...He is faced with the prospect of ruling autocratically - at least until Malaysia settles again - and, at the same time, of trying to keep democracy alive in the people's imagination (The New York Times, May 17, 1969).

Mort Rosenblum, one time chief of Associated Press' Paris bureau, and later, editor of The International Herald Tribune, when commenting on the reportage given by U.S. newspapers of foreign countries wrote:

Any random sampling of foreigners - Germany, Venezuela or Bhutan - will reveal that a great majority feel that Americans know very little about the essence of their societies. And even if Americans cared, they could not easily bridge that gulf from what is reported in the United States (1979, p. 165).

To say that The New York Times coverage of foreign news is similar to the above would amount to stereotyping coverage of foreign news by all U.S. newspapers. It is nevertheless an important point to bear in mind.

Snider conducted a study about the role of the telegraph editor of a newspaper, the person in charge of filtering the foreign news, and found that,

Mr. Gates picked the stories he liked and believed his readers wanted, all of it according with what he considered newsworthy, his past experience, attitudes, expectations, values and of course, the orientations of the paper and the guidelines made by the editor in chief. This particular gatekeeper is extremely important because he opens or closes the windows of the world. He decides what the readers will know about what is going on outside the boundaries of their community (Snider in Rodriguez, 1971, p. 9).

It would be true to say that to an extent, society determines one's experience, attitudes, expectations and values. In the case of the gatekeepers, they determine what their readers know about foreign news, based on their experience, attitudes, expectations and values

which are molded by society. This can be related to how the American gatekeeper and the British gatekeeper will view Malaysia based on each of their country's differing experience with Malaysia.

With regards to U.S. newspapers' coverage of the Third World, Dorman writes that

Of even greater concern...is the extent to which Washington officials not only provide interpretation, but also serve as sources for news about the Third World. Most foreign news reaches the mainstream press through routine channels that are hardly disinterested and are likely, in fact, to be officials or agencies of the U.S. government (1986, p. 424).

Under these circumstances, the failure of journalists

to exert an effective reality check on policymakers - to provide a means of gauging whether policy is based on evidence and concrete facts or on self-delusions and misperceptions - has particularly serious consequences for U.S. understanding of Third World (Dorman, 1986, p. 419).

As for The Times of London, Giles Fowler, Associate Professor at the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Iowa State University, said that the British newspaper regarded itself as a paper "of and for the establishment." Fowler, who served as a general assignment reporter with The Times of London for seven months, from 1957 to 1958, said that those in the "establishment include the headmaster of Eaton, chief officers in the military, the Prime Minister and his Cabinet members and the editor of The Times of London (Fowler, Personal Interview, April 27, 1988).

"And although a paper of the establishment, it did not mean that The Times never criticized the government," said Fowler. Criticize the government it did, and sometimes very harshly.

Very often The Times of London offered a "honeymoon period" for whichever party that came to power. It provided a "sporting chance" for the new government to carry out its policies before it started criticizing the government.

During his time of service, Fowler said The Times was "literally a paper of judicial records." The newspaper was literally the legal paper for the law courts in Britain. For this reason, "The Times felt a tremendous responsibility to report news accurately." Dr. Michael Frith, a Briton, and the Health Communications Consultant at the Department of Veterinary Medicine at Iowa State University, concurred with Fowler. Frith, who was doing public relations work in London during the 1960s, said that "in terms of reporting the truth, The Times was beyond reproach" (Personal Interview, April 22, 1988).

Fowler further added that The Times had "specialists" on different subjects and "treated knowledge more like a University" (Personal Interview, April 27, 1988).

Michael Binyon, currently The Times Bureau Chief at Washington, D.C., said that although The Times is basically a paper for the elites i.e., those in A and B socio-economic groups in Britain, it has recently been getting more varied readers. Some readers, not of the elite class, read the paper "purely for the good sports section." However, he agreed that since Rupert Murdoch bought The Times of London,

"the public tends to see The Times as undergoing popularization and slipping in standard, though this may not really be happening."

Although Murdoch has always wanted to extend readership of The Times, he knows the limits where an elite paper such as The Times is concerned (Binyon, Personal Interview, April 20, 1988).

Binyon also disclosed that British journalists tend to get more opinion into their writing, that is more than some American journalists, but less than the French journalists. Opinion is subtly brought in when emphasizing the lead of the story or just by focusing on the headlines. However, correspondents of The Times of London have no control over the headlines as they are put out by The Times' main office in London. A third way of bringing in opinion in reporting is when journalists provide paragraphs giving background interpretation of what may have happened. He agreed that American journalists are more rigid in keeping out interpretation analysis when reporting (Binyon, Telephone Interview, April 20, 1988).

The methodology employed in this study is content analysis. Berelson defined content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (1952, p. 18). The researcher will have to be clear about exactly what he wants to look at, and create suitable questions so that the answers can be well quantified. In this study, the coverage given to Malaysia by both newspapers and specifically the themes are manifest content, and systematic content analysis can be used to register them. According to Budd et al. (1969), "content

analysis is a systematic technique for analyzing message content and message handling - it is a tool for observing and analyzing overt communication behavior of selected communicators." They maintain that content analysis allows observations to be carried out "without fear that the attention will bias the communicator, something that will be more difficult if the analyst were trying to watch at the scene (Budd et al., 1969, p. 2).

In carrying out content analysis, observations can be made several times since the messages are in permanent form, i.e., in print. Messages will not change and so the study can be repeated at will and errors can be corrected (Rodriguez, 1971, p. 40).

A central problem in any research design is the selection and definition of categories, the "pidgeon holes" into which content units are to be classified. "Content studies have been productive to the extent that the categories were clearly formulated and well adapted to the problem and to the content" (Berelson in Holsti, 1969, p. 95).

Basically, categories should reflect the purposes of the research, be exhaustive, be mutually exclusive, independent, and be derived from a single classification (Holsti, 1969, p. 95).

The categories for this study will be discussed in the next chapter.

According to Lasswell, Lerner, and Pool (from Budd et al., 1969, p. 50), direction in content analysis refers to the "attitude expressed toward any symbol by its user." But the researcher has no way of knowing the attitude of the writer of the communication. Normally,

the attitudes are categorized as favorable or unfavorable or neutral. Still others will have expressions of attitude using different labels for these categories: pro - con, positive - negative, friendly - hostile, indulgence - deprivation, approval - disapproval, optimistic - pessimistic, relief - discomfort, consonance - dissonance, affirmative - negative, etc. (Budd et al., 1969, p. 50).

It is important to remember that messages are not always distinctly favorable or unfavorable or neutral. The line dividing it is often indistinct (Berelson, 1952). Therefore, a researcher must clearly define the criteria by which contents of the newspaper(s) being analyzed can be categorized as favorable or unfavorable.

In analyzing content of newspapers, looking at sources of news is important, the reason being that variation in news content about the subject under study could have occurred because news was supplied by different news sources (Gitau, 1979). At the same time, if news was supplied by the same news source to two different newspapers, then the news appearing should be the same, unless it has been interpreted differently by the two newspapers.

Professor John Hohenberg writes:

Preferably the news source should be fully identified. But whether the source is identified or not, some indication of the origin of the information should be given so that the public can evaluate the relative worth of the source (1978, p. 104).

In terms of location and prominence in display, research has shown that different parts of a newspaper have different attention

values. Important news is printed on the front page (Gitau, 1979, p. 48). A major factor that will be considered in this study is the location and prominence in display of news on Malaysia in the two newspapers.

Themes are a special kind of content category. Each theme is a unit of analysis, but very often belonging to a larger "compartment." In this study, the compartment refers to a particular subject category that the theme originated from. A theme is an assertion about a subject matter (Berelson in Budd et al., 1969, p. 47).

The researcher has stated the reasons as to why the changes were introduced. At this point, it must be emphasized that not all the changes were government policies, neither were they all lasting. However, they will be looked into because they were among the changes introduced by government right after the 1969 riots. Some have far reaching effects in present day Malaysia and the researcher hoped to see how many among them were covered by the two dailies. Or, if the two dailies even considered them important enough to be covered. This is another reason why the themes were being analyzed.

The first of these changes/themes is the National Operations Council (NOC)/Emergency Government. The National Operations Council (NOC) or Majlis Gerakan Negara (MAGERAN) was formed with Tun Razak as its director.

In his capacity, Tun Razak had wide executive and legislative powers. However, he had to act on the Prime Minister's (the Tunku's) advice, and was to be assisted by a National Operations Council appointed by himself (Milne and Mauzy, 1977, p. 84).



The original composition of the NOC was as follows: Director of Operations - Tun Abdul Razak bin Dato Hussein, Ordinary Members - Minister of Home Affairs, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, the MCA President, the MIC President, Director of Public Services, the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, Inspector-General of Police, and one person appointed as Chief Executive Officer to the NOC (Straits Times, May 18, 1969 in Goh, 1971, p. 27).

The council, which took over the rule of the country in a state of emergency declared by the King after the riots, was given the task of returning the nation to the state of normalcy. Basically, its functions were to (The NOC Report, 1969, p. 77):

- (a) restore law and order,
- (b) ensure the smooth administration of the country, and
- (c) restore harmony and mutual trust among the various races.

