



Breaking the Malaysian Political Media Dichotomy: A Case for Citizen's Media

Shafizan bt Mohamed ¹

¹International Islamic University Malaysia, Jalan Gombak, 53100 Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Malaysia
shafizan@iium.edu.my

Article Information

Keywords

Alternative Media; Citizenship;
Citizen's Media; Participation;
Politics

Abstract

The alternative media is a significant component in Malaysian political life. Because of the Government's control of the mainstream media, the alternative media becomes the source Malaysians refer to for other political news. George (2006) explained that the Malaysian alternative media is politically contentious in the sense that it is focused on offering news and information that specifically challenges the credibility of the state-controlled mainstream media. Studies on the Malaysian media often reinforced this dichotomy by referring to all other non-government political media as the alternative media (Steele, 2009). As such, the alternative media has often been taken as a blanket term covering all forms of non-mainstream media and this undermines the complexities and specificities of the many kinds of democratic media practices. The media choice is always "either-or". This binary becomes problematic when trying to understand other forms of media, especially the social media that are owned by individuals and used for many purposes that go beyond subversive politics. Thus, this paper unpacks the problematic application and categorisation of this dichotomy while offering a more inclusive approach through the theoretical ideas of Citizen's Media.

INTRODUCTION

In 1978, Lent used the term "guided media" to describe the Malaysian press system wherein the leaders of the country "admonish mass media, especially broadcasting, to be uncritical of government policies" (p. 72). The rationale was that Malaysia, "being a newly emerging nation, needs time to get on its feet. The mass media, therefore, should provide this by not touching on sensitive issues, by stressing positive and ignoring negative societal characteristics" (Lent, 1978, p. 72). Almost 40 years later, Lent's description is still relevant. Because of this close relationship between the state and the media, international media watchers have often been critical of the state of freedom of the Malaysian media and have been skeptical of the justifications provided by the state. Indeed, according to Lim (2009, p.88), immediately following Article 10 of the Federal Constitution, which guarantees the right to free speech, is a set of qualifiers that give the parliament the power to impose "such restrictions as it deems necessary or expedient in the interest of the security of the Federation or any part thereof, friendly relations with other countries, public order or morality". In imposing such restrictions in the interest of security, public order and even the contested concept of morality, the parliament "may pass laws prohibiting the questioning of any stipulated matter, right, status, position, privilege, sovereignty or prerogative"

Since independence in 1957, the Malaysian Government's official control over the media has gradually tightened. The official line is that the country is not ready for greater freedom of expression as it would lead to

political instability and inter-ethnic unrest, which would undermine economic development (Anuar, 2005). For those reasons, press freedom in Malaysia has been restricted and controlled by the government. The mainstream press depicts the government leaders as having a naturalised affinity with the general populace in terms of socio-economic aspirations and goals. This public declaration of the Barisan Nasional government's economic successes is elaborated by the media's calculated tightening and to some extent, closure of access for the other contesting political parties (Sani, 2009). The opposition parties' stance on some issues and their policies on economic, political, and cultural matters are hardly heard by the electorate. The coverage of the opposition parties by the mainstream media has often resulted in the former being depicted in a negative light (Steele, 2009). In this respect, the mainstream press and other news media were, and still are, instrumental in helping to promote the state's hegemonic influence over society. The state controls the media through two main ways: strict media laws and ownership of media organisations.

Media laws and restrictions

In situations of political dissent, the media is expected to support the ruling government and, if it fails to do so, strict legal actions are imposed. As a result, the mainstream media has been forced to become unconditionally loyalist (Moten, 2009) while the alternative media that attempts to express dissenting voices will face legal penalties. There are numerous laws that severely limit freedom of expression. Media specific laws include:

Printing Presses and Publications Act (PPPA)

The PPPA governs the printing press in Malaysia. Introduced and passed in 1984, it provides the Home Affairs Minister the "power to grant or withdraw a printing license or a publishing permit" (Loh & Khoo, 2002, p. 128). Under this law, a potential publisher needs a publishing license from the Ministry before starting a newspaper or magazine. The publisher must apply for a new license every year. This creates a climate of self-censorship among Malaysian editors and journalists, especially those publishers who have much to lose considering the high production cost of traditional print media (Steele, 2009). In addition to the power to control the domestic print, the PPPA also requires foreign publications sold in the country to pay a large deposit.

