

The Techniques of Political Agenda Setting by Bloggers: A Look at Che' Det.Com and Raja Petra Kamaruddin's Blogs

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to analyze alternative media such as blogs in order to understand its content, intention, and look at the impact it has on readers. The general objective of this research is to look at the content of two most popular blogs in Malaysia regarding the "Perak crisis". The study explored the writing style of bloggers based on the Agenda Setting Theory. The research design is quantitative in nature involving data which were content analyzed from the blogs of Tun Mahathir and Raja Petra Kamarudin. Results show that che det. com made his readers to reject party jumping from his experience as an ex-Prime Minister's point of view as he was more worried about the image or perception the general public would have if the Barisan Nasional or specifically UMNO was to accept party jumpers. On the other hand, Raja Petra is agenda in his blog was clearly to highlight the incompetence of Parti Keadilan Rakyat in handling the issue as he pointed out that the issue has been brewing for a while and the party leaders failed to take affirmative action. The difference and the implications of the blog readers giving different feedbacks in both blogs could be contributed by demographics of the readers themselves. This study also revealed that both blogs identified UMNO as the victim as both blogs attributed the Perak Crisis with the power play and intervention of UMNO. Same thing goes to readers where they also criticized UMNO as the main player in the crisis. However, it is worth mentioning that there was also blog readers who sympathized with UMNO. Their study suggested that the blog writers were successful in making the readers think what to think about. This study contributes to the knowledge about how the

blogs are now important in shaping the minds of the people especially in the discussion of local politics.

Keywords: *Blogs, Political Writer, Party Jumpers, Agenda Setting, Alternative Media.*

Introduction

The Perak constitutional crisis involves the legitimacy of the state government of Perak. The crisis began when the Barisan Nasional's (BN) Nasaruddin Hashim crossed over to the Pakatan Rakyat (PR). A week later, he changed his mind and redefected back to BN but this time together with three other PR assemblymen Hee Yit Foong, Jamaluddin Mohd Radzi, and Osman Jailu. The PR assemblymen declared themselves as independent-friendly to BN.

Prior to the defections, Pakatan Rakyat had 32 representatives while Barisan Nasional had 27 representatives. The defections meant that the state now has 28 Pakatan Rakyat representatives, 28 Barisan Nasional representatives, and three independent representatives who pledged confidence to Barisan Nasional. Therefore BN has the number to form the new government in Perak.

The Sultan of Perak accepted the request by BN to form a government and a new Menteri Besar was sworn in.

The main issues of the crisis would be the legality of jumping party, validity of postdated resignation letter PR assemblymen signed the power of the Election Commission to declare state seats as vacant and the power of the Sultan to dismiss the menteri besar. The whole situation attracted a lot of attention, not only in Malaysia but around the world as it was considered as a democratic constitution issue in a democratic society. As in a mediated world, as described by McLuhan, the "global village" (Argenti, 2003), news of the issue was now spreading all over the world and the state of Perak was flooded with the attention.

Background of Study

In March 2008 the 12th General Election was held in Malaysia and the ruling coalition party Barisan Nasional suffered huge losses; losing five states and also losing the all-important two-third majority in parliament.

Many bloggers and local politics narrator like Keris Silau (<http://kerissilau.blogspot.com/2008/03/10-faktor-kekalahan-bn-dalam-pru12.html>) attributed the Barisan Nasional loss to the changing voter support and change in public opinion to the alternative media. On his blog he mentioned below:

“Third Factor: Internet

The user of the internet is widening in Malaysia especially among the young and educated enabling the alternative media and news that is not aired by the mainstream media to reach them. Political parties such as PAS and DAP used the internet extensively in the form of blogs, videos etc. Malaysia Today handled by Raja Petra has the biggest influence with reports of governments wrong doings and corruption. Blogs mushroomed and included the blogs of pro-Mahathir. The VK Lingam issue stemmed from the internet postings and Pak Lah had his hands full answering to issue coming from the internet”.

The government has a rigid control on the mainstream media, forcing the opposition parties in Malaysia to use alternative media such as the Internet, Weblogs and Short Messaging Service (SMS) to reach their voters.

With the electoral young who are more Internet savvy, the internet and alternative media is a bane of information for them. For the first time issues that are played in the mainstream media are cross checked by the young electoral with the alternative media. The information that the mainstream media provides which could be heavily slant to the government, now have credible reference from the alternative media. The notion to trust more what the internet informs and the wealth of blogs and sites of the opposition saw the young electoral to favor the opposition.

Kahn and Kellner (2004) says that blogs are popular because of its simplified interface and the ease to create and publish writings. The evolution of the internet may have contributed to the ease and rise of popularity of blogs. Blogs further allows the reader to be interactive and leave responses and comments to each posting.

Quible (2005) further explains that blogs not only can be easily created in a few minutes on an Internet-based provider, such as blogger.com, all content is stored on the provider’s server. Blogs can be created more quickly and easily and comments could be handled differently. Comments posted on a discussion board can be arranged either in linear or threaded

patterns. They used a linear pattern that makes all comments of equal importance. With the threaded pattern, someone's comment about a comment appears indented under the original comment. On a Web discussion board, comments tend to appear in reverse chronological order, with the most recent comments displayed first.

With such feature in Blogs saw the rise of social interactive media and created a subculture of techno activist that favors self-expression. Blog writers or commonly known as blogger now takes the role of global media critique and sociopolitical intervention commenter.

Just like the mainstream media political bloggers have shown their true ability to influence decision making, with the focus of attention, reporting and exposing any dishonest practice of the mainstream media.

In Malaysia, with the digital divide bridging us closer, added with more than two million new electoral voters in the next general elections, the alternative media seems to be the new frontier for media and information warfare.

Conquering this new frontier will be an important factor for BN in the next general and could decide whether they remain in power after that.

When the Perak crisis hit, the mainstream media went head to head with the alternative media in reporting and discussing about it. The opportunity arises for us to look at how popular blogs play the role of agenda setting in capturing the attention and the thinking of the reader. Cohen articulated the idea that the media may not always be successful in telling people on what to think but they are usually successful in telling what to think about (Wood, 2007).

When alternative media is mentioned, the first thing that comes to mind would be the Internet and the World Wide Web. Extensions of the Internet, blogs are personal websites that contain postings that is regularly updated (www.dictionary.com).

Merriam Webster online (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/blog>) further defines blogs as "a Web site that contains an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks provided by the writer; also: the contents of such a site".