Today, the NOC exists as the National Security Council.

#### Formation of the National Front Political Party/Coalition Government

The 1969 racial riots saw the demise of the Alliance Party that had been ruling the country since Independence and the birth of the United Front, i.e., the new ruling coalition political party. To quote the then Prime Minister,

We are now closer to the concept of a national front which will in due course become a durable foundation for a strong, united multi-racial Malaysia (The Straits Times (Malaysia), January 1, 1973 and The Star, January 1, 1973 in Milne and Mauzy, 1977, p. 188).

The United Front extended its membership to the opposition parties other than the three major political parties, i.e., the UMNO, MCA and MIC that were previously the main components of the Alliance. The PMIP/PAS<sup>5</sup>, Gerakan, and PPP all of which had been opposition parties became members of the National Front. The National Front stood for its first general election on August 24, 1974.

#### Limitations on democracy

Related to the second change/theme are limitations imposed on the process of democracy which include amendments to the Constitution.

To quote Tun Abdul Razak, the Director of the NOC:

This nation cannot afford to perpetuate a system that permits anybody to say or do things which would set one race against another. If this Nation is to survive, we must make sure that subjects which are likely to engender racial tensions are not exploited by irresponsible opportunists. We can only guarantee this by placing such subjects beyond the reach of race demagogues... (NOC Report, 1969, p. v).

According to G. P. Means,

Government spokesmen argued publicly that 'Westminster type' democracy could not work in Malaysia because of the lack of 'social and economic infrastructure' for democracy. Such analysis as this then became the justification for the restriction placed on the role of Parliament when it was finally reconstituted following the nearly two year period of rule by emergency decree (1976, pp. 442-443).

At one point, the late Tun Abdul Razak even implied an indefinite postponement of the restoration of democracy because equitable

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<sup>5</sup>The PMIP/PAS has since pulled out of the National Front.

distribution of wealth and opportunity needed to exist before democracy could be restored.

Everything possible must be done to correct the economic imbalance among the races.... Unless the have-nots are assured of a better position in the economic life, and unless the benefits are justly distributed, there is no possibility of the country returning to normal (Goh, 1971, p. 33).

The new economic policy (NEP)/the second Malaysia economic plan

One of the reasons for the riots was the feeling of "alienation, deprivation and inferiority" (Means, 1976) felt by the Malays because of their economic backwardness. This called for a New Economic Policy by the government.

The NEP was introduced for the

restructuring of the whole economy of the country in order to correct racial imbalances in education, income employment opportunities and the ownership of industry and basic national resources (Shaw, 1976, pp. 220-221).

Although called an economic policy, the NEP was political in its origins (Milne, 1976, p. 220).

Few observers would deny that there is a pressing political need to increase significantly the Malay share in ownership of the economy (Young et al., 1980, p. 70).

To increase Malay participation and ownership of the economy,

The New Economic Policy set as its target 30 percent Malay ownership and participation in all industrial and commercial activities by 1990. Because Malays owned only 1.5% of the total capital assets of limited

companies in West Malaysia in 1969, and their average per capital income was less than half of that of the non-Malays, the goals of the NEP demanded a rapid ethnic reallocation of national product and jobs. To achieve this goal, Malay ownership of capital assets needed to be increased at the rate of 25% per year provided that the growth rate in the private corporate [sector] was sustained at the projected 10% per year. Such a drastic redistribution of national product was to be achieved largely by massive government investments in government corporations, some of which were eventually to be converted into private Malay corporations (Means, 1976, pp. 410-411).

#### Amendments to the Constitution

The Constitutional amendments that were introduced gave a different meaning to democracy in Malaysia. The amendments were introduced to prohibit any individual from questioning the provisions entrenched in the Constitution, i.e., Bahasa Malaysia as the national language (Article 152), the National Education Policy, the Special Malay Rights (Article 153), and the rights of the Malay Sultans (Article 159) (Goh, 1971, p. 36), and provision related to the Citizenship Rights (Article 150 6A) (The NOC Report, 1969, p. 82). All these articles are part of the Seditions Act.

The Malaysian government felt it necessary to enact laws which will Inter alia make it an offense for any person to question the entrenched provisions in the Constitution, which can create ill-will and hostility among the different races. The government felt the measures were "tenable in law and are not inconsistent with democracy" (NOC Report, 1969, pp. 86-87).

### Citizenship rights of the non-Malays

...there was an increased emphasis on the registration of non-citizens and a tightening up on the issue of work permits. Later there was a scrutiny of citizenship certificates issued under Article 30 of the Constitution. ...action taken against such people as the non-Malays, opened up possibilities of jobs for genuine citizens, whether Malay or non-Malays (Milne and Mauzy, 1977, p. 88).

The non-Malays may have interpreted this as a move by the predominantly Malay government, asserting their dominance by limiting the number of non-Malays in the country.

### National Consultative Council (NCC)

Milne and Mauzy (1977, p. 90) say that "of all the various organizations set up after 13 May, the NCC was by far the most interesting." Its purpose was to establish positive and practical guidelines for inter-racial cooperation and social integration for the growth of a Malaysian national identity. But there were other factors that made the NCC's function more complex. The NCC was a widely representative body, and its discussions were frank and open. It included representatives of Ministers (from the NOC), the state governments, political parties, Sabah, Sarawak, religious groups, professional bodies, the public services, trade unions and employers associations, the press, teachers and minority groups. Except for the DAP which insisted that its imprisoned leader (Lim Kit Siang) be its representative in the NCC, all major political parties were represented in the NCC.

The NCC was set up in January 1970 and served to provide a "permanent base for the restoration of Parliamentary democracy" (Shaw, 1976, p. 216).

#### Rukunegara/national ideology

On August 31, 1970, the King issued a proclamation. It was not intended to be included in the Constitution, but

to guide Malaysians of all races in the everyday affairs in a conscious effort to bring about a single united and strong Malaysian nation (Malaysian Digest in Milne and Mauzy, 1977, p. 93).

Basically, the Rukunegara served the same function as Indonesia's Panjasila, i.e., to unify the country. The Rukunegara has five pillars which guide the nation: believe in God, loyalty to King and Country, upholding the Constitution, rule of law and good behavior and morality.

#### Implementation of Bahasa Malaysia as the national language and the main medium of instruction in schools

The implementation of Bahasa Malaysia as the national language and the introduction of Malay in 1970 for all subjects in Standard One, except those in the English, Chinese and Tamil languages, was another big change witnessed after the 1969 riots (Milne and Mauzy, 1977, p. 88).

In fact, Bahasa Malaysia was to have been made the medium of instruction in national-type schools back in 1967, but it was delayed. This caused much dissatisfaction among the Malays. Reid (1969, p. 275) cites this as one of the reasons for the May 13 riots. After the

riots, there were hurried efforts to implement the policy.

Department of National Unity (DNU)

DNU was formed with the intention of helping the government in "galvanizing the country and guiding it towards national unity." The DNU was intended to take the long-term view to think in "generational terms" (The Straits Times, July 16, 1969, in Milne and Mauzy, 1977, p. 92).

More immediately, it was intended to provide standards and measures in order to ensure that all policies and actions of the government were consonant with the national ideology and so conducive towards national unity (Milne and Mauzy, 1977, p. 92).

Today, the DNU exists as the National Unity Board.

Having said the above, it is interesting to know what the Malaysian government thought about the coverage of the riots in Malaysia by foreign newspapers. Through the NOC Report, the Malaysian government stated that,

...some foreign mass media, the British and Americans being more noticeably so than others, did great harm to Malaysians of Chinese origins through slanted reporting. Reports which appeared in certain sections of the foreign press were based more on rumours than on hard facts. This was possibly due partly to the dearth of accurate information during the initial days of disturbances. But it cannot be denied that a few foreign correspondents quite enthusiastically accepted wild allegations by certain racial groups as factual. Apart from sensational reporting, even some captions to photographs were obviously erroneous. For example, a photograph showing members of the security forces and armed Malays near the mosque on Jalan Hale was interpreted as military collusion with the rioters. The facts,

revealed by careful investigation, are that the soldiers had successfully contained the Malays; the photographs were taken just before the men were disarmed and returned to their respective village (NOC Report, 1969, p. 72).

The NOC Report did not mention the names of the British or American mass media it was referring to. However, Mohd. Safar Hashim's analysis of the coverage of the May 13, 1969 riots in The Times of London, The Guardian, The New York Times and The Washington Post found that The Times of London's coverage of Malaysia was unfavorable, while the other three newspapers provided neutral coverage. He attributed this to Britain's "hangover" of its former colony. On the other hand, he felt that the American newspapers treated the riots as an incident that ought to be reported. Mohd. Safar Hashim does not explain what the "hangover" was, but one may assume that he was probably referring to the fact the British had a hard time giving up a colony that is rich in resources.

Many factors can explain negative coverage, for example, the correspondent's temperament, the interest of the newspaper owners, which particular group or groups is sought out as sources when reporting, which particular group may have been more open about discussing their side of the story, etc.