Film Censorship Act

Film censorship is controlled by the Film Censorship Board under the prerogative of the Home Ministry. In 2002, the Film Censorship Act was revised to state that all films screened in Malaysian cinemas must first be certified by the Film Censorship Board. According to Wan et. al. (2009), most films that are censored by the Film Censorship Board dealt with three sensitive issues which are religious, cultural and moral values. Basri and Alauddin (2003) added that political ideology also plays an important role in film censorship. Films that are deemed to depict Malaysia negatively are banned. Such films include the Ben Stiller directed film 'zoolander' which depicted Malaysia as an impoverished and underdeveloped country

Communication and Multimedia Act (CMA)

The CMA allows the government to regulate all manner of broadcasting including the Internet. The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) is entrusted with the role of promoting and regulating the communications and multimedia industry and to enforce the communications and multimedia laws in Malaysia. Hence it has the power to approve, amend or revoke broadcasting and other licenses (Lee, 2002). The MCMC is also given the task to implement and promote the government's national policy objectives for the communications and multimedia sector. The CMA has some enlightened provisions which protect freedom of expression online

Media ownership

Restrictions on media freedom in Malaysia are not only confined to the direct legal control imposed through the many laws and regulations but also through an indirect control mechanism in the form of ownership. This is especially true when much of the mainstream media in the country is owned directly or indirectly by entities linked to the ruling political party. Most notably is Media Prima's monopoly over the mass media. *Media Prima* is the largest media conglomerate in the country. It is a publicly traded company listed on the Main Board of the Malaysia Stock Exchange. Media Prima controls 43% of the *New Straits Times Press* (NSTP) Group. NSTP is Malaysia's oldest and largest publisher. Its three main newspapers, *New Straits Times*, *Berita Harian* and *Harian Metro*, have a combined circulation exceeding a million copies per day. Media Prima also controls the private television broadcast sector in the country. It owns and operates four out of six of the free-to-air television channels, TV3, NTV 7, 8TV and TV9. The other two, RTM1 and RTM2, are directly run by the Ministry of Information (Anuar, 2005). According to Lim (2009), Media Prima commanded 50% of TV viewership in the country as of March 2008. Moreover, Sani (2009) explains that anti-monopoly laws against concentration of media ownership do not exist in Malaysia and this has allowed Media Prima to steadily acquire controlling stakes in most media outlets in the country.

The conglomerate also owns four radio stations, Fly FM, Radio Wanita (Women's Radio), Hot FM, and One FM. In addition, it owns a motion picture company (Grand Brilliance), a recording studio (Ambang Klasik) and several advertising companies (Gotcha, Uniteers, Right Channel, UPD, Big Tree Outdoor). The dominance of Media Prima becomes more problematic because it is a subsidiary of Malaysia Resources Corporation Berhad (MRCB), a government-backed corporation. Major shareholders of both Media Prima and MRCB are known to be supporters of the government. This means that through its link with the media conglomerate, the government has a disproportionate amount of influence on the major television, newspaper, radio and advertising agencies in the country (Lim, 2009).

The Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), the second and the third largest parties in the BN coalition, are also major stakeholders in the media industry. Lim (2009) indicated that the MCA through its investment arm, *Huaren Holdings*, owns over 40% of shares in *The Star* which is the most profitable newspaper in the country. The MCA investment arm also controls over 20% of the Nanyang Press Group which controls local Chinese newspapers, the *China Press* and the *Nanyang Siang Pau*; one of the most established Chinese-language newspapers in the country. Lim (2009) also highlighted that in 2007, the Malaysia-based Sinchew Media Corporation, also a company closely linked to the MCA, announced its intention to merge with the Hong Kong-based Ming Pao Group and invited Nanyang Press Holdings to form a tri-partite venture. The Sinchew Group owns the lucrative Chinese language daily, *Sinchew Jit Poh*, the highest circulating Chinese language newspaper in the country.

