Culture and Communication

News Flows in Singapore

“From Third World to First”: The Development of Disseminating News
Towards a “More Just and More Efficient Information Order”

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<td>Agence France-Presse</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMIC</td>
<td>Asian Media Information and Communication Center</td>
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<td>ANN</td>
<td>Asia News Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Associated Press</td>
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<td>APEC</td>
<td>Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>APRANET</td>
<td>Advanced Research Projects Agency Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>APU</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union</td>
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<td>ASCII</td>
<td>American Standard Code for the Information Interchange</td>
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<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of South East Asian Nations</td>
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<td>AWSJ</td>
<td>Asian Wall Street Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCTV</td>
<td>China Central Television</td>
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<td>CNPS</td>
<td>Chinese Newspaper Publishing System</td>
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<td>DBS</td>
<td>Development Bank of Singapore</td>
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<td>DPA</td>
<td>Deutsche Presse Agentur</td>
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<td>DSB</td>
<td>Direct Satellite Broadcasting</td>
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<td>EDB</td>
<td>Economic Development Board</td>
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<td>EWCI</td>
<td>East West Communication Institute</td>
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<td>FANA</td>
<td>Federation of Arab News Agencies</td>
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<td>FEER</td>
<td>Far Eastern Economic Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>FM</td>
<td>Frequency Modulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>GB</td>
<td>United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GDP/cap.</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product Per Capita</td>
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<td>GLCs</td>
<td>Government-linked Companies</td>
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<td>HTTP</td>
<td>Hyper Text Transfer Protocol</td>
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<td>ICP</td>
<td>Internet Content Provider</td>
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<td>IDA</td>
<td>Infocomm Development Authority</td>
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<td>IDD</td>
<td>International Direct Dialing</td>
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<td>INTELSAT</td>
<td>International Telecommunications Satellite Organization</td>
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<td>IRA</td>
<td>Irish Republican Army</td>
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<td>ISA</td>
<td>Internal Security Act</td>
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<td>ISDN</td>
<td>Integrated Services Digital Network</td>
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<td>ISO</td>
<td>International Organization for Standardization</td>
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<td>ISP</td>
<td>Internet Service Access Provider</td>
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<td>ITU</td>
<td>International Telecommunication Union</td>
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<td>JCT</td>
<td>Jurong Town Corporation</td>
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<td>MCP</td>
<td>Malayan Communist Party</td>
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<td>Media Development Authority</td>
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<td>Malayan Democratic Union</td>
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<td>MediaCorp</td>
<td>Media Corporation of Singapore</td>
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<td>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</td>
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<td>Malay Nationalist Party</td>
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<td>NAN</td>
<td>News Agency of Nigeria</td>
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<td>NANA</td>
<td>Non-Aligned News Agency Pool</td>
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<td>NASA</td>
<td>National Aeronautics and Space Administration</td>
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<td>NATO</td>
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<td>NHB</td>
<td>National Heritage Board</td>
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<td>NOL</td>
<td>Neptune Orient Lines</td>
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<td>NPPA</td>
<td>Newspaper and Printing Presses Act</td>
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<td>NTU</td>
<td>Nanyang Technological University</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>NWICO</td>
<td>New World Information Order</td>
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<td>OANA</td>
<td>Organization of Asia-Pacific News Agencies</td>
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<td>OB marker</td>
<td>Out-of-bound Marker</td>
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<td>OUB</td>
<td>Overseas Union Bank</td>
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<td>PANA</td>
<td>Pan African News Agency</td>
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<td>PAP</td>
<td>People’s Action Party</td>
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<td>PMO</td>
<td>Prime Minister’s Office</td>
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<td>RTM</td>
<td>Radio Televisyen Malaysia</td>
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<td>RTS</td>
<td>Radio Television Singapore</td>
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<td>SBC</td>
<td>Singapore Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<td>SHM</td>
<td>Singapore History Museum</td>
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<td>Singapore Telecommunication</td>
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<td>Singapore News and Publishing Ltd</td>
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<td>Straits Times Press</td>
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<td>Telecommunication Authority of Singapore</td>
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<td>TCS</td>
<td>Television Corporation of Singapore</td>
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<td>TEU</td>
<td>Twenty-Foot Equivalent Unit</td>
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<td>TVB</td>
<td>Television Broadcasts Limited</td>
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<td>TVRI</td>
<td>Televisi Republik Indonesia</td>
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<td>UCLA</td>
<td>University of California in Los Angeles</td>
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<td>UMNO</td>
<td>United Malays National Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UOB</td>
<td>United Overseas Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<td>USSR</td>
<td>Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
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<td>WWW</td>
<td>World Wide Web</td>
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“Never has the flow of information and ideas, of hard news and reasoned comment, been more important.”

Rupert Murdoch on 14 March 2006 in an interview with The Guardian¹

Introduction

1.1 Subject of this dissertation

The subject of this dissertation is the cultural role of a certain kind of communication at a certain place during a certain period of time in a certain context. To be more specific, the subject of this dissertation is the development of news flows in Singapore between 1965 and 2000 in context with the discussions regarding the “New World Information Order”.