Mohd. Safar Hashim's analysis of the coverage of the riots by the four newspapers dealt with the month of May 1969 per se. Therefore, while immediate coverage of the riots by The Times of London may have been unfavorable for any number of reasons, the researcher is of the opinion that subsequent coverage of Malaysia by The Times of London may be more favorable for the reasons cited earlier in this chapter.



Impressions were also conveyed by some foreign press that the Chinese in Malaysia were a "persecuted minority." This further contributed to the feeling of insecurity and desperation among this ethnic group (NOC Report, 1969, p. 72).

The above finding of the NOC is supported by Parker in his Communication and the May 13th Crisis: A Psychocultural Interpretation:

A front-page story in the May 15th New York Times stated incorrectly that the Malaysian Constitution has been suspended. This story reported that there were indiscriminate firings by Malay troops against Chinese and that no efforts were made to stop Malays from violating the curfew. A New York Times story on May 17th alleged that Malay government leaders reacted in 'panic' to the election results and demonstrators; none of The New York Times story indicated the degree of tension before May 13th or the extent of provocations experienced by Malays in Kuala Lumpur.

Articles in The Times of London were consistently critical of the Alliance government and gave almost exclusive attention to Chinese grievances and Chinese suffering in the crisis. Times correspondent Fred Emery dismissed the possibility that opposition demonstrators could have contributed to the outbreak of violence (1979, pp. 5-6).

It is no wonder then, that relations between the government and the foreign press deteriorated. Initially, foreign newsmen were admitted into the country freely and were given curfew passes to facilitate their movement. On May 17th, after negative coverage of Malaysia, several foreign correspondents' curfew passes were withdrawn.

Parker (1979) attributes the coverage of the riots by leading newspapers, which questioned the motives of the Malaysian government, while giving preponderant emphasis to the Chinese version of the riots, to his Repression-Sensitization Theory. This theory is about cultural

differences in outlook and communication. Parker theorizes that the Chinese by tradition and upbringing are more "sensitized" than the Malays who by their tradition and upbringing are "repressed." When troubled about something, the Malays tend to brood and refrain from speaking out, while the Chinese will verbalize, sometimes even to excess about their feelings.

Parker's first-hand experience of the riots and his analyses of those willing to talk about the riots support this. He suggests that foreign correspondents may have received a one-sided version of the riots as the Chinese were more willing to talk about the riots and never seemed reluctant to "volunteer negative news of the government and the Malays without being asked" (Parker, 1979, p. 9). The Malays, on the other hand, did not want to discuss the riots and never even wanted to discuss the provocations experienced by them in and around Kuala Lumpur prior to the riots.

Parker also states that foreign correspondents were probably not told the Malay and pro-government versions of the crises "at least not told in terms sufficiently complete to form a coherent picture" (1979, p. 9).

Only one leading foreign journalist, Derek Davies of the Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER), criticized the way foreign media had covered the crisis. He likened foreign correspondents covering the riots to

...professional vultures quick to feed upon death and disaster.... When the blood and thunder was over, the journalists flew away again.... But they had told only half the story: the reports of Malaysia's demise had been exaggerated (Davies, 1969, p. 700).

Of the coverage by numerous foreign newspapers that the predominantly Malay army and police directed most of their fire at the Chinese, Davies writes,

Lamentable though this may be, the harsh fact remains that for two decades, the country's security forces have been trained to fight the communist menace.... Their whole training has led them to identify the Chinese with the internal security threat - and vice versa. In the confusion of the two or three days, with no clear orders coming from above, a tremendous responsibility descended on the soldier or constable with a gun. He was presented with a riot in which fellow Malays armed with parangs, were chasing Chinese - and he instinctively jumped into the conclusion that the Chinese constituted anti-social elements. He fired into Chinese crowds, he watched while his blood brothers massed for forays into the Chinese city of Kuala Lumpur and, sometimes, when his own Malay blood was up, he fired himself into Chinese shops and houses and joined in the looting.

Reprehensible and criminal though this was, such behavior did not typify the force as a whole (many Malays fell victim to the security forces), and it was a direct product of the administrative breakdown (Davies, 1969, p. 700).

Had foreign correspondents understood the mindset of the Malaysian private or constable, they may have perceived the above incident in a totally different light.

The Malaysian government of that time is not entirely without blame in this matter. Had they been more open in discussing the riots, the foreign press may not have got the impression that the government

was trying to conceal "an even more dangerous fire than the riots themselves." As was the case, the authorities failed to answer their questions satisfactorily at press conferences, and denied events that the press themselves had witnessed (Davies, 1969, p. 705).

The fears of Malaysia's racial communities can no longer be swept under the carpet, "such fears can only be dissipated by complete frankness."

...the news blackout has encouraged the manufacture of rumours and uncertainties, enormously facilitating any communist attempts to exploit the situation with their well-tried Agitprop techniques (Davies, 1969, p. 705).

## CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Two newspapers, The New York Times and The Times of London, were selected as subjects of this research.

The New York Times is a newspaper, and serves as a reference index for other media (Riffe and Shaw, 1984, p. 618). It is the most widely read among the elites, both within and outside the U.S. government (Weiss in Albritton and Manheim, 1985, p. 45), and the most widely cited by U.S. policy makers (Davis in Albritton and Manheim, 1985, p. 45). The New York Times is also regarded as a "benchmark of U.S. news coverage by foreign governments" (Albritton and Manheim, 1985, p. 45). It carries a greater volume of foreign news than any other U.S. newspapers (Semmel and Womack in Albritton and Manheim, 1985, p. 45).

The New York Times is shown to have strong agenda-setting effects on public opinion (Winter and Eyal in Albritton and Manheim, 1985, p. 45).

The Times of London (inclusive of The Sunday Times) was included because it was once considered the voice of Britain (Merrill, 1983, p. 63).

An American content analysis of British newspapers in 1966 showed that there was greater emphasis on the part of The Times for foreign coverage. Another study showed that the proportion of foreign news in The Times was increasing (Merrill, 1968, p. 175).

In 1968, The Times of London was still considered "a paper of the establishment - the government, the nobility, the ruling class" (Merrill,

1968, p. 176). It can, therefore, be considered a paper read by the policy makers in Britain.

The researcher included The Times of London to see if the British were concerned over the changes in Malaysia, as they had vested interests (economic and defense) in the country during the period covered in this thesis. The author also hoped to see how the British reacted to changes in Malaysia (i.e., favorably or unfavorably) considering the fact that Malaysia was once Britain's colony.

A 1964 U.S. panel which named the world's 10 leading dailies put The New York Times and The Times of London in number one and two positions, respectively (Merrill in Gitau, 1979, p. 8).

#### The Population

A total of 429 articles were content analyzed, i.e., 134 from The New York Times and 295 (excluding five photographs appearing only with captions) from The Times of London articles found in the final edition of that newspaper.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>The Times of London has seven editions. Most news about the Far East normally appears in the first or third editions. Sometimes news from the Far East which appeared in the earlier editions does not appear in the final edition of the paper. This is to make way for more "important" and "significant" news from the U.S. About 85 stories on Malaysia appeared in the earlier editions of The Times and did not appear in the final edition. Since the Iowa State University Library, where this research was carried out, had only the final edition of this newspaper (on microfilm), the 85 stories on Malaysia could not be analyzed. After a telephone interview with Michael Binyon, The Times' Bureau Chief in Washington, D.C., the researcher was convinced that these stories were "insignificant" (February 1, 1988). Beginning from 1972, all news on Malaysia appeared in the final edition of The Times of London.

The period of study for this research was from May 14, 1969, a day after the May 13 racial riots, to August 26, 1974, two days after the General Election in Malaysia, since coverage of this election appeared only in the August 26 issue of The Times of London.

All articles on Malaysia, as indicated in the indexes of The New York Times and The Times of London, were analyzed. The rationale for picking this time period was to determine if the two newspapers were following the changes which were being implemented in Malaysia, as a result of the riots which occurred after the May 10, 1969, General Election. The researcher also felt that foreign newspapers may have reported on these changes especially as the 1974 General Election approached. The fact that most of these changes were introduced immediately after the 1969 riots, or were being introduced prior to the 1974 General Election made these five years a good period to content analyze. Also, coverage of the actual election day, August 24, 1974, by The New York Times and The Times of London may have dealt with some of these changes.

#### The Coding

The following variables were used for coding the content analysis:

1. the name of the newspaper
2. the date and year of issue of the newspaper
3. the content type of the newspaper (whether it was news, features opinion item)
4. total size of the article (inclusive of photo(s), map(s), news copy and headline) in column inches

5. size of the photograph(s) or map(s) found in the article
6. size of news copy (inclusive of headline)
7. page number and number of columns of each article
8. category/categories of news to which the article belonged
9. the measurement in inches of the category/categories of news of each article analyzed
10. prominence in display of the article (whether it was displayed on the front page above fold, front page below fold, inside page above fold or in the inside page below fold)
11. sources of the news (whether it originated from the Associated Press, United Press International, Reuters, Agence France Presse, the newspaper itself, i.e., whether the correspondent/editor/staff writer/journalist was the originator of the news, an unidentified source, or other, i.e., private individuals or correspondents of other newspapers)
12. the headline and message of each article
13. the total number of paragraphs of each article
14. the theme/themes raised in each article<sup>7</sup>
15. the number of paragraphs in which the theme/themes appear
16. the value direction of each paragraph in which theme/themes appeared, i.e., whether it was positive, negative, or neutral

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<sup>7</sup>The theme/themes refer to the changes introduced by the Malaysian government after the riots. Henceforth, these changes will be referred to as themes.