The Indian-based party, the MIC, conducts its dealings with the mass media through its investment arm, Maika Holdings Berhad. It was founded by the current MIC President, M. Samy Vellu who also serves as its chairman. It currently owns the Tamil language newspaper, *Tamil Nesan* (Tamil News), one of three Tamil language newspapers still in publication in the country (Anuar, 2005).

THE MALAYSIAN ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

Because of the limited freedom given to voices that do not agree with the establishment, namely the BN government, opposing or alternative views are mostly forced to find or create their own media. The opposition parties and non-government groups have resorted to producing and funding their own media albeit in very limited and contested circumstances. Every opposition party has its own newspaper. The PAS official newspaper is *Harakah* while the DAP and the PKR publish *The Rocket* and *Berita Keadilan*, respectively. As a result, there is the tendency to refer any media in Malaysia that is not philosophically or legally approved by the government as the alternative media (Smeltzer, 2008; Anuar, 2005).

According to Atton (2004), alternative media are those media outside mainstream media institutions and "can include the media of protest groups, dissidents, fringe political organisations, even fans and hobbyists" (p. 3). The alternative media enables ordinary people, without any professional training, to write and report about their experience as citizens, activists, fans or simply as members of a community. As pointed out by Hamilton (2003), alternative media is essentially de-professionalised and de-capitalised, emphasising wider social participation in its creation, production and dissemination than is possible in the mainstream media. Therefore, alternative media is primarily concerned with representing the interests, views and needs of marginalised groups in society through the non-mainstream production and distribution of media messages.

However, Deane (2007) stressed that the dynamics and origins of alternative media in developing countries such as Malaysia are different from those in industrialised countries. In industrialised countries, alternative media normally refers to non-commercial media that is independent of corporate and government control. It is often community media that focuses on minority perspectives and experiences. More specifically, it exists as a response and in opposition to the claims that the mainstream media is an instrument of corporate and elite power to control the people. On the other hand, Deane (2007) also claimed that for most part of Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia, the mainstream media is controlled by the government or by corporations that are closely related to the ruling elites, which results in the media content being strictly controlled by the state. As such, the growth of alternative media in these parts of the world is largely a response to government control.

Malaysia has a media system that fits Deane's (2007) description. Mainstream media in Malaysia is controlled by the state and hence only serves the government's interest while sidelining critical and dissenting voices in the community. Although there are privately-owned media agencies in Malaysia, they do not offer alternative views because they are owned by corporations that are closely related to the ruling elites (Sani, 2005). The alternative media in Malaysia is mostly anti-government rather than anti-corporate. It also adopts an oppositional and radical stance that is essentially anti-establishment (George, 2006). Explicitly political media especially faces continuous government harassment and often has to distribute its media products illegally. Even individually published new media content is not free from government control. Alternative media producers not only face

economic hardship, they may risk imprisonment just for discussing a subject the government considers to be inappropriate (Anuar, 2005). Through strict legal control and political intimidation, the state has always been able to curb the potential threat posed by the alternative media.

REFORMASI AND THE RISE OF THE INTERNET

According to Anuar (2005) and Brown (2005), the seeds for using the Internet as an alternative platform to the mainstream media were first sown during the *Reformasi* period following the arrest of Anwar Ibrahim in 1998. The sacking of Anwar Ibrahim as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister in September 1998 and his subsequent arrest on sex and corruption charges galvanised a new political consciousness among Malaysians, prompting speculation about the prospects for regime change. In the wake of the Anwar case, the ideals of judicial independence, rule of law, freedom of the press, freedom of association, and free speech became common topics of conversation among ordinary Malaysians. These issues, as well as the accountability of the government, transparency in rule, and aversion to cronyism all found a space within the *Reformasi* movement (Moten, 2009).