In the 1950s and 1960s, scientists discovered that there are imbalances in the flows of news. A simple example is that wealthier people are generally better informed about current events than poorer ones. Another example is that people living in large cities are generally better informed about current events than those living in rural areas.²

The imbalances in international news flows are more complicated. Between the North and the South, the imbalances are usually characterized by the transfer of information and values from industrialized to developed countries through transnational news agencies as well as the tremendous differences in the availability of media and access to news.³

This has several effects. In industrialized countries, relatively little news about events in developing countries is available. What does end up being reported often describes developing countries as being less successful, poor and corrupt, and their citizens are depicted as being uneducated, uncultivated, barbaric and dangerous.⁴ Meanwhile, industrialized countries are often praised as being successful, rich and honest, and their citizens are depicted as being educated, cultivated, obliging and trustworthy.

Generally, the same can be said about news disseminated within the South, even when the reports seem to originate from the same or a neighboring country. The reason is that almost 80 percent of international news flows are handled by the “Big Four” or “Big Five” transnational agencies. Until the late 1980s, three of them were either in American or British

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hands and one was Russian.\(^5\) Today, they are based in America, Britain, France, Russia and China – the five permanent member countries of the United Nations Security Council – but the American and British agencies dominate the market.\(^6\) This means that almost every single news item crossing a national frontier is transmitted via offices in a few media capitals, in most cases New York or London.

To illustrate the power of one of the dominating agencies, Stanley Swinton, World Service Director of the Associated Press (AP) news agency states: “Over a billion people a day make their judgments on international developments on the basis of AP news.”\(^7\)

| (1) Simplified schema of news flows within a region\(^8\) |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| **Direction**                          | **Volume**      | **Quality**|
| Top to bottom                         | High            | Good       |
| Bottom to top                         | Low             | Poor       |
| Wealthier to poorer                   | High            | Good       |
| Poor to wealthier                     | Low             | Poor       |
| Elder to younger                      | High            | Good       |
| Younger to elder                      | Low             | Poor       |
| Literate to illiterate                | High            | Good       |
| Illiterate to literate                | Low             | Poor       |
| Cities to rural areas                 | High            | Good       |
| Rural areas to cities                 | Low             | Poor       |

| (2) Simplified schema of news flows between regions |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| **Direction**                          | **Volume**      | **Quality**|
| North to south                         | High            | Good       |
| South to north                         | Low             | Poor       |
| North to north                         | High            | Good       |
| South to south                         | Low             | Poor       |
| Industrialized to developing           | High            | Good       |
| Developing to industrialized           | Low             | Poor       |
| Wealthier to poorer                   | High            | Good       |
| Poorer to wealthier                    | Low             | Poor       |
| Larger to smaller                      | High            | Good       |
| Smaller to larger                      | Low             | Poor       |

These findings soon reached the international community. Already in the 1970s, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognized the problems and organized several hundred conferences, symposia and workshops. At those events, experts from various fields explained the state of things and presented several concepts.


\(^6\) Meaning the Associated Press, Reuters, Agency France Press, Itar-Tass and Xinhua.


\(^8\) The schemata are based on the information provided in other chapters.
The discussions which resulted from them were very heated, because the perspectives of the so-called “Western” countries led by the USA, of the “Socialist Bloc” led by Russia and the less organized “Third World” differed fundamentally. Soon, the UNESCO itself, particularly the management and the rising influence of the “Third World” in the organization, was coming under attack.

In order to achieve at least some basic agreements, the UNESCO organization suggested to the participants of the 19th General Assembly held in 1976 in Nairobi the assignment of the “International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems”. It was chaired by Seán MacBride, the only person to have ever been awarded both the “Nobel Peace Prize” (1974) and the “Lenin Peace Prize” (1976). Together with 15 other experts, he analyzed communication problems in contemporary societies for nearly four years.

In their ensuing report, published in 1980 under the title “Many Voices, One World”, they recommended that developing countries restructure their media systems and that industrialized countries support these efforts with knowledge as well as financial and technical means. One of the main goals was to increase the diversity and availability of media and news by improving the overall conditions of the press. Among other things, the commission recommended the establishment of national news agencies, training centers for professionals, archives and libraries.

On the following occasion, the UNESCO members more or less agreed to implement the recommendations in order to achieve a “New World Information Order”, but how the report was interpreted and used by the members differed. While some understood it as a manifesto against the overwhelming media power of the former colonialists, others used the opportunity to point to the violations of “Human Rights” in the “Third World”.

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At the height of the conflicts, three countries withdrew from UNESCO. The withdrawal of the United States of America in 1984 was the most dramatic, because the superpower had carried around 25 percent of UNESCO’s budget. Soon after, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Singapore followed. The organization was plunged into its worst crisis ever. This led to fundamental changes on all levels, including the adoption of a new strategy and the appointment of a new director-general. As a result, Britain rejoined in 1997. In October 2003, even the United States returned. In fact, all countries that withdrew from UNESCO at some point rejoined sooner or later – with one exception: Singapore.