In Malaysia, most blogs are political in nature where we could see blogs such as Chedet.com and Malaysiakini.com have big and strong followings. In his posting on May 6th 2009 noting the first anniversary of his blog, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad acknowledged the strong support he receives for his blog. He noted the overwhelming support with 18,710,769 hits in one year alone. If there is an award for most popular

blog in Malaysia, it is believed that Tun Mahathir's blog would win hands down.

Blogs are very popular amongst Malaysian, where political blogs remains the most favourite type of blogs most Malaysian visits based on the feedback or comments received on these political blogs.

Therefore this study aims to look at the role of political blogs, in giving the narration on the nation's political scenario, thus shaping the perception of the public and how it is often framed.

Statement of Research Problem

Most of the time, mainstream media is the source of information for the citizen of a nation. With the advent of the Internet and the arrival of the digital age, information for the masses is now at the edge of their fingertip. More often the information that is on the Internet is information that is unreliable and often could not be trusted.

Politics are one of the main interests of Internet users, therefore there is a need to analyze these alternate media and look at the impact it has on readers for such important issues like the Perak Political power struggle.

In February 2009, with the declaration of three Pakatan Rakyat state representative leaving their fold and being independents supporting the Barisan Nasional, Perak was torn into political turmoil as Barisan Nasional now has the majority to form government. With the political situation becoming worst and entangled, the public turn to political blogs for answers.

We would look into the Agenda Setting Theory (Baran, 2006), where what news is reported or makes the headlines on a normal media normally sets the agenda for society to think about, but in this context what appears on the Blogs are what the readers are thinking about (Dominick, 2003).

Previous researches that have been done mainly studied the mainstream media. The study of mainstream media would be a study and analysis of the source only. When we study blogs, it would be an analysis of thoughts of the bloggers and feedback by the readers on the issue posted by bloggers. Furthermore in context of Psychological Warfare, more often the elements of winning the hearts and mind of the reader to act favourably of the initiator means that the writer of the blog would clearly state his case and wins over the reader of his blogs.

Therefore within the psychological warfare context this research seeks to answer several research questions as stated below:

1. What are the main issues posted on the blogs?
2. Who are the victims and who are being supported in the posted articles in the blogs?
3. What are the reactions given by the general public (through their comments)?
4. What are the differences between the two blogs: issues that are highlighted in the feedbacks, parties being criticized or supported?

Research Objectives

The general objective of this research is to examine the content of two most popular Blogs in Malaysia pertaining to the Perak crisis.

The specific objectives include:-

1. To look at what are the issues posted on the blogs.
2. To identify the victims and those supported in the posted articles in the blogs by the blog writer.
3. To look at the reactions of the public to what is written.
4. To identify the difference between the two blogs in term of issue highlighted in the feedbacks, parties being criticized and supported.

Significances of this Study

The study is carried out to get a clear understanding of the role the blogs plays on important issues such as politics and the power to form and persuade in public opinion (Larson, 2004). We could come to an understanding that normal news reporting and the mainstream media work within boundaries and regulation of the country. Blogs do not comply with such ruling and they report as what they say is fit. This research aims to look at the way blog writers write and how they frame the issue in their own political view. Raja Petra Kamaruddin (RPK) is the blog writer for Malaysiakini.com and Tun Dr Mahathir (TDM) writes Chedet.com.

The findings of the research would then be forwarded to the relevant bodies that would be interested to put the information to good use.

Scope and Rationale of the Study

The Internet and blogs are the new channel of machine assisted Mass Communications (Dominick, 2005). Websites and blogs allow everybody to be mass communicators.

The Internet has decrease the cost of exchange in mass communications and now anyone could afford to be a penned critic. A person only has to have a computer and access to the internet and instantly would be able to speak to the world. With no gatekeepers, blog writers have the freedom to post whatever they want without any fear of censorship. The downside known is the freedom could be abused by posting rumours or lies such as conspiracy theories on the internet. On the other hand websites and blogs could also effectively serve the public by being the public watchdog and whistle blower for any wrong doings of the authorities.

Gurak (2008) identify blogs as a way to illustrate the fusion of key elements of human desire – to express one’s identity, create community, structure one’s past and present experiences – with the main technological features of 21st century digital communication. Blogs can serve as a lens to observe the way in which people currently use digital technologies and, in return, transform some of the traditional cultural norms such as those between the public and the private.

The two blogs, Chedet.com and Malaysiakini.com are very popular among Malaysians. RPK and TDM could best be described as Psychological Warriors by way their Blog postings are “winning the hearts and mind” of the people and blacken the reputation of any political oppositions (Rajib Ghani & Taylor, 2006). Often, any issue that is posted by these two Bloggers would lead to heated discussion through the Comments and Feedback channels of the posts.

The Perak crisis was the very first acid test for the new Prime Minister Najib Razak to handle prior to his ascension to succeed Pak Lah in April 2009. The whole crisis was triggered by a defecting BN Assemblymen to the PKR but the whole concept of “Jumping” was conceptualized by the Head of Opposition Anwar Ibrahim when he announced to the Malaysian Public about the PR would be taking over the seat of government by Sept 16 2008 by way of securing the “jump” of BN Members of Parliament to the PR fold.

Therefore the Perak crisis that happened in February 2009 caught the imagination of the public on the issue of “jumping” sides and feedbacks on the blogs right after the event would be able to provide a better

understanding how effective blogs would be to shape the mind of the public towards a certain issue.

Blog posted by RPK gathered more than 220 comments and feedbacks while the blog posted by TDM gathered more than 519.

Literature Review

How the Perak State Government Fell (A Chronology of Events from the Star (4th February 2009)

Jan 25: UMNO's Bota assemblyman Datuk Nasarudin Hashim quits Barisan to join PKR.

Jan 26: Perak Barisan chairman Datuk Seri Mohd Tajol Rosli Ghazali takes responsibility for defection. Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin claims three more will leave UMNO and join PKR.

Jan 27: Nasarudin goes into "hiding".

Jan 28: Tajol Rosli quits as Perak UMNO liaison chairman. Nasarudin resurfaces, says he will not change his mind. Barisan drops first hint of defections from PKR.

Jan 29: Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak takes over as Perak Barisan chairman and state UMNO liaison chairman.

Jan 30: Nizar dismisses talk that both Jamaluddin (Behrang) and Mohd Osman (Changkat Jering), who were charged with corruption last August, would be crossing over. Several UMNO assemblyman claim PKR agents had approached them to cross over.

Jan 31: Jamaluddin and Mohd Osman go "missing". Eight UMNO branches in Bota disband, members join PKR.

Feb 1: Perak state assembly Speaker V. Sivakumar releases undated resignation letters signed by the two. Both deny resigning and claim they were forced to sign the letters after the March 8 elections.