During the peak of the *Reformasi* movement in 1998-1999, numerous anti-government websites emerged, providing news and stories that were not available in the mainstream media (Brown, 2005). Electronic bulletin boards gave the public a chance to discuss and discover other people's opinions. Although Anwar Ibrahim was not the first political figure to be unfairly detained and punished by the government, his story was the first to be openly discussed on the Internet; allowing Malaysians, for the first time, to personally access uncensored political information. Malaysians, who before the *Reformasi* had little exposure to information other than that coming from the government-controlled media, were suddenly awakened by the volume of political information coming from both the government media and the Internet. The use of the Internet was complemented by the use of faxes and copiers that further increased the reach of the news to the wider public (George, 2006).

During this time, new political and anti-government websites mushroomed. George (2006) claimed that at one point there were no less than 40 anti-government websites, including *agendadaily*, *reformasi online*, *laman reformasi*, *reformasi.com*, *freeanwar.com*, *mahazalim*, *Freemalaysia*, *saksi* and many others. Electronic forums and bulletin boards provided a fertile ground for the public to exchange opinions. While existing alternative presses were hampered by licensing and circulation constraints, the same constraints could not be applied on the Internet. As previously mentioned, Malaysia had made an agreement, called the Bill of Guarantee, to convince international investors that Malaysia would not impose any censorship on the Internet in line with the promotion of Malaysia's ambitious IT venture, the Multimedia Super Corridor in 1997 (George, 2006).

A DICHOTOMISED POLITICAL MEDIA

While it is evident that the restrictions imposed on the Malaysia media have led to the creation of a significant alternative media, it has also resulted in a divisive media system where it is taken for granted that news and information must come from either one of the two categories. Studies on the Malaysian media have often reinforced this dichotomy by referring to the government-backed media as the mainstream and all other forms of political media as the alternative media (Lim, 2009; Anuar, 2005; Loh and Khoo, 2002). George (2006) further explained that the opposition parties' monopoly of the online media indicates that while the Internet had opened a new frontier for the Malaysian alternative media, it has yet to overcome the dichotomised political media wherein the alternative is still accepted as the oppositional media promoting anti-government sentiments. The partisan nature of the Malaysian alternative media is not entirely unique, as alternative media has traditionally been considered as biased and partisan. According to Atton and Hamilton (2008), alternative media are usually partisan and are issue specific because it is their goal to challenge the already biased reporting of the media centre. Alternative media practitioners do not feel the need to repeat the mainstream views. However, despite the accepted bias of the alternative media, I still find the dichotomized understanding that pitches the mainstream media against the alternative media in Malaysia problematic, especially in relation to the rise of new democratic media practices.

I argue that this dichotomy undermines the complexities and specificities of the many kinds of democratic media practices that are emerging in relation to the Internet. I propose that new conceptualisations of citizen participation, especially the acts of participation that are non-partisan and come from the grassroots and the everyday citizens, require a more flexible approach to the study of the Malaysian alternative media. Such flexibility enables the relationship between the mainstream media and the alternative media to be understood outside institutional and political terms while also overcoming the misleading belief that the Malaysian alternative media is solely oppositional and radical (George, 2006). This can help explain and inform other forms of citizen action that are ongoing at the individual level outside the dichotomised construct of the Malaysian political media. This argument is consistent with Atton and Hamilton's (2008) proposal that, despite the very wide range of alternative media practices, the essential goal for all alternative media ventures is to

foreground the views of the ordinary people whose views are often obscured by the elite individuals or groups. A limited understanding of the Malaysian alternative media as politically subversive, radical or oppositional confines alternative media to specific political groups, undermining emerging new media experiences that are allowing ordinary citizens to become expert sources.

The distinctive characteristic of the post-*Reformasi* online media is that the new online activism and political discourse are mainly driven by the Web 2.0 technologies that enable individuals to have control over their own mass media (Leong, 2015). Social media offers democratic practices based on the freedom of speech and expression in a country where the socio-political structure does not accommodate such practices. It allows individuals or groups to redefine their own understanding of what constitute citizenship and this may differ from the understanding promoted by the mainstream media and traditional alternative media (Smeltzer, 2008). More importantly it brings forth the voices of the everyday citizens who represent neither the government nor the opposition parties (Sani, 2009) and are indirectly challenging the political traditions that were mostly confined to partisan and electoral politics.