17. description of the photographs and maps appearing in each article.

Not all the variables stated above were necessary or directly related to what this study was attempting to find out, but they were nevertheless coded to perhaps provide some insight to questions that may arise in the course of this research.

A coder reliability test was carried out to verify the accuracy of the researcher's (A) coding ability. Three persons (all female) participated in it. Two are graduate students from the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at Iowa State University. One of them is a Malaysian of Malay (B) origin and the other is an American (C). The third person is an Indian undergraduate student (D) majoring in Biochemistry.

This reliability test was carried out in the early part of the research. A simple reliability formulae was used:

$$R = \frac{2 (C1,2)}{C1 + C2}$$

(North et al., 1963, p. 49).

Here, the number of category assignments on which the researcher and one of the three coders agree is divided by the sum of all category assignments of the two coders. This was done three times for the three persons who had participated in the test (see Table 3.1).

The Malaysian had the highest score, .8 (with one as the highest score). The American and Indian students had a score of .73.

Table 3.1. A table of coefficients of reliability

A	B	C	D
X	.8	.73	.73

This implied that the researcher's coding is reliable. It is not unusual that the Malaysian had the highest score in the test. This is probably because she understands the topic under study better and has actual first-hand knowledge and experience of Malaysia.

There was no need for establishing the confidence level or sampling error as the content analysis dealt with the whole population, rather than a sample.

Based on the literature review in Chapter II, four hypotheses were formed. The following is a statement of hypotheses after which the operationalization of each hypotheses will be discussed.

#### The Hypotheses

- (1) The Times of London will have wider coverage of Malaysia in terms of the number of articles, the type and number of news categories and the length in column inches of each category of news compared to The New York Times.
- (2) The Times of London will give more prominence in display to news about Malaysia than The New York Times.
- (3) The Times of London will give more coverage to the themes in terms of the type and number of themes by paragraphs than The New York Times.

- (4) The Times of London will generally give favorable coverage to the themes compared to The New York Times.

#### Operationalization

To test the first hypothesis, the following news categories were created. The research of Karl H. Friederich (1961) and Jose Elido Rodriguez (1971), both M.S. theses, greatly contributed in the formation of these news categories. As is always the case, the news categories had to be modified in order to enable better categorization of news coverage of Malaysia.

(1) Internal political situation, issues and political statements of office holders. This category included subjects such as the struggle of the Malaysian government against the Communists on a national level (not including military pacts with neighboring countries to fight communism).

(2) Economic plans and activities. This covered stories on the Malaysian government's economic plans and actual economic activities, both at the national and international levels, events of trade, commerce, taxes, money, finances and other market stories, inclusive of economic activities dealing with agriculture.

(3) Defense. This dealt with all news about Malaysia's defense and defense expenditures, the withdrawal of British troops from the region, the five power defense arrangement, all defense agreements or assurances with other countries or neighboring Southeast Asian countries. Included also were pacts with Southeast Asian countries in joint struggles against communism and the security of Malaysia/Southeast Asia

from external threat.

(4) Crime and violence. This covered acts of violence, e.g., hurting, killing, murdering, looting and the consequences thereof, e.g., imprisonment. It did not include such acts by soldiers involved in the defense of the country. It did include violent acts by Communist guerillas.

(5) Foreign policy and international relations. This included Malaysia's relations with other countries and vice versa, and activities in the international arena which were of interest to Malaysia. State visits by foreign dignitaries/royalty to Malaysia or by Malaysian dignitaries and royalty to other countries were included in this category.

(6) Human interest and profiles. This covered features and news material of personalities in Malaysian politics and history, stories of celebrities/entertainment/amusements, oddities in nature or human temperament, everyday life in Malaysia or life among the different peoples in Malaysia.

(7) Education, health, administration and social aspects. This included any news related to education and health. It also included administration at both the public and private sectors. The social aspects included news about social welfare, broad social problems such as poverty, socially significant issues such as language, etc. News of relief and rehabilitation was also considered in this category.

(8) Accidents, fires, floods, other natural disasters, near disasters and bad happenings.

(9) Media/media personnel, both local and foreign. This covered all news affecting media/media personnel in and outside Malaysia with regards to action taken by the Malaysian government.

(10) Public works and development. This included news about urban and rural development, construction of homes, buildings, construction of new roads, harbors, airports, and other facilities, etc.

(11) Religious activities/happenings. This included all activities or incidents related to any religion in Malaysia or statements made by religious leaders related to religion.

(12) Trials/court cases. Stories involving Malaysians (not media personnel) involved in court cases/trials, both within and outside Malaysia, or trials of non-Malaysians being tried for something related to Malaysia were considered under this category.

(13) Tourism. This included all stories about Malaysia's scenic spots. Steps taken to improve tourism and increase tourism earnings in Malaysia were included in this category.

In situations where the article on Malaysia shared the same headline with other news stories, only the portion directly related to Malaysia or somewhat related to Malaysia was categorized and measured, especially when the rest of the news was deemed as totally unrelated to Malaysia. (In such a situation, the measurement of the headline and news copy to get the total size of the article was counted on the basis of whether the headline showed that the article was about Malaysia or was in some way related to Malaysia, e.g., Southeast Asian security.)

All stories/articles on Malaysia were categorized under one or more of the above stated categories. The type of news categories and their number were noted for each of the two papers. The length in column inches of each news category/categories was measured for both newspapers.

The second hypothesis was tested by seeing where articles on Malaysia were displayed in each of the newspapers. All news items beginning above or on the fold of the front page of the newspapers were considered front page above fold news. All news items beginning below the fold of the front page were considered front page below fold news. All news beginning above or on the fold of the inside page of the newspapers were considered inside page above fold news. All news beginning below the fold of the inside page were considered inside page below fold news. Importance was placed on exactly where the news items began on the page.

The third and fourth hypotheses concerning the types of theme covered and their number, and the direction of each theme by paragraph were tested in the following way. In all, 10 themes were determined by the researcher as important changes that had occurred in Malaysia as a result of the riots. They are:

- (1) The National Operations Council/emergency government
- (2) The National Front Government/coalition government
- (3) Limitations on democracy
- (4) The new economic policy/the second Malaysia economic plan
- (5) Amendments to the Constitution

- (6) Citizenship rights of the non-Malays
- (7) National Consultative Council
- (8) The Rukunegara/national ideology
- (9) Bahasa Malaysia as the national language and the main medium of instruction in schools
- (10) Department of National Unity.

The mention of National Operations Council/emergency government, the National Consultative Council, the Department of National Unity, the Rukunegara/national ideology, the new economic policy/the second Malaysia economic plan<sup>8</sup>, and the National Front/coalition government political party qualified each of these themes to be analyzed. These themes have the same specific titles used by the Malaysian government when these changes were announced. When these titles appeared, the paragraph containing these titles was scrutinized and the direction of each theme was analyzed. Subsequent paragraphs were also analyzed to see if they contained a follow-up of the themes, although the themes may not be mentioned by name. This applied for all the 10 themes mentioned.

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<sup>8</sup> Although economic programs and plans were mentioned by both newspapers, only when the New Economic Policy or the Second Malaysian Economic Plan were mentioned by name was it considered theme and the value direction analyzed. The reason for this is as a Malaysian, it is easy for the researcher to recognize these changes as being related to the New Economic Policy or the Second Malaysian Economic Plan, although the newspapers may not have mentioned it as such. But, it will be unfair to expect someone with a different background, who is reading the same article, to make the same connection.

Certain themes did not have specific titles, e.g., Amendments to the Constitution, Bahasa Malaysia as the national language and the main medium of instruction in schools, limitations on democracy, and citizenship rights of the non-Malays.

For limitations on democracy, once the term "democracy" appeared and suggested some form of extension or limitation in this process, or the paragraph suggested some loss or gain of individual rights, then the direction of this theme was analyzed.

The mention of Bahasa Malaysia being implemented as the national language and as the main medium of instruction at schools as a result of the riots was analyzed.

As for amendments to the Constitution, any article within the Seditions Act touched by The New York Times and The Times of London stating the Malaysian government's intentions to amend them, to put them "beyond discussions even in Parliament or references made to them after the amendments had been passed in Parliament," qualified this theme to be analyzed.

The citizenship rights of the non-Malays, raised or questioned by the Malays or the predominantly Malay government of Malaysia, were analyzed. This theme did not include the fate of the 200,000 non-citizens classified as "stateless" or Indians who were non-citizens, but who possessed working permits.

In this research, the author set the direction of the theme(s) as being favorable, unfavorable or neutral. Favorable coverage was defined as coverage that was more than fair, which praised or was



supportive, tolerant, or understanding of the reasons as to why the themes were necessary changes in Malaysia. Unfavorable coverage was defined as coverage that was unfair, was biased, that discredited, belittled or put down the implementations of these themes by the authorities or implied that the Chinese in Malaysia were being discriminated upon by the implementations of these themes.