Feb 2: Sivakumar submits the resignation letters to the Election Commission and declared seats vacant. Nizar meets Sultan of Perak. Jamaluddin and Mohd Osman fail to show up at press conferences.

Feb 3: EC rules that Changkat Jering and Behrang seats are not vacant. Both assemblymen quit their seats to become Independent. Perak deputy speaker Hee Yit Foong goes "missing" but later states she is still with DAP.

Feb 4: Hee turns Independent. Nizar meets Sultan in bid to have assembly dissolved. Najib announces fall of Pakatan government and says Barisan is ready to take over.

Che Det and Blogging

Tun Mahathir was born in Alor Star, the capital of the northern Malaysian state of Kedah, the youngest of nine children of a school teacher and a housewife. His father, Mohamad Iskandar, was of half-Indian origin, being the son of a Malayalee Muslim and a Malay mother (BBC 2003).

Tun Mahathir attended a Malay vernacular school before continuing his education at the Sultan Abdul Hamid College in Alor Star. Tun Mahathir then attended the King Edward VII Medical College in Singapore. He also contributed to the The Straits Times newspaper anonymously under the nickname “Che Det”. Upon graduation in 1953, Mahathir joined the then Malayan government service as a medical officer. He married Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali – a fellow doctor and former classmate in college on 5 August 1956. He then left government service in 1957 to set up his own private practice in Alor Star. From his marriage with Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, they have five children, three sons and two daughters. Both Mukhriz and Mokhzani Mahathir are involved in business as well as in politics while their eldest daughter Marina Mahathir is a prominent local writer and AIDS activist.

Tun Mahathir started his on blog on May 2008 after being denied or being blacked out from the media by the then Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Abdullah Badawi for his scathing criticism of Pak Lah’s administration (Mohamad, 2008)

To date, Tun Mahathir’s blog at www.chedet.cc in May 2009 celebrated its first anniversary and since its first blog published, it has had 18,710,769 and counting. In his book *Che Det Blogging to Unblock* (2008), Tun Mahathir states that his decision to blog was mainly motivated by the fact that he was no longer accessible to the mainstream media and considered to be the enemy of the government by criticizing them openly in the media. So while Tun Mahathir were blogging unlike the mainstream media, have no gatekeepers to appease and there is also no censorship he was able to write what ever he likes on a wide range of topics. Even with the new found freedom he has always maintained that blogging should also come with a heavy responsibility.

Raja Petra and Malaysiakini.com

Born in Surrey, England, 27 September 1950, Raja Petra Kamarudin was educated at the Alice Smith School. At the age of 13 he went to further his studies at the Malay College Kuala Kangsar, completing his education at the Victoria Institution. As his father died when he was only 22, he had to forgo university education and begin working to support his mother and three younger siblings. Raja Petra began work as both owner of a motorcycle dealership and rice distributor. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raja_Petra_Kamarudin).

Raja Petra is a member of the Selangor royal family. He is the nephew of the late Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, the eleventh Yang di-Pertuan Agong (King) of Malaysia and the seventh Sultan of Selangor. His royal lineage traces back to his paternal grandmother Tengku Badariah, who is the elder sister of Sultan Hisamuddin Alam Shah, the second Yang di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia and the sixth Sultan of Selangor.

Raja Petra was a leading member of Parti Keadilan Nasional (now Parti Keadilan Rakyat) the party set up in response to the arrest of former Malaysian deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim in 1998. On April 11, 2001, Raja Petra and 10 other opposition activists were detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for allegedly plotting to overthrow then prime minister Mahathir bin Mohamad. He was released from the detention center 52 days later.

Raja Petra started the *Malaysia Today* website and his blog to facilitate open discussion on Malaysia's political and social scenes. In his online writings, he is often very critical of the current political developments in Malaysia. In his *Malaysia Today's* columns, he advocates for transparency, accountability and justice in the Malaysian political system. He often denounces money politics, corruption, and ethnic polarization that is deeply rooted in Malaysian society.

The Use of Media in Media Warfare Operations

Although democratic theorists recognize an independent media as central to the proper functioning of democratic institutions, democratic governments often exploit their citizen's faith in that independence to generate popular support or at least approval on government policies. The study done by Wolfgram (2008) showed democratic government of

the west themselves do manipulate the media with their own propaganda. In Operation Horseshoe and the fighting in Racak and Rugovo during the Kosovo conflict of 1998 and 1999, showed how democratic governments in the US and Germany attempted to manipulate public perceptions of the Kosovo conflict to justify the 1999 war.

The use of media and information shows how the German and American governments fabricated or manipulated information to justify the war effort in Kosovo. It would also look into the long debate about government manipulation of information is justified and later the use of these information by scholars to write their scholarly reports.

The study found that the free presses are important in a democracy. The German media questions and challenged the government use and misuse of information before and during the war. The free press system is self-correcting and ultimately the truth would prevail and emerges. The decision about war is made the very moment when one would hope for the most full and open social deliberation about the use of violence as a tool of foreign policy, the free press system could be brought into service of achieving government objectives.

The Media and the Need to Set Agendas

As Dominick and Wimmer (2003) points out that agenda setting theory proposes that the public agenda or what people discuss, think and worry about is powerfully shaped and directed by what the news media choose to publicize. Furthermore it is described that the news media decides to give the most time and space coverage on certain issue would then become the most important issue on the audience agenda.

Even as the news media rates another issue as the second most important issue, it would then also be an important issue on the agenda of the audience (Baran, Dennis, 2006).

The history of agenda setting began when it was used in the 1968 US Presidential Campaign that saw the behaviour of voters reacts directly with the use of media space and time (Dominick, 2005). Agenda Setting has spurned the theory on the “framing” of issues and also the theory of “agenda building” which involves writer’s (or blogger’s) personal agenda.

The agenda setting theory was proposed by Walter Lippmann are extension of McCombs and Shaws who suggested that media was responsible for putting “pictures in our head”. This theory was further enhanced by Cohen in which he articulated the idea when he argued

that the media may not always be successful in telling people on what to think but they are usually successful in telling people what to think about (McComb & Shaw, 1972).

Perceptions and the Way People Perceive Issues

According to Gerbner television fosters beliefs (Wood, 2004). Therefore Cultivation Theory explains that the repeated exposures to consistent media portrayals and themes influence our perceptions of these items in the direction of the media portrayals. In simple words the theory says that people's perceptions are influenced by repeated portrayals showed by the media or the themes emphasized by the media.

Therefore repeated exposure by the media on certain issues will affect the audience's perception on certain issues. It could also be said about other mediums. In this study, we would look at blogs.