GENERAL ELECTIONS AND THE RISE OF THE CITIZENS

In the last general elections held in 2008 and 2013 respectively, the *Barisan Nasional* government won only a simple majority and lost five of the country's fourteen states. The Internet as the alternative media was seen as one of the major contributors to these losses (Gomez, 2014). Online media and especially political blogs enabled the negative side of the government to be openly exposed. In addition, unlike the 1999 and 2004 elections, the 2008 and 2013 election saw a number of everyday citizens blogging and discussing about local politics. On Facebook and other social media platforms, Malaysians were sharing photos, videos and opinions about numerous issues that concern them. The people were not held back by laws and restrictions as they were offered a free platform that by default is beyond legal control.

In these elections, the opposition groups and everyday citizens were finally able to go against the restrictive campaign rules and dodge the virtual blackout by the mainstream media by going online and turning to blogs, news portals, and YouTube. The Web allowed parties such as the DAP, PKR and PAS to reach voters, especially young voters, in their offices and homes. Lim (2009) explained that during the 2008 election, a prominent political blog, *Malaysia Today* (<http://www.malaysia-today.net>), had around 15 million hits the day after the results were announced, a more than threefold increase from a normal day. The number of hits worked out to be about 625,000 visitors an hour. Pioneer online newspaper, *Malaysiakini*, was so overwhelmed by visitors on polling day that the site broke down. At its peak, the site had around 500,000 visitors an hour, a sharp jump from the 100,000 to 200,000 hits it customarily had per day. In comparison, the website of the mainstream newspaper, *New Straits Times*, received only 970,000 visits for one day, from midnight on Election Day to midnight the following day. This further signified that the Internet-based media had broken the government's strict control over media and political deliberation.

These contemporary political and media developments indicate that Malaysians are reclaiming their media and engaging in political discourse without having to succumb to the dichotomised Malaysian political media. In doing so, they are challenging the political powers by placing specific issues on the national political agenda and pushing the establishment to take responsibility and be accountable towards the citizenry. Therefore, an analysis of democratic media practices in Malaysia must be able to move from the dichotomised nature of the Malaysian political media. When it comes to the experiences of the everyday Malaysians who may not be entirely political or oppositional, the theoretical framework of the citizens' media as proposed by Rodriguez (2001) proves to be most effective. Citizen's media is inclusive and flexible in conceptualising the media experiences that are neither mainstream nor subversive.

CITIZENS' MEDIA

Rodriguez coined the term "citizens' media" in an attempt to capture the fluid and complex nature of the alternative media. According to Rodriguez (2001), citizens' media emerges from the need to overcome the oppositional frameworks and binary categories traditionally used to theorise alternative media. Rodriguez argues that the "alternative" in alternative media suggests it is an alternative to something, which traps scholars in binary thinking. This binary thinking fails to capture people's multiple identities and the transformations happening as a result of participating in what Rodriguez called citizens' media, rather than alternative media. Rodriguez claims that citizens' media represents the use of media to achieve empowerment, community cohesion, and express social and cultural identities.

Rodriguez's (2001) citizens' media defines alternative media practice in terms of their role in promoting active citizenship and expression; not in terms of resisting or contesting the mainstream institutions. Citizens' media is driven by notions of democracy, community and equality, and is created and driven by citizen participation

(Rodriguez, 2001). To make sense of the many ways citizens' media can develop and challenge social and cultural meanings in media practice, such practices must be defined exclusively and not as a response or comparison to mainstream practice. More importantly, citizens' media highlights alternative media practices that focus on citizens' creative expression and democratic participation. Rodriguez (2001) proposes an inclusive approach that considers both the production and reception processes that create alternative media in terms of the lived experience of those involved in these practices. A key feature of citizens' media is its focus on the user dimension. Unlike alternative media that is mostly measured and explained through its opposition to the dominant relations of content, production and distribution (Atton, 2007), citizens' media allows for a more subjective interpretation of alternative media use by making the users' experience and transformation the central focus of measurement and analysis. Citizens' media offers a framework for understanding alternative media practices that may not be intended to resist or challenge established powers and structures. This removal of radical resistance explains the Malaysian blogging experience, and overcomes the dichotomized stereotype of the Malaysian media.