In both cases, the use of such words as "likely", "unlikely", "seemed" or words of such nature suggested that the writer was expressing his/her personal opinion. Whenever such words were used or when personal opinion was put forward, they were analyzed to determine the direction.

Neutral coverage would refer to coverage on which no value judgment was made by the source to suggest any direction. In a situation where something negative was written about a theme, only to have something positive written about the same theme in the same paragraph, then the paragraph was considered neutral.

All the themes were analyzed by paragraph. This was not difficult to do as the newspapers tended frequently to discuss one theme in one paragraph. In rare situations, two different themes were discussed in one paragraph. When this occurred, the themes were analyzed as appearing in two separate paragraphs.

## CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The time period for this research was from May 14, 1969, to August 26, 1974. During this time period, The Times of London has 295 articles (excluding five photographs unaccompanied by news copy), more than twice the number of articles (134) that appeared in The New York Times (Table 4.1). This partially supports the first hypothesis that The Times of London will have wider coverage of Malaysia in terms of the number of articles, the type and number of news categories and the length in column inches of each category of news compared to The New York Times.

The New York Times covered 12 news categories 163 times and The Times of London covered all 13 news categories 325 times. The New York Times covered all but one news category (tourism). Some articles were categorized under two or more news categories.

Both newspapers had given the most emphasis to Internal Political Situation, Issues and Political Statements of Office Holders. There were 98 such items (30.2%) in The Times of London and 60 such items (36.8%) in The New York Times (Table 4.1).

Such coverage may be explained by the fact that the political situation of a country undergoing traumatic experiences such as a riot will be of interest to any newspaper, even the "big ones." It is bound to get the attention of foreign newspapers, especially when the country in question is experiencing it for the first time since its independence. It may well have been newsworthy because although



Table 4.1. Categories of news for Malaysia in The New York Times and The Times of London between May 14, 1969 and August 26, 1974

News categories	The New York Times		The Times of London		Total N	%
	N	%	N	%		
Internal politics situation, issues and political statements of office holders	60	36.8	98	30.2	158	32.4
Economic plans and activities	14	8.6	52	16.0	66	13.5
Defense	21	12.9	42	12.9	63	12.9
Crime and violence	23	14.1	39	12.0	62	12.7
Foreign policy and international relations	22	13.5	39	12.0	61	12.5
Human interest and profiles	9	5.5	13	4.0	22	4.5
Education, health, administration and social aspects	2	1.2	11	3.4	13	2.7

Accidents, fires, floods, other natural disasters, near disasters and bad happenings	1	0.6	3.0	0.2	10	3.1	19.75	0.9	11	2.3
Media and media personnel both local and foreign	4	2.5	9.25	0.7	5	1.5	9.5	0.5	9	1.8
Public works and development	3	1.8	29.0	2.3	5	1.5	13.25	0.6	9	1.6
Religious activities and happenings	1	0.6	3.5	0.3	6	1.8	53.75	2.5	7	1.4
Trials/court cases	3	1.8	20.0	1.5	2	0.6	14.0	0.7	5	1.0
Tourism	--	--	--	--	3	0.9	52.25	2.5	3	0.6
Total number of categories mentioned	163	99.9	1255.25	99.8	325	99.9	2108.00	100	488	99.9
Total number of articles	134				295				429	

Malaysia is a multi-racial country, it had been a relatively stable country since its independence in 1957 until the time of the riots in 1969.

Whatever the reason, the political situation, political statements and subsequent political actions and policies in Malaysia were of interest to the two newspapers. This category also dealt with the internal struggle of the government against Communist terrorists.

As expected, The Times of London gave more coverage to Economic Plans and Activities, 52 (16%), followed by Defense, 42 (12.9%), Foreign Policy and International Relations and Crime and Violence, 39 (12%) each.

As explained in Chapter II, The British had large economic investments in Malaysia. Therefore, it is not surprising that news about rubber and tin prices and the activities in the two industries, oil strikes, news about other export commodities and the stock exchange situation were constantly covered.

The researcher was also right in her assertion that The Times of London would have given more coverage to Malaysia during the withdrawal of British forces from Malaysia.

The Times discussed at great length the withdrawal and alternative security measures taken by the governments of Britain, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand through the formation of the Five Power Defense Arrangement (which replaced the Anglo-Malayan Defense Agreement). Charles Mohr, The New York Times correspondent for Asia in 1969, concurred that at the time, the editors of his paper regarded

Malaysia as belonging to the British sphere of influence (Telephone interview, March 7, 1988).

As for Foreign Policy and International Relations, which was given the same amount of coverage as Crime and Violence, coverage dealt with Queen Elizabeth's visit to Malaysia and the King and Queen of Malaysia's visit to the United Kingdom. The Times of London was also interested in Malaysia's foreign policy, especially its Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) policy for Southeast Asia.

Both The Times of London and The New York Times mentioned Crime and Violence, i.e., 39 times (12%) in The Times of London compared to 23 (14.1%) in The New York Times. This was the second most important category for the American newspaper. Both newspapers did not deal with crime news per se. Most of the news from this category dealt with violence, i.e., the burning of vehicles and buildings, fightings, shootings and killings that had taken place during the riots. Even then, a substantial number of items (17 out of 39 or 46%) in The Times of London dealt with the alleged massacre of 25 Chinese villagers by the British Scots Guards in Northern Malaya in 1948. The British newspaper had given wide coverage to this incident. Out of the 194.5 column inches devoted to this news category, 133.5 or 68.6% dealt with the alleged massacre. Apparently, the incident caused much reaction in Britain to the extent that it was even discussed in Parliament. It is likely that The Times of London had not resorted much to reporting the violence that had occurred during the riots. As for The New York Times, one must give considerable thought to whether it may have

resorted to reporting the violence that had occurred during the riots.

The third most important news category for The New York Times was Foreign Policy and International Relations (22 or 13.5%). The visit of U.S. Vice President Spiro Agnew to the region and to Malaysia was given much coverage. News of American officials stopping over in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city, to explain U.S. policy in Vietnam and to provide assurances, was also covered. The New York Times seemed very interested when Malaysia and The People's Republic of China were in the process of establishing diplomatic relations. This was probably because Malaysia was the first nation in the region to do so. The late Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak's visit to The People's Republic of China later on was also given coverage.

It would be correct to conclude that The New York Times was very interested in the activities of communist guerillas in Malaysia. Articles that touched on guerilla activities in Malaysia came under the categories of Internal Political Situation, Issues and Political Statement of Office Holders, Defense, Crime and Violence and Foreign Policy and International Relations. As there seemed to be a preoccupation in The New York Times of the communist situation in Malaysia, the researcher counted the number of articles that dealt with the Communist struggle in Malaysia. Out of the 134 articles in The New York Times, 29 (21.6%) (not shown in table) were related to Communist guerillas in Malaya, while only 36 (12.2%) (not in table) in The Times of London dealt with the same.



This suggests that for the time period analyzed, the American newspaper was following the Communist situation in Malaysia, while the British newspaper was more interested in the Malaysian economy and the external defense of Malaysia and Singapore.

Related to the above, one can understand why The New York Times gave more emphasis to Defense, the paper's fourth most important news category. Defense was covered 21 times or 12.9%.

Most of the news about Defense in The New York Times dealt with the withdrawal of British forces from Malaysia and the Five Power Defense Arrangement. The American newspaper was probably interested in the safety of the region now that the British were pulling out of Malaysia and Singapore. Defense news also dealt with joint actions between Malaysia and neighboring Southeast Asian countries to fight Communist guerillas.

The above supports the researcher's opinion in Chapter II that The New York Times will be more concerned about Communist guerilla activities in Malaysia as well as possible external threat of Communism to Malaysia and the Southeast Asian region. This also explains why Foreign Policy and International Relations and Defense were given wider coverage than Economic Plans and Activities, which was covered 14 times (8.6%). This was the fifth important news category for The New York Times. This suggests that the U.S. did not have the same economic interest or investments in the country as the British.

Human Interest and Profiles were covered nine times (5.5%) in The New York Times and 13 times (4%) in The Times of London. The stories dealt with active political figures of that time, such as Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman and his deputy Tun Abdul Razak. These stories were reported during the coverage of the riots in Kuala Lumpur. Both newspapers carried stories of a Malay warrior who had fought the British in the late 1800s and whose identity had just been discovered.

While The New York Times dealt with Education, Health, Administration and Social Aspects two times (1.2%), The Times dealt with it 11 times (3.4%). Several articles in the British newspaper were related to the relief work of the Royal British Air Force during one of Malaysia's worst floods in 1971.

Accidents, Fires, Floods, Other Natural Disasters, Near Disasters and Bad Happenings was covered once (0.6%) in The New York Times and 10 times (3.1%) in The Times of London. Although coverage in The Times of London dealt with a fire destroying a rubber factory, a capsizing flotilla and ferry, and a crashing boulder, there were a number that dealt with the yearly floods that affected Malaysia during the monsoon season.