The role of Blogs could be the same as Television. Blogs says something extreme or wrong about an issue therefore the reader of the blogs could have distorted views on the issues too.

Blogs would frame an issue to favour the writers point of view. Therefore the Blog writer would be "building and agenda" towards an issue to their point of view. Framing theory is a communication process whereby the person who communicates sets an agenda or 'frame' for an idea in such a manner that it influences not only the thoughts of the audience but also their way of thinking, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Frames are 'powerful mechanism through which public relations practitioners can mediate debate related to public policy (Knight, 1999).

Framing theory is also based on the notion that when something is presented, the 'frame' influences how the subject is perceived and subsequently affects the people's decision or perception. According to Baran & Dennis (2006) framing has helped many organizations to be highlighted in a favourable manner even as issues are being presented on that particular organization.

In the Perak crisis, the defecting of the BN Assemblyman to their side was celebrated openly by Anwar and lauded by their supporters as "a good move" but when a week later Assemblymen from their fold walked over to BN, they were then calling the move as illegal and dirty tactics. The use of frames to show that BN practices dirty politics to win at all cost were being applied in the reports of RPK and the people of

United Malay National Organization (UMNO) are behind the whole crisis by buying over the Assemblymen with money.

Social Implication of the Internet and Blogs

According to Dominick (2005) there are social implications of the Internet and blogs. He cited four important points.

Firstly the Internet and blogs are lacking of gatekeepers and are at risk of “overloading” the system. Gatekeepers act as an evaluator of information that passes through a medium. The gatekeeper would be evaluating the authenticity and the credibility of the news before it reaches the audience. The Internet has no gatekeepers and therefore the so-called information that reaches the audiences could be lies, hearsay, rumours that has a lot of impact. The information stated on the Internet or blogs could just be inaccurate.

Together with no censorship the Internet and blogs could be described as a big city, there are some places that is safe to be visited and there are some places that is risky or dangerous. The Internet and blogs could expose the dangers of pornographic and violent elements.

Secondly, there is a concern for information overload. As the source of information is always subjective most of the information on the Internet and blogs are useless information and full of obscenities and violent images and information. Most of the information is too trivial and the source is often not credible.

Thirdly, the Internet and blogs risks privacy concerns. There are cases which involves Internet and Blogs exposing information of others and causing invasion of privacy. On few postings we found Raja Petra Kamaruddin accusing wrong doings by exposing “classified” documents that often cite the name and private information of the person such as identification card numbers. By exposing such information, there would be risks of identity theft or fraud.

Lastly Dominick (2002), pointed out that Internet and blogs are a way for individuals with escapism and isolation. The Internet and Blogs detach people from other people. People are spending more time in front of the computer writing e-mails, browsing, and social networking on sites like Facebook, Friendster or Twittering, rather than doing physical human contact.

The Difference between Mainstream Mass Media and The Alternative Mass Media

Mainstream mass media are the conventional mass media channel that we know report news to the benefit of the stakeholder of that organization. In Malaysia the mainstream mass media are controlled by stakeholders that are aligned to the ruling government. New Straits Time, TV3, Astro are partly owned indirectly by the government by the arm of the Finance Ministry (Khazanah Berhad).

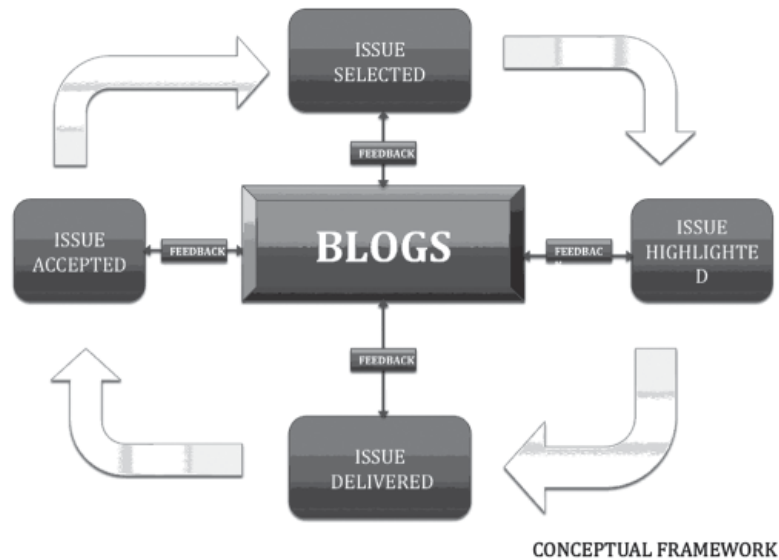
While the mainstream mass media is aligned and carries the responsibility to report news that is benefitting the stakeholder, Alternative mass media also report the side of the story that is not being reported in the mainstream mass media. Most alternative mass media carries the responsibility to report the news as they see it. There are also alternative mass media that is reporting directly by the political parties such as Harakahdaily.net that is reporting for PAS and SuaraKeadilan for Parti Keadilan.

Trend of Blogs (Perspective of the Bloggers)

Blogs are communication tools and serve as a vehicle to transmit messages (Schultz, 2005). In Blogs there is a big difference in media agenda setting where it is more focus on the writing style that will get the attention of the reader and the way the issue are put forward to the audience.

Blogs offer forms of communication that allows political actors to bypass established media practices (Albrect, Lubcke & Perschke, 2007) and therefore we could see the rise of politician blogging.

A very significant observation of the researcher is the simple way of writing by Tun Dr Mahathir in his blogs. Also the simplistic way Raja Petra writes his points. It has to be for the target audience are the normal Malaysians with standard vocabulary. The researcher's observations of blogs are more critical for the writing of the blogs are more perspective towards the writer. More important, blogs provide the avenue for feedback from the readers.



Criteria for Responsible Persuasion

Political activism on the internet has risen with the movement of anti-war after the 911 attacks (Kahn & Kellner, 2004). In Malaysia blogs carry more of the same role of political activism. In political activism it is all about persuasion.

Larson (2003) explains that political persuasion should be done responsibly. Highlighting the need to be critical of receivers' persuasion of Hugh Rank that is called Ranks Model of Persuasion. Rank outlined a simple but very insightful model of persuasion that is called intensify/downplay technique.

The basic idea is the use of two strategies:

- To intensify certain aspects
- Down play certain aspects of the opponents.

Persuaders often choose four courses of actions:

1. Intensify their own good points
2. Intensify the weak points of the opposition
3. Downplay their own weak points
4. Downplay the good points of the opposition

Therefore on the tactical side, Rank Model of persuasion noted that the use of these tactics often goes well when opposition chooses on

certain issues by which if they downplay an issue, persuaders should intensify and when they intensify issues therefore persuader should the downplay.