Citizen's media also offers a way to investigate the heterogeneity of alternative media practice. Citizens' media results from a complex interaction between people's attempts to democratise the mediascape and their contextual circumstances. This explains why, contends Rodriguez (2001, p. 164), that "it is possible to talk about citizens' media when referring to [very diverse] communication experiences". Citizen's media can become an important site for the creation of citizenship, enabling personal as well as collective participation in the negotiation of social definitions, their identities, cultures and lifestyles. Rodriguez argues that "citizens have to enact their citizenship on a day-to-day basis, through their participation in everyday political practices" (p. 19). Her fluid interpretation of citizenship allows participatory media practices to incorporate social, political and cultural phenomena, something very much related to the Malaysian experience of blogging and new politics. Thus, politics and participation are understood as operating on multiple levels, from legislative decisions to everyday practice, and in many forms, from signing petitions to fashion choice. Rodriguez (2001) claimed that citizen's media "adopts a concept of political subject as one who expresses his/her citizenship in multiple forms, including for example, the collective transformation of symbolic codes, historically legitimized identities, and traditionally established social relations" (p. 19). Breaking away from the conventional understanding of citizenship as expressed by voting and protesting, the media is then considered as the everyday site where meaning is contested and cultural codes are negotiated (Rodriguez, 2001).

As such, Rodriguez (2001) noted that the media should not just inform the citizenry, but should also provide a forum for citizens to express their opinions and experiences, expanding the power of the citizen to contribute to decision-making and debate. Media, as an open forum in democratic societies, should also support the exchange and expression of citizens' experiences and perspectives. Rodriguez further proposes that citizens' media provides media studies scholarship a way to acknowledge the diverse ways in which media may function as a democratic or undemocratic force in society. Definitions of politics and participation that are based primarily on electoral or procedural practices alone cannot fully describe how the media operates because they ignore the agency of cultural expression, which is active democratic practice through open and direct participation in media production.

This explains how new media offers Malaysians more than democratic participation and freedom from institutional and commercial control; rather, it has also become an important site for the creation of citizenship that enables personal as well as collective participation in the negotiation of social definitions, identities, cultures and lifestyles. The fluidity of power as suggested by Rodriguez (2001) is also apparent when Malaysians are able to defy the collective system they live in and recreate their identity from a mere citizen to an active political actor. Subsequently, this ability to challenge the established media and political culture is a definitive goal of the alternative media that critiques existing ways of subordinating the citizen- audience as mere receivers (Atton and Hamilton, 2008)

CONCLUSION

The alternative media has often been taken as a blanket term covering all forms of non-mainstream media and this undermines the complexities and specificities of the many kinds of democratic media practices. The media choice is always "either-or". This binary is problematic when trying to understand other forms of media, especially new media platforms that are owned by individuals and used for many purposes that go beyond subversive politics. Therefore, in relation to the Malaysian experience, this paper had unpacked the problematic application and categorisation of this dichotomy. The democratic potential of blogging facilitated media experiences that challenged the established structure that went beyond the perceived oppositional and subversive stereotype of the Malaysian alternative media. This new media experience required me to consider other interpretations of the alternative media that can capture both the structural and individual implications of non-mainstream media practices. Hence, this study contributes to the theorisation of the Malaysian alternative media