Media and Media Personnel Both Local and Foreign were covered four times (2.5%) in The New York Times and five times (1.5%) in The Times of London. The New York Times' stories dealt with the expulsion of Henry Kamm, the paper's correspondent from the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak. The banning of The Times and Newsweek, the

the American news magazines, was reported as well. The Times of London dealt with strict censorship regulations and bans imposed on all Malaysian political parties publications and distribution of foreign newspapers. It also mentioned that The Times of London had been held by the Malaysian Customs after the riots (May 24, 1969).

Religious Activities and Happenings was covered only once (0.6%) in The New York Times, but six times (1.8%) in The Times of London. The Times devoted 53.75 column inches to this category. Much of the news in the British newspaper dealt with foreign missionaries being pressured to leave the state of Sabah by the predominantly Muslim state leadership.

As mentioned, some articles were a combination of Internal Political Situation, Issues and Political Statements of Office Holders and Crime and Violence which appeared 11 times in The New York Times and 10 times in The Times of London. This is expected as the correspondents were simultaneously covering the violence during the riots while reporting the political situation in Malaysia.

There was also a combination of Internal Political Situation, Issues and Political Statements of Office Holders and Foreign Policy and International Relations. Three of these combinations appeared in The New York Times and four in The Times of London. These were normally news about Malaysian politics or policies which affected Foreign Policy and International Relations.

The Times of London was the only newspaper of the two to have photographs totally unaccompanied by news. There were five such photos which appeared with captions. Three were of the Malaysian King

and Queen's official visit to the United Kingdom, one of Queen Elizabeth's official visit to Malaysia and one of soldiers in the streets of Kuala Lumpur during the riots with burnt cars in the background. All five photos were located on the inside pages above the fold.

The first hypothesis states that The Times of London would have more coverage than The New York Times in terms of column inches of each news category. The researcher has decided that emphasis cannot be placed on the length of column inches of each news category.

This is because variables, such as column width and type size, were different for both newspapers and were beyond the control of the researcher. The column width of opinion items in The Times of London was broader than the column width for straight news and general features. And although the researcher is not certain about this, the type face for one or both of the newspapers may have changed during the five years that were content analyzed.

Nevertheless, The New York Times devoted a total of 1255.25 column inches to Malaysia, while The Times of London devoted 2108 column inches.

Therefore, the researcher concludes that The Times of London gave more coverage in terms of the number of articles on Malaysia and in the types and number of news categories, and the first hypothesis is supported.

However, the researcher decided to carry out an approximate word count to indicate how many words were used by The New York Times and

The Times of London when reporting on Malaysia. The New York Times had an average of 45 words per column inch for all news items that it carried, except for one book review on Malaysia that averaged 64 words per column inch.

The Times of London had an average of 45 words per column inch for news and general features on Malaysia. However, special features about Malaysia, written on Malaysia's Independence Day on August 31, averaged 39 words per column inch. All opinion items in The Times of London contained about 50 words per column inch.

The findings reveal that The New York Times carried approximately 56,825.5 words and The Times of London approximately 93,843.25 words on Malaysia, respectively from May 14, 1969 to August 26, 1974.

The data suggest that although The New York Times had 134 articles on Malaysia for the time period analyzed, compared to 295 in The Times of London, the articles that appeared in the American newspaper may have been fairly long in length. Although the British newspaper reported quite frequently on Malaysia, the data suggest that the daily may have carried more articles on Malaysia that were shorter in length.

The findings also suggest that The New York Times was prone to place news on Malaysia on the inside pages above the fold. Ninety-four articles (70.1%) were placed this way (Table 4.2). This is a significantly high percentage.

For inside pages below the fold, there were 35 articles (26.1%) in The New York Times.

Table 4.2. Prominence in display of news on Malaysia in The New York Times and The Times of London between May 14, 1969 and August 26, 1974

Display of news	The New York Times		The Times of London		Total N	%
	N	%	N	%		
Inside page above fold	94	70.1	147	49.8	241	56.2
Inside page below fold	35	26.1	135	45.8	170	39.6
Front page below fold	4	2.9	8	2.7	12	2.8
Front page above fold	<u>1</u>	<u>0.7</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>1.7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1.4</u>
Totals	134	99.8	295	100.0	429	100.0

However, Malaysian news in The Times of London was somewhat equally distributed in that 147 articles (49.8%) were located in the inside pages above the fold and 135 articles (45.8%) on the inside pages below the fold. Perhaps the newspaper did not have any specific policies of where international news ought to be placed, except that it is normally placed on the inside pages. The Times of London Bureau Chief at Washington, D.C. emphatically stated that news from the U.S. which The Times considers as "more important and more significant," is always given preference over news from the Far East (Telephone Interviews, February 2 and February 22, 1988). This suggests that news from the U.S. was given more front page displays than news from the Far East.

For both newspapers, the inside page above the fold layout of Malaysian news was higher than the inside page below the fold news. This may be because the researcher had defined front page/inside page above the fold news as all news on Malaysia beginning above or on the fold of the newspapers. If a headline started on the fold or slightly above the fold while most of the body remained below the fold, the article was considered as being located above the fold. This is because the article had more visibility because of its positioning than one that clearly began below the fold.

It is evident, however, that neither of the two newspapers gave Malaysian news much prominence in display. The New York Times had four articles (2.9%) and The Times of London had eight articles (2.7%), respectively, for front page below fold news. As for front page above

fold news, The New York Times had one (0.7%) article and The Times of London had five (1.7%) articles.

The Times of London did not give more prominence in display to a former colony as had been expected by the researcher. In fact, if the inside page above fold news is considered more important than inside page fold news, data suggest that The New York Times had given more prominence in display to news on Malaysia. Therefore, the second hypothesis is not supported.

The findings also show that The New York Times covered eight of the 10 themes put forward by the researcher as important changes that took place in Malaysia (Table 4.3). The two themes not covered were The New Economic Policy/Second Malaysia Economic Plan and The Rukunegara/National Ideology.

The Times of London covered nine out of 10 themes put forward. Bahasa Malaysia as the National Language and the Main Medium of Instruction in Schools was the only theme not covered by it.

The most popular theme for The New York Times was the National Operations Council (NOC)/Emergency Government, (29 paragraphs or 36.7%), followed by Limitations on Democracy (23 paragraphs or 26.7%), National Front/Coalition Government (16 paragraphs or 18.6%), Citizenship Rights of the Non-Malays (10 paragraphs or 11.6%), Bahasa Malaysia as the National Language and the Main Medium of Instruction in Schools (three paragraphs or 3.5%), the National Consultative Council and Amendments to the Constitution which had two paragraphs (2.3%), respectively, and finally, the Department of National Unity





Table 4.3. The types of themes covered, their direction and number by paragraph in The New York Times and The Times of London between May 14, 1969 and August 26, 1974

	The New York Times				
	Favorable	Unfavorable	Neutral	N	%
National Operations Council/emergency government	3	9	17	29	33.7
National front/coalition government	1	4	11	16	18.6
Limitations on democracy	3	8	12	23	26.7
New economic policy/second Malaysia economic plan	-	-	--	--	--
Amendments to the Constitution	-	-	2	2	2.3
Citizenship rights of non-Malays	-	4	6	10	11.6
National consultative Council	-	-	2	2	2.3
Rukunegara/national ideology	-	-	--	--	--
Bahasa Malaysia as the national language and main medium of instruction in schools	-	-	3	3	3.5
Department of National Unity	-	-	1	1	1.2
Totals	7	25	54	86	99.9
%	8.1	29.1	62.7	99.9	--

The Times of London			N	%	Total N	%
Favorable	Unfavorable	Neutral				
3	10	18	31	26.5	60	29.6
16	4	13	33	28.2	49	24.1
2	4	3	9	7.7	32	15.8
1	4	14	19	16.2	19	9.4
-	4	6	10	8.5	12	5.9
-	-	2	2	1.7	12	5.9
-	2	7	9	7.7	11	5.4
2	1	--	3	2.6	3	1.5
-	-	--	--	--	3	1.5
<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0.9</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1.0</u>
24	29	64	117	100.0	203	100.1
20.5	24.8	54.7	100	--	--	--

which was covered in one paragraph (1.2%).

This supports the researcher's assertion in Chapter II that The New York Times would be more concerned with news affecting principles such as democracy and freedom of expression which comes under the theme Limitations on Democracy. This also explains why Citizenship Rights was the fourth important theme for The New York Times. Surprisingly, the Amendments to the Constitution were mentioned in only two paragraphs.

The NOC/Emergency Government was probably given the highest coverage under themes in The New York Times as this was the machinery running the country when it was placed under a state of emergency soon after the riots. References were made to the NOC as possessing wide powers and whether the rule of democracy will be restored in Malaysia.

The National Front/Coalition Government was the third most important theme in The New York Times. Coverage of this theme in the American paper after the 1974 General Election suggested a loss of rights of the other political parties in Malaysia. The National Front was described as "a conglomerate of nine parties headed for control of nearly 90 percent of the seats in Parliament." The National Front was also accused of wiping out all non-racial/moderate opposition parties leaving only a "militant" racially-oriented Chinese party as the only alternative to the government (The New York Times, August 26, 1974).