Bashing of BBC by American Bloggers

The article by Wall and Bicket (2008) assesses the US bloggers attack on British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) post 911 terror wars. It was viewed through the analytical concept of news repair and boundary maintenance. Their attack on BBC was based on the reports by them on the war in Iraq where they suggest that reporting multiple viewpoints of the war by BBC was evidence of bias, highlighting reporting errors and against the public ownership of new media.

US bloggers claimed that the BBC practices news repair and boundary maintenance for the profession, deciding which journalistic acts are within the bounds of acceptable professional behaviour. The blogger feels that news repair is a form of ideological work – a mean of trying to ensure that certain views are not perceived as credible while other views are.

Research Methodology

The research design of this study is quantitative in nature which involves data obtained from a content analysis of blogs of the det and rpk where a systematic coding sheet and coding book were used in coding processes. The researcher believed that this method of data collection it is the most appropriate technique and also is a systematic procedure devised to examine the content of recorded information. Kerlinger (2005) defined it as a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables.

Sampling of the Study

It is unlikely that we will be able to collect data from all the feedback of the blogs in the internet as there are constraint of time and other resources to do so. Therefore the researcher would have to collect evidence or data from a portion of the blogs. It is done in the expectation that the sample will generate adequate and relevant information, with sufficient

quality data to offer new insights on the topic (Daymon & Halloway, 2002).

The samples are from the blogs of Tun Mahathir che.det.com and Raja Petra Malaysia kini.com. The time frames that have been chosen for sampling is between 2nd February 2009 till 6th February 2009 at the height of the Perak crisis.

The contents would then be systematically evaluated using scientific content analysis procedures applied by the coder. For this study the researcher would be the coder to collect the data. As mentioned, there would be a total of 2 blogs that would be analyzed to answer its research questions and objectives. According to Babbie (2002), content analysis is particularly well suited to the study of communications and to answering classic questions of communication research such as “what, whom, why, how and with what effect?”

Research Instrument

This study uses the coding book and coding sheet based on the research questions and objectives. The use of coding sheet is to avoid any confusion by the coder when analyzing the blogs. Content analysis mainly involves coding operations. There would be several items that would be pointed out by the researcher for the purpose of this study.

Coding Categories

There are 17 items or variables that have been pointed out by the researcher for the purpose of this study. As recommended by Babbie (2002), the researcher should develop operational definition as to answer the inquiry. The next step that should be taken by the researcher is to decide what to code in the blogs

Type of Blog

Which blog that is in question or being coded, either [che det.com](http://che.det.com) or [rpk](http://rpk.com).

Language

The writer would be writing in either Bahasa Malaysia or English. A reference for the researcher to know which language was used the blog reader.

Issue

The issue that is being brought upon by the blog writer and also the reader. Identified issues are Perak Issue, other issues or not applicable.

Perak Issue

The Perak issue and look at the support of the blog writer and the readers, such as jumping party of the assemblymen, the acceptance of the assemblymen of Barisan Nasional and the legality of the act to switch party.

Other Issues

If the reader of the blogs do not refer the Perak Issue, they may take the opportunity to forward other issues such as corruption in the government or politicians, current economic issues, and other general issues that is currently in the agenda of the public.

Ways to Resolve

If there is any suggestion given by the reader on a way to resolve the issue mainly the dissolve of the state assembly to pave way to new state elections, by way of court and the judiciary system, the role of the Sultan to dissolve and reject the move by BN to form government.

To Identify the Victim of the Writer and Readers of the Blog

The victim is the party which is being mentioned to be the whole culprit of the situation/crisis in Perak. The identified party are Pakatan Rakyat, Barisan Nasional, The people of Perak.

Feedback by the Blog Readers

The feedback given by the blog readers to identify whether they are agreeable on issue such as BN forming government in Perak, support the action by the assemblymen to jump party and whether the reader is happy of the whole situation in Perak.

Is the Perak BN Government is Legal

The blog readers take on the legality of the BN forming government in Perak.

Action by Sultan is Correct

The blog readers take on the action by the Sultan in solving the crisis.

Direction of the Feedback

The direction of the feedback given by the readers whether they support the BN, or they support the opposition PR.

Pilot Study

Data collected from the first tenth of the articles of Che det.com and Malaysiakini would be regarded as pre-test. It will be coded by using the coded sheets. To prepare for the pre-test there would be twenty coding sheet where one coding sheet represent one feedback of the Blogs. Therefore any component that needs to be added or removed would be done during the pre-test.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software for MS Windows version 13.0 was being used to analyze the collected data.

Finding and Discussions

Issues That are Being Posted on the Blogs

The following section will discuss the findings of the study on the issues that has been posted by the bloggers and readers on the blogs.

From the Blogs of Che Det the researcher could come to the understanding that Che Det has highlighted:

- a. A loyalty crisis within the Pakatan Rakyat Assemblymen.
- b. A rising phenomena of jumping or switching party among the assemblymen of Pakatan Rakyat.
- c. A new crisis brewing within the ranks of Parti Keadilan Rakyat.
- d. Che Det as a ex-Chairman of the ruling Barisan Nasional Parti have attempted before to make jumping/switching party illegal by way of signing post-dated resignation letters but was not allowed as it was not legal in the constitution. Therefore the use of post-dated resignation letter is not accepted as way to secure loyalty of allegiance.
- e. Che Det is against the acceptance of the assemblymen into Barisan Nasional component parties.
- f. UMNO is becoming in the eyes of the rakyat as being corrupt, never or failing to fulfill promises and practices cronyism.
- g. The UMNO image would become worst if they accepted the assemblymen into the folds of Barisan Nasional.
- h. The Chairman of Barisan Nasional should not accept the assemblymen contrary to his statement.