by proposing a more inclusive understanding and practice of alternative media by adopting a citizens' media approach. Rodriguez's (2001) theorisation of citizens' media allowed for a flexible understanding of the relationship between media and citizenship. Her insistence that political participation and citizenship experience should be understood less in institutional terms but more through the media users' contextual lived experience allows for a more inclusive approach to studying the media experiences of everyday citizens. More specifically within the Malaysian context where participation in institutional and electoral politics can be contested, a framework for analysing new forms of political ideas was vital for explaining how citizens negotiate and challenge the socio-political culture that shapes their everyday experience. A future research agenda that acknowledges citizens' media experience as more than an alternative to the mainstream media is needed in the study of Malaysian political media. The dichotomy that divides the Malaysian political media can no longer effectively explain the political and media dynamics in the country as new media practices have complexly entered into many areas of citizen life. Therefore, more extensive in-depth researches that address the impact of this new political media experience across institutions, governments, media organizations and different citizen groups can provide an encompassing understanding of how new media experiences penetrate and evolve politics and citizenship.

REFERENCES

- Allan, S. and Thorsen, E. (2009). *Citizen journalism: Global perspectives* (Vol. 1): Peter Lang Pub Incorporated
- Anuar, M. K (2005) Politics and Media in Malaysia. *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies* 20 (1) 25-47
- Atton, C. (2007) Current Issues in Alternative Media Research. *Sociology Compass* 1(1)17–27
- Atton, C., & Hamilton, J. F. (2008). *Alternative journalism*: SAGE Publications Limited
- Basri, F.K.H & Alauddin, R.A (2003). The search for a Malaysian cinema: between U-Wei Shaari, Shuhaimi, Yusof and LPFM. In Samsudin A. Rahim (Ed.). *Isu-isu komunikasi*. Bangi: Pusat Pengajian Media dan Komunikasi UKM.
- Brown, G. K (2005) The Rough and Rosy Road: Sites of Contestation in Malaysia's Shackled Media Industry in *Pacific Affairs*: 78 (1)pp:39-56
- Bruns A (2008) *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and Beyond: From Production to Prodsusage*, New York: Peter Lang
- Deane, J (2007). Alternative and Participatory Media in Developing Countries in Coyer, K, Dowmunt, T. & Fountain, A.I (eds) *Alternative Media Handbook*. UK:Routledge
- George, C. (2006). *Contentious Journalism and the Internet: Towards Democratic Discourse in Malaysia and Singapore*. Singapore: Singapore University Press.
- Gomez, J. (2014). Social media impact on Malaysia's 13th general election. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 24(1), 95-105.
- Hah, F. L. (2012). New media and old politics: The role of blogging in the 2008 Malaysian general election.
- Lent, John A. (1978) Malaysia's National Language Mass Media: History and Present Status *South East Asian Studies*, 15(4) 598-612
- Leong, P. P. Y. (2015). Political Communication in Malaysia: A Study on the Use of New Media in Politics. *JeDEM-eJournal of eDemocracy and Open Government*, 7(1), 46-71.
- Lim, M.K (2009) The Function of Blogs in Democratic Discourse in *Journal of Global Communication*, 2(1) 13-326
- Loh, F.K.W (2002). Developmentalism and the Limits of Democratic Discourse. In Loh, F.K.W & Khoo B. T (eds), *Democracy in Malaysia: Discourses and Practices*. Curzon Press. pp.19-50.
- Miner, L. (2015). The unintended consequences of Internet diffusion: Evidence from Malaysia. *Journal of Public Economics*, 132, 66-78.
- Moten, A. R. (2009). 2008 General Elections in Malaysia: Democracy at Work. *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, 10(1), 21-42
- Rodríguez, Clemencia (2001) *Fissures in the Mediascape. An International Study of Citizens' Media*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Sani, M. A. M. (2009). The Emergence of New Politics in Malaysia from Consociational to Deliberative Democracy. *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, 5(2), 97-125.
- Smeltzer, S. (2008). Blogging in Malaysia. *Journal of International Communication*, 14(1), 28- 45.
- Steele, J. (2009). Professionalism Online: How Malaysiakini Challenges Authoritarianism. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 14(1), 91-111.
- Wan A., Kee, C. P., & Aziz, J. (2009). Film censorship in Malaysia: Sanctions of religious, cultural and moral values. *Jurnal Komunikasi, Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 25.