The theme that received the most coverage from The Times of London was National Front/Coalition Government (33 paragraphs or 28.2%). This is followed by the National Operations Council (31 paragraphs or 26.5%),

the New Economic Policy/Second Malaysian Economic Plan (19 paragraphs or 16.2%), Amendments to the Constitution (10 paragraphs or 8.5%), Limitations on Democracy and National Consultative Council (nine paragraphs or 7.7%, respectively), Rukunegara/National Ideology (three paragraphs or 2.6%), Citizenship Rights of the non-Malays (two paragraphs or 1.7%), and the Department of National Unity (one paragraph or 0.9%).

The Times of London gave highest coverage under themes for the National Front/Coalition Government, which is the political party replacing the Alliance that had ruled Malaysia since its independence. The 1974 General Election was the first election that the National Front was participating in. The Times of London at first suggested that the then Prime Minister's coalition (National Front) "may not stand the strain." But Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak's persuasion saw a number of opposition parties joining the National Front and immediately, coverage become favorable. The National Front/Coalition Government was praised for its good performance in the 1974 General Election (The Times of London, May 2 and August 22, 24, 26, 1974).

The second most important theme for The Times of London was the NOC/Emergency Government. Like the American paper, this newspaper also discussed whether democracy would be restored in Malaysia and of the wide powers of the NOC. But often, it dealt with the various duties of the NOC.

While The New York Times did not give any coverage to the New Economic Policy/Second Malaysian Economic Plan, this was the third most

important theme in The Times of London.

The New York Times had some articles that touched on economic changes in Malaysia after the riots. However, none mentioned the New Economic Policy/Second Malaysia Economic Plan by name. When asked why this was so, Charles Mohr said that "The New York Times is not too concerned with obscure policies which may be important to the Malaysian people, but not to the U.S. State Department" (Telephone Interview, March 7, 1988). He also cited constraints such as space. "In 1969", said Mohr, "The New York Times had allotted 19 columns per issue for foreign news throughout the world." The New York Times selected news it felt was of utmost importance to them or as Mr. Mohr implied, the U.S. State Department, just as The Times of London covered the New Economic Policy because Malaysian economy was important to the British at that time.

Unlike The New York Times, the themes of Limitations on Democracy (nine paragraphs or 7.7%) and Citizenship Rights (two paragraphs or 1.7%) were not given much emphasis in The Times of London. The British newspaper had 10 paragraphs or 8.5% on Amendments to the Constitution compared to two paragraphs or 2.3% in The New York Times.

The National Consultative Council (NCC) was given nine paragraphs or 7.7% coverage in The Times of London, but only two paragraphs or 2.3% coverage in The New York Times. Evidently, The Times of London may have felt that the NCC had an important role in resolving the racial problems of multi-racial Malaysia.

In all, The New York Times had 86 paragraphs bearing eight themes it had covered, while The Times of London had 117 paragraphs bearing nine themes it had covered. Therefore, the third hypothesis is supported. The percentage of themes covered in relation to the total number of paragraphs covered in The Times of London was only slightly smaller (6.4%) than for The New York Times (6.9%). The Times of London had a total of 1816 paragraphs, while The New York Times had 1231 paragraphs.

Such percentages cannot say much. Not all of the articles in the newspapers dealt with the themes. Besides, the paragraph lengths in both newspapers were bound to be different. Also, the number of words appearing in a paragraph were different for both newspapers.

However, the percentages become valid in that they indicate that while the researcher felt that some of these changes or themes were important aspects in understanding Malaysia's political, social and economic situation, they were indeed "obscure" to The New York Times and The Times of London.

It suggests that national and economic interests of a nation, be it the U.S., Britain, Malaysia, or any other country, greatly determine the kind of foreign news emphasized by the newspapers of these countries.

Out of 86 paragraphs in The New York Times bearing the themes, 54 (62.7%) were neutral in direction compared to 64 (54.7%) in The Times of London (Table 4.3). However, The New York Times gave more unfavorable coverage of the themes than The Times of London, i.e.,

25 (29.1%) compared to 29 (24.8%). While The New York Times gave only 8.1% favorable coverage of the themes or seven paragraphs, The Times of London had 20.5% or 24 paragraphs of favorable coverage.

While the NOC, Limitations on Democracy, National Front/Emergency Government and Citizenship Rights of the non-Malays were given more neutral coverage in The New York Times, they were discussed unfavorably, i.e., in nine, eight, four and four paragraphs, respectively. This further supports the researcher's argument in Chapter II that unfavorable coverage may be given to Malaysia where principles such as democracy and freedom of expression - values strongly held by the Americans - were affected. Amendments to the Constitution, Bahasa Malaysia as the National Language and the Main Medium of Instruction in Schools, Department of National Unity, and the National Consultative Council were always discussed neutrally.

While coverage of themes in The Times was generally neutral in direction, the NOC received the most unfavorable coverage (10 paragraphs). Limitations on Democracy had more unfavorable coverage (four paragraphs) than neutral (three paragraphs) coverage. However, 16 paragraphs were favorable in direction for the National Front/Coalition Government, four paragraphs were unfavorable in direction and 13 were neutral. This theme had the highest number of favorable coverage in The Times of London.

When the percentage of favorable coverage was added to the percentage of neutral coverage for The New York Times and The Times of London, the total was 70.8% and 75.2%, respectively.



The above data support the fourth hypothesis that The Times of London will generally give more coverage to the themes than The New York Times.

## CHAPTER V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

## Summary

Three of the four hypotheses presented in this research are supported. The Times of London did provide wider coverage of Malaysia in terms of the number of articles and the type and number of news categories. Contrary to the researcher's expectations, The Times of London did not give more prominence in display to news on Malaysia than The New York Times. The Times of London also provided more coverage of the themes in terms of the type and number of themes by paragraphs. They also provided more favorable coverage of the themes compared to The New York Times.

The point to remember is that the hypotheses did not deal much with "what about" or "how" Malaysia was reported except when the direction of the themes was analyzed. The hypotheses dealt more with the amount of coverage, i.e., the number of articles found in The New York Times and The Times of London, and the types of news categories covered, their number, prominence in display given to the news on Malaysia and the types of themes covered by both papers and their number by paragraphs.

Analysis of the coverage of the riots per se is dealt with in the literature review. As mentioned earlier in this study, Mohd. Safar Hashim discusses the direction of the coverage of the riots by two American newspapers, The New York Times and The Washington Post, and two British newspapers, i.e., The Times of London and The Guardian (1986, pp. 21-39). Parker (1979), however, provides an explanation as

to why the foreign press, particularly The New York Times and especially The Times of London, may have provided exclusive attention to Chinese grievances and Chinese suffering in the crisis.

#### Suggestions

A researcher undertaking a similar study should, in the future, determine themes through content analysis rather than predetermining them. The reason is that themes which may seem important to the researcher may actually be unimportant to the newspapers being analyzed. Factors such as national and economic interests tend to determine the coverage of a foreign country.

The content analysis of the newspapers may show the emergence of themes that a researcher may have thought of as unimportant or which may never have crossed his/her mind, but which may be of considerable interest to the newspapers under study.

For this study, Malaysia's security forces' struggle against the Communist guerillas, Malaysia's pact with neighboring Southeast Asian countries to fight the communist guerillas, and terrorists acts of these guerillas were given a fairly wide coverage in The Times of London. The same was given considerable coverage in The New York Times. This could have been an essential theme for this study.

This thesis dealt with the direction of the themes predetermined by the researcher and not whole articles found in both the dailies. If whole articles were analyzed for direction, the findings may have been different. Such research may be more indicative of which of the

two dailies gave more favorable, unfavorable or neutral coverage to Malaysia.

When formulating hypotheses, one must give considerable thought to the sort of foreign news that a newspaper may perceive as important. That it covers international news is merely one part of it. What sort of international news is it inclined to cover and how is it covered? This would particularly apply to newspapers that use their correspondents to write the story. These are important points that will help the researcher to form more accurate hypotheses, provided such information is available.

#### Subjects for Further Review

Parker's (1979) psychocultural interpretation of why Chinese grievances and sufferings were highlighted during the riots by foreign correspondents, based on his Repression-Sensitization theory, should be further researched. How valid is the theory today in explaining the communication behavior of the Chinese and Malays in Malaysia? Has the present situation of the Malays holding political power while trying to gain footing in the economy through government-intervention made the Malays more vocal in voicing their grievances? As a result of this, have the Chinese become more repressed in their communication, or have they in fact become more vocal, and what will be the ensuing communication in a nation undergoing such an experience? Such research can be invaluable to a multi-racial country such as Malaysia.

Another area of research could be how far does one's culture, tradition and upbringing determine the communication behavior of an individual? Such a study can help Malaysians and other multi-racial nations to understand the behavior of a particular race when facing a certain problem or sensitive issue. It may result in a higher level of tolerance amongst the people once such information is made available to them.

Derek Davies' (1969, pp. 701-705) account of why rumors were rife during and after the riots suggested that the Malaysian government in 1969 was in the habit of not disclosing information related to sensitive issues, that could very well have put an end to such rumors. Parker's (1979) Repression-Sensitization theory can serve to explain why the predominantly Malay government did not discuss unpleasant issues. While foreign media may not understand the lack of frankness on the part of the Malaysian government, this could very well have its roots in the culture of the Malay leaders. A study to determine the communication behavior of the predominantly Malay government would be of great help in overcoming rumors and unnecessary speculation, as the leaders still tend to shy away from discussing or providing information on sensitive or unpleasant issues.