On the other hand, Raja Petra Kamarudin Blog has brought upon the following issues:

- a. Raja Petra Kamarudin commented on the collapse of the Pakatan Rakyat Perak government.
- b. He also commented on the lack of vision by the Pakatan Rakyat leadership to resolve the State Assembly at the first sign of dissent of the Assemblymen.
- c. The Sultan of Perak/Selangor right after the March 2008 election, earlier expressed their fear that the Pakatan Rakyat government would not be able to govern the state as one entity of Pakatan Rakyat. Even as the selection of the Menteri Besar, the DAP has boycotted the ceremony as they have not gotten their wish to have their own assemblymen as the Menteri Besar.
- d. There were unhappiness and uneasiness within the Pakatan Rakyat of Perak.
- e. The Perak Government was firstly almost a Non-Malay government governed by Pakatan Rakyat and with the walkout of the assembly men to support Barisan Nasional and the lost of majority seat, the Perak Government is now almost a Malay government with the new government consisting mostly from UMNO Assemblymen.
- f. Raja Petra Kamarudin stress the point for better vetting for Pakatan Rakyat future Assemblymen candidates to avoid the same situation from happening again in the future.
- g. Raja Petra accuses the Barisan Nasional of buying over the Pakatan Rakyat assemblymen with lots of money.
- h. Raja Petra also stressed that the Sultan of Perak could not force the Menteri Besar Pakatan Rakyat to resign from his post.

After analyzing both Blogs of the issues that have been stressed on by the writers, the researcher could come to the understanding that the issue that is agreed upon by both bloggers are about the corrupt practices in UMNO. While Che Det stresses about the current image of UMNO is seen as corrupt, deceiving the rakyat and practices cronyism. Raja Petra also stress the ability of UMNO with its big pockets to buy over the assemblymen to defect over to them.

Both the bloggers in their blogs also attack the leadership of the political parties in their blogs. While Che Det stresses more on issues that is plaguing his beloved UMNO party and ways to improve or damage control, Che Det also issued a plea to the UMNO party leader Pak Lah to not accept the assemblymen. Raja Petra also attacks the political

leadership of the Pakatan Rakyat as slow to react to the problems within the Pakatan Rakyat Perak Government. Raja Petra said that the Pakatan Rakyat lack vision to resolve the State Assembly at the first sign of problems in the coalition.

Also Che Det stingingly attack on the bad practices of choosing candidate for the Kuala Terengganu parliament seat election. Calling it a cronyism action. Raja Petra also touched on better candidacy for Pakatan Rakyat in future elections.

Otherwise there was a startling difference in the issues that was brought up by both bloggers. Che Det in his Blogs touched mostly on the issue of Perak and the impact it could have on UMNO and Barisan Nasional. Where as Raja Petra touched on a bigger spectrum of issues from the role of the Sultan in the state government appointment affairs to the problem to the Pakatan Rakyat itself where he touched on the teething problem in appointing the Menteri Besar by the Pakatan Rakyat after winning the state after the 12th General Election in March 2008. Raja Petra also touched on the fact that the Perak State government has transitioned from Pakatan Rakyat mostly Non-Malay government to Barisan Nasional mostly UMNO Malay government.

From the Blog readers point of view the following issues have been decoded by the researcher.

From the Table 1 we could see that the blog readers of Che Det, 85.74% of them touched on the issue of Perak, while 5.01% touched on the issue of corruption, 0.01% touched on the issue of economic problem and a total of 9.24% touched on general problems.

Table 1: Issue by Blog Readers of Che Det

Issue	Frequency	Percentage
Perak Issue	445	85.74
Corruption	26	5.01
Economic	4	0.01
General	44	9.24
Total	519	100

While Table 2 shows on the breakdown of issues that was given on the feedback of the readers to the Raja Petra Blogs. Of the feedbacks 64.55% of the Blog readers touched on the Perak Issue, 0.91% of them touched on corruption issues, 5.00% touched on the economic issues and a 29.55% touched on the general issues.

Table 2: Raja Petra Readers Feedback on Issues

Issue	Frequency	Percentage
Perak Issue	142	64.55
Corruption	2	0.91
Economic	11	5.00
General	65	29.55
Total	220	100

Victims and Those Supported in the Posted Articles in the Blogs by the Blog Writer and the Readers

Analyzing both the Blogs the researcher could come to the understanding that the blog writers have identified the following victims of the whole issue and their stand. Victim here could be defined as the party that is being solely identified as the source of the whole crisis.

In Che Det, the writer Tun Mahathir writes about the victim as the UMNO or Barisan Nasional. He said, the rakyat would still believe that the assemblymen who are involve in sex corruption charge in the courts would still be guilty in the eyes of the rakyat, even though the courts do not find them guilty. UMNO, he added would have their image affected by accepting these assemblymen on charge. He strongly believe that after the whole Perak crisis is over the main victim of the whole situation would bare down to be the UMNO party itself as the rakyat would look at its action as only confirming the notion that UMNO is corrupt therefore they accept corrupted leaders, as in the case of the acceptance of these assemblymen.

Meanwhile, Raja Petra also states the UMNO/BN as the victim of the whole episode as he clearly states that UMNO/BN as the true powers behind the situation power play in the crisis in Perak. He also pointed out that the Sultan of Perak was in a quandary as monarch are pressured by UMNO/BN to allow and endorse the formation of the state government. Lastly, Raja Petra mentions that the Pakatan Rakyat are the victim of money politics played by UMNO.

As a comparison the blog readers of both blogs identified their victim. In Table 3, Che Det readers showed that 34.3% believed that the Barisan Nasional/UMNO is the victim of the whole episode.

Table 3: Che Det Readers Identified Victim

Victim	Frequency	Percentage
Pakatan Rakyat	11	2.1
Barisan Nasional	178	34.3
N/A	330	63.6
Total	519	100.0

Of the Blog readers of Che Det, in Table 4 shows that 36.4% does not support the BN to form the government by default of the jumping of the assemblymen, with only 4.0% showing support while 59.5% did not state their support.

Table 4: Che Det Readers Supporting BN to form Government

Support BN to form Govt	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	21	4.0
No	189	36.4
N/A	309	59.5
Total	519	100.0

On the hand, as a comparison, Raja Petra blog readers in Table 5 shows that 34.10% of the readers express that the victim of the crisis are Barisan Nasional/UMNO are the victims.

Table 5: Raja Petra Victim by the Feedback of the Readers

Victim	Frequency	Percentage
Pakatan Rakyat	39	17.7
Barisan Nasional	75	34.1
N/A	106	48.2
Total	220	100.0

Of the Raja Petra Blog readers 39.50% does not support the Barisan Nasional government forming and ruling in Perak while 60.50% does not give their feedback as stated in Table 6

Table 6: Raja Petra Reader's Support for the Barisan Nasional

Support BN Govt	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	0	0.00
No	87	39.50
N/A	133	60.50
Total	220	100.00

Public Reaction

In Che Det from the 519 entries of feedback posted by the blog readers, 85% entries touched on the Perak Crisis. Part of the Perak issue was the issue of jumping party by the assemblymen of Pakatan Rakyat, the question of whether Barisan Nasional was right to accept these assemblymen and the legal standing of the assemblymen to jump party and not resign to allow a new fresh election. For detail information on the blog readers reaction please refer to the following tables below for the readers reaction from the Che Det blog.

The readers of Che Det's reaction towards the issue of jumping party with 4.2% supporting the action and 47.8% are against it.

Table 7 : Che Det Blog Reader's Reactions Towards Assemblymen Jumping Party

Feedback	Frequency	Percentage
Support	22	4.2
Against	248	47.8
N/A	249	48.0
Total	519	100.0

The Che Det reader's reaction towards Barisan Nasional's intention to accept the assemblymen in Perak was only supported by 3.9% while 47.4% was against it as shown in the table below.

Table 8: Che Det Blogs Reader's Reactions Towards Acceptance of the Assemblymen by Barisan Nasional

Feedback	Frequency	Percentage
Support	20	3.9
Against	246	47.4
N/A	253	48.7
Total	519	100.0

The Che Det reader's reactions towards Barisan Nasional's forming government in Perak with 3.5% supports and 38.2% are against.

Table 9: Che Det Blogs Reader's Reaction Towards Legality of Barisan Nasional Forming Government in Perak

Feedback	Frequency	Percentage
Support	18	3.5
Against	198	38.2
N/A	303	58.4
Total	519	100.0

On the other hand, the following are the blog readers reactions from Raja Petra's Blogs. Of the 220 entries that was posted by the blog readers on Raja Petra's Blogs, 64.5% responses touched on the Perak Crisis. For a detailed information on the Raja Petra blog readers reaction please refer to the following tables.

The reader's reactions of Raja Petra Blogs towards assemblymen jumping party where 35.5% of the readers are against in the action with none supporting.

Table 10: Raja Petra Blog Reader's Reaction Towards Assemblymen Jumping Party

Feedback	Frequency	Percentage
Support	0	0.0
Against	78	35.5
N/A	142	64.5
Total	220	100.0

The reader's reactions of Raja Petra Blogs towards the acceptance of the assemblymen by Barisan Nasional are as follows, 35.0% are against with none supporting.

Table 11: Raja Petra Blog Reader's Reaction Towards Barisan Nasional Acceptance of the Assemblymen

Feedback	Frequency	Percentage
Support	0	0.0
Against	77	35.0
N/A	143	65.0
Total	220	100.0

The reader's reaction towards legality of Barisan Nasional forming government in Perak in Raja Petra Blog is as follows, 33.2% against and none supporting.

Table 12: Raja Petra Blog Readers Reaction Towards Legality of Barisan Nasional Forming Government in Perak

Feedback	Frequency	Percentage
Support	0	0.0
Against	73	33.2
N/A	147	66.8
Total	220	100.0

The Difference Between the Two Blogs: Issues that are Highlighted in the Feedbacks, Parties Being Criticized or Supported

The issues that have been highlighted include the support for the Barisan Nasional to form the government in Perak. At the same time whether the blog readers agree with the issue of switching party without resigning, unhappiness of the whole situation in Perak legal standing of forming government in Perak without any reelection, and the response on the role played by the Sultan of Perak in resolving the issue.

To see the difference between Che Det and Raja Petra on the details of the issues and highlighted and criticized or supported are as follows, please refer to Table 13.

Table 13: Feedback by Readers of Both Blogs on BN Forming Government in Perak

Support BN forming govt	Che Det		Raja Petra	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	96	18.5	0	0.0
No	111	21.4	87	39.5
N/A	312	60.1	133	60.5
Total	519	100.0	220	100.0

Regarding to the issue of forming government in Perak by Barisan Nasional, Table 13 shows 18.5% readers of Che Det seems to agree on the action while none from Raja Petra's Blogs. A total of 21.4% of Che Det readers do not support the Barisan Nasional to form government in Perak while 39.5% of the readers of Raja Petra do not support.

In the following Table 14, the issue of assemblymen defecting and jumping party showed that 4% of the readers of Che Det agrees on the action while non of the Raja Petra readers agree. Compared to the notion to go against the act of defection, a total of 36.4% of the Che Det readers are against with 37.3% of the readers of Raja Petra also against the action to defect.

Table 14: Feedback by Readers of Both Blogs on Defection Actions of the Assemblymen

Defection Action	Che Det		Raja Petra	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	21	4.0	0	0.0
No	189	36.4	82	37.3
N/A	309	59.5	138	62.7
Total	519	100.0	220	100.0

In the following Table 15, the issue of either the blog readers are happy of the situation in Perak, 5.2% of Che Det readers are happy

about the situation Perak while only 0.5% of the reader of Raja Petra are happy. Of that, 35.5% of Che Det readers responded that they are not happy while 41.8% of Raja Petra's readers expressed that they are not happy. The reason is that both writers of the blogs expressed their unhappiness of their situation in perak in their blogs and the readers reiterated the views in their own feedbacks.

Table 15: Feedback by Readers of Both Blogs on Their Feelings About the Situation in Perak

Happy of Situation in Perak	Che Det		Raja Petra	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	27	5.2	1	0.5
No	184	35.5	92	41.8
N/A	308	59.3	127	57.7
Total	519	100.0	220	100.0

When the Perak state government's legality was in question, 2.5% of Che Det readers responded positively while none of Raja Petra readers said yes. On the hand 11.9% of Che Det readers said that the government in Perak is not legal while 31.4% of Raja Petra readers said no as showed in Table 16 below:

Table 16 Feedback by Readers of Both Blogs on the Legality of the Perak Government

Perak Government is Legal	Che Det		Raja Petra	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	13	2.5	0	0.0
No	62	11.9	69	31.4
N/A	444	85.5	151	68.6
Total	519	100.0	220	100.0

Looking into the whether the action by the Sultan of Perak was correct in order to resolve the issue, none of the readers of Che Det agrees while 2.7% of Raja Petra readers agrees. Of that 35.5% of Che Det readers said no and 24.5% of Raja Petra readers said no as showed in the Table 17 below.

Table 17: Feedback by Readers of Both Blogs on the Action by the Sultan of Perak in the Perak Crisis

Action of Sultan Perak is correct	Che Det		Raja Petra	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	12	0.0	6	2.7
No	31	35.5	54	24.5
N/A	476	64.5	160	72.7
Total	519	100.0	220	100.0

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Dominick and Wimmer (2003) points out that agenda setting theory proposes that the public agenda or what people discuss, think and worry about is powerfully shaped and directed by what the news media choose to publicize. In this research we studied how blog writers shaped and directed what the readers were thinking about. The blog writers were successful in making the readers think what to think about.