### Conclusions

The Times of London left out 85 stories on Malaysia that appeared from May 14, 1969 to December 1971. These stories appeared in the earlier editions, but not in the final edition of that newspaper.

Michael Binyon, The Times Bureau Chief at Washington, D.C., cited one important reason for this - news from the Far East comes in earlier than news from the U.S. and makes it in the earlier editions. As news from the Far East is not quite as "important" or "significant" as news from the U.S., it sometimes does not make it to the final edition (Telephone Interview, February 1, 1988).

To quote Mr. Binyon from another telephone interview, "If all news came in at the same time, U.S. news will still be given priority" (February 22, 1988).

One can conclude that although Malaysia was a former British colony and an area of investment for the British even after Malaysia's independence in 1957, Malaysian news is not as significant or important to the British newspapers as U.S. news. This must be because the U.S. has greater impact and effect on the politics and economics of Britain. This also confirms the complaints of developing nations that developed countries tend to give more coverage to other developed countries in comparison to developing countries.

Malaysian news was also probably left out in the final edition from 1969 to 1971 because this period witnessed the riots and the subsequent changes taking place. Bits of follow-up news about the situation in Malaysia and the subsequent changes may have been reported, which may have been suitable for the earlier editions, but not for the final edition. Beginning from 1972, all news on Malaysia appeared in the final edition. The rationale could be that only important news on Malaysia was covered and it was deemed important enough to appear in

the final edition.

Although the researcher was quite right in assuming that The Times of London would have given more coverage to Malaysia compared to The New York Times, she did not expect The Times of London to have seven editions<sup>9</sup>. The fact that Malaysia and the Far East compete for space against U.S. news, and that news from the Far East is thrown out to make way for news from the U.S. was something that never crossed the mind of the researcher. Apparently, this practice still goes on. Indeed, many things arose that were unanticipated by the researcher, as can be seen below.

As a Malaysian, the author assumed that themes or changes introduced in Malaysia, as a result of the riots, needed to be known and understood by foreign newspapers covering Malaysia simply because some among them are government policies that have far-reaching effects on the nation and its people. This was expected of both The New York Times and The Times of London. However, Charles Mohr had said that "The New York Times is not too concerned with obscure policies which may be important to the Malaysian people, but not to

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<sup>9</sup>Mr. Michael Binyon, in a telephone interview on February 22, 1988, revealed that the first edition of The Times goes to Scotland and faraway places like Northern Ireland. The second edition is rarely produced. As a result, the third edition sometimes becomes the second edition and is prepared for England. It is also sent abroad to countries like Germany and France. The fifth edition is prepared for the London area and bears the latest news happenings. However, when some big news occurs or there is a late night event, then the sixth edition, which is the final edition in this case, is put out and distributed in the London area. Sometimes, there is even a seventh edition. According to Binyon, the time difference between editions is probably an hour or so.

the U.S. State Department" (Telephone Interview, March 7, 1988).

One important conclusion is that the changes or themes introduced by the Malaysian government after the 1969 racial riots were evidently not as important to The New York Times or The Times of London as they are to the researcher.

Mohr went on to say that "when the changes did touch or infringe on human or civil rights issues, especially when it was an unashamed, open declared statement by a government of actions that may affect the rights of a minority within a country, the U.S. newspapers would be greatly concerned" (Telephone Interview, March 7, 1988). So, while the researcher had perceived that The New York Times will react to some of the themes that limited the rights of individuals, she had not expected the correspondent to reach such conclusions.

Mohr was not the only one who felt that way about the Malaysian government. According to Parker, "Articles in The Times of London were consistently critical of the Alliance government and gave almost considerable coverage to Chinese grievances and suffering" (1986, p. 5).

In line with the reference that was made to the U.S. State Department by Mohr, one must give some thought to the reliance of U.S. newspapers to the State Department as not only sources, but interpreters of news. Dorman disclosed in his article about U.S. journalism and the Third World that the Washington officials not only provide interpretation, but also serve as sources of news about the Third World (1986, p. 424).



A form of interdependence probably exists between U.S. newspapers (which may very well include The New York Times) and the U.S. State Department, which is perhaps necessary, but which may hinder unbiased reportage of foreign countries simply because American newspapers may tend to adopt the opinion of the State Department as its own views.

The interview with Mr. Mohr<sup>10</sup> and Parker's research gave the researcher the impression that foreign correspondents covering the riots in Malaysia were of the attitude that the Chinese are very hardworking<sup>11</sup> and were the ones that suffered most during the riots. The changes introduced by the government after the riots hurt the Chinese, a minority group, even more. Suggesting that the Malaysian government was biased in its actions, he likened the situation in Malaysia to the situation in South Africa! "The press doesn't like to be lied to, but the Malays, even the Prime Minister, had said the riots weren't the fault of the Malays, that they (the Malays) didn't start the riots" (Telephone Interview, March 7, 1988). Apparently, a group of Malay supporters of the government who had gathered at the residence of Selangor Chief Minister's home went berserk upon hearing the attack made on Malays by Chinese in the Setapak district of Kuala Lumpur.

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<sup>10</sup>The researcher was fortunate to have conducted a telephone interview with Charles Mohr, The New York Times correspondent for Asia, who covered the riots. It was, however, impossible to hold a telephone interview with Fred Emery, The Times of London correspondent for the Far East, who covered the riots but who no longer works for The Times of London.

<sup>11</sup>Parker attributes this to the fact that many Western journalists may have been more familiar and at home with the Chinese of Hong Kong, Singapore, and other Asian cities with large Chinese populations than with the more traditional and rural Malays (1979, pp. 7-8).

The researcher asked Mr. Mohr if he ever wondered how else the Malays (or any other race for that matter) would have reacted to the insults and jeering by non-Malays staging a victory procession right after the results of the May 10, 1969 election results were announced. The author also asked Mr. Mohr if he ever wondered why the Malay described by historians as "diplomatic" and "statesmanlike" could have reacted in so violent a manner during the riots (Winstedt, 1969, p. 17). Mr. Mohr replied that he did not have the answer to those questions.

The purpose of this lengthy discussion is to assert that foreign correspondents, whether they are from the West or East, who lack understanding of the traditions, culture and history of a society or as in Malaysia's case, ethnic groups, may interpret events and happenings such as a riot inaccurately. If they possessed some cultural insight and knowledge of the groups involved, they may have interpreted the riots in a totally different light.

Dorman was right when he commented about the practice of objectivity in the American press, which could probably apply to a newspaper looking at a culture foreign to its own:

Emphasis on surface observations skews things.... By limiting journalists to mere description, enjoining them from their own "knowledgeable" interpretation, and restricting them to interpretations sanctioned by establishing authority, the press has maintained a process that cultural anthropology and sociology rejected decades ago as leading to gross distortion. To observe and particularly to describe without full understanding is most likely to misrepresent (1986, p. 423).

One final conclusion is that the researcher had expected The Times of London to give more coverage to news on Malaysia, the rationale being that Malaysia was a former colony of Britain. Both Mohr and Binyon agreed to that rationale. Mohr even went as far as to relate his experience of reading The Times of London in India in early 1962. The Times of London gave considerable coverage to India at the time and India was a former colony of Britain. The Times discussed the Punjabi struggle for an autonomous Punjabi state. The Times' correspondent wrote the article as if all his readers had the necessary background information. This implied that the journalist was well-versed in the subject. He expected his readers to be well-versed in the subject as well. Mohr expected a somewhat similar coverage of Malaysia.

The researcher noticed that very often The Times used its correspondents when reporting on Malaysia, while The New York Times tended to use reports from both the wire services and its correspondents and stringers. Again, this is hardly surprising, as Britain had large economic investments in the area. The heavy reliance on correspondents' coverage of Malaysia suggests that Malaysia was of considerable importance to the British newspaper.

However, both Mohr and Binyon felt that The Times of London should not be expected to give more favorable coverage of the themes simply because Malaysia was a former colony of Britain. Mohr even suggested that coverage would have been negative even for The Times of London because the actions of the predominantly Malay government infringed the rights of the minority Chinese.

The researcher's rationale, however, for expecting favorable coverage from the British newspaper as discussed in Chapter II is that the British would understand why these changes were necessary having ruled the country for more than 80 years. They would also understand the underlying mechanisms at work in Malaysia as a result of this. And while it is true that more favorable coverage of themes was found in The Times of London than The New York Times for this study, one simply cannot expect coverage of a former colony to be favorable due solely for the reasons cited above. To do so would be naive. However, favorable coverage may be anticipated if the country written about has the same national interests, fulfills the economic interests, and holds the same values as the country or countries whose newspapers are doing the reporting.

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APPENDIX

Coding Sheet

Publication: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of issue: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Content type: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total size of article: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Size of photographs/ map: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Drawings: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Copy size: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Page no. & column: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Category(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Prominence in display: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Source: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total no. of paragraphs: \_\_\_\_\_  
 No. of paragraphs for theme: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Size of news category/ categories in column inches: \_\_\_\_\_

Headlines and message	Themes	Value direction			Description of photographs
		+	-	0	