As the conclusion, firstly, as we can see of the main issue, Che det made his readers to reject party jumping from his experience as an ex-Prime Minister's point of view as he was more worried about the image or perception the general public would have if the Barisan Nasional or specifically UMNO was to accept party jumpers. It is clearly mentioned in his blogs that the rakyat has a perception that UMNO was corrupted and were lying to the rakyat. The direct impact of accepting the jumping assemblymen is Barisan Nasional very bad image would become worst.

On the other hand, Raja Petra agenda in his blog was clearly to highlight the incompetence of Parti Keadilan Rakyat in handling the issue as he pointed out that the issue has been brewing for a while and the party leaders failed to take affirmative actions. He advocated that the Pakatan Rakyat should have dissolved the State Assembly at the first sign of the assemblymen unhappiness and leaving. That was clearly reiterated in the finding where the readers of Raja Petra Blogs where non of the readers agree to Barisan Nasional to form the new government. He pressed on the move to have better candidates for future elections.

Both the bloggers in their blogs also attack the leadership of the political parties in their blogs. Tun Mahathir stresses more on issues that

is plaguing his beloved UMNO party and ways to improve or damage control, and a plea to the UMNO party leader Pak Lah to not accept the assemblymen. Raja Petra also attacks the political leadership of the Pakatan Rakyat as slow to react to the problems within the Pakatan Rakyat Perak Government. Tun Mahathir stingingly attack on the bad practices of choosing candidate for the Kuala Terengganu parliament seat election. Calling it a cronyism action. Raja Petra also touched on better candidacy for Pakatan Rakyat in future elections.

Otherwise there was a startling difference in the issues that was brought up by both bloggers. Che Det in his Blogs touched mostly on the issue of Perak and the impact it could have on UMNO and Barisan Nasional. Whereas Raja Petra touched on a bigger spectrum of issues from the role of the Sultan in the state government appointment affairs to the problem to the Pakatan Rakyat itself where he touched on the teething problem in appointing the Menteri Besar by the Pakatan Rakyat after winning the state after the 12th General Election in March 2008. Raja Petra also touched on the fact that the Perak State government has transitioned from Pakatan Rakyat mostly Non-Malay government to Barisan Nasional mostly UMNO Malay government.

The difference and the implications of the blog readers giving different feedbacks in both blogs could be contributed by demographics of the readers themselves. Che Det is written by an ex-prime minister and he is well known for his wit. Therefore he has a bigger appeal to the general public and the readers of his blog. Unlike Raja Petra, he is well known to be a political writer and is known to be a writer who supports the opposition Pakatan Rakyat. Therefore his readers would mainly be those who are inclined to support the opposition and are generally against any political move by Barisan Nasional.

In che det the issue that is being posted by Tun Mahathir was about the Perak crisis and the issue of assemblymen jumping party, Raja Petra Kamaruddin was writing on the same issue as well.

The feedback of the blog readers of both che det and RPK also posted the same issue of Perak crisis.

Both blogs identified UMNO as the victim as both blogs attributed the Perak Crisis with the power play and intervention of UMNO. Same thing goes to readers where they also criticized UMNO as the main player in the crisis. However, it is worth mentioning that there was also blog readers who sympathized with UMNO.

The blog readers of che det and rpk , both agree that the move by Barisan Nasional to accept the assemblymen is wrong. The blog readers

of the det and rpk also viewed that the Barisan Nasional forming government in Perak after the defection as illegal.

The blog readers have their own standing on the issues and would use their own consideration in highlighting what issues are important to them, parties criticized or supported. They are mainly unhappy with the situation in Perak and are against assemblymen jumping party, by which in doing so causing the need for a new government to formed in the state.

Recommendations

Further studies could be carried out on blogs, especially the study on the mind of the bloggers where the study needs to be expanded to more than one posting. The study may take a few years as we look to focus on other issues and the mechanics of thinking of the bloggers.

For future studies, it would be recommended that the study on bloggers to be expanded to other local bloggers like A Kadir Jasin, and Rocky Bru. This is because other than politicians, bloggers are capable of shaping the mind of the people. As proven in the research, readers would follow the bloggers that views and mind are compatible to them. So future research would look at the way these bloggers as individual are capable of propagating their mindset to the readers.

Limitation of Study

In doing the research there are some limitations. As the topics of the blogs are political, the researcher is not a political analyst. It all depends on the reading and exposure that the researcher has only local politics. Furthermore, there are limitations in interpreting the meanings of the researches. The researcher interprets the meaning by way that is to his judgment as he reads the blogs.

Conclusion

Blogs are popular because they are interactive with their audiences. Whatever issues that is being forwarded to their readers and followers allow instant response and comments.

Wall (2005) states that blogs are a new genre of journalism. During the US war with Iraq, blogs were active with audience participation in the content creation and story forms that are interdependent from others.

Blogs also demonstrated the ability to influence any decision making with the focus of attention and reporting of certain issues compared to the mainstream media. The role of Che Det and Malaysiakini is known as social interactive media. There is a big movement on the new media and these blogs are right in the middle of it.

Political theorist would attribute the changes of the Malaysian political scenario based on a few theory such as Spiral of Silence and Social Judgment Theory. As mentioned in Social Judgment Theory (Kindra, 1999), the blogs are in the role of changing attitude, as a tool to mediate the judgmental process and effects of the readers to persuade them.

As we look at these blogs, we could also see that they are agent of change, with blogs are moving from the new media towards becoming mainstream media. This is due to the bridging of the digital divide. As we move forward, more and more people are connected to the Internet either by way of computers or by way of mobile telephones. Therefore as more people are accessible to the Internet, it is no longer exclusive to a privileged few. Even as rural citizens are now able to connect to the internet.

In the future, I foresee that Blogs will be integrated into social media websites like Facebook and twitter where right now, they are expanding the functions. The ease for anyone to write and publish their thoughts with a ready audience among their friends would make this tool a very powerful tool in the future. We could see that Che Det has begun integrating his blog with his Facebook Fan Page and also on Twitter. If this is the future than Che Det has a very good footing on the future.

Research could be done beyond the state level as done in this research and perhaps look at the whole country. As this research look upon one posting each from Che Det, and Raja Petra, we could look at a few more postings from both blogs to determine political mission and vision of these blogs. We look upon also on issues that could be interpreted. For this we need to do a longer research.

Furthermore, a research of blogs that is now integrated into social media websites should also be looked into as we Malaysia stands at number 19 in the world ranking with almost 4million Facebook users (<http://www.nickburcher.com/2009/12/facebook-usage-statistics-by-country.html>). This represent a very large number of audience and a force to be reckon with now and also in the future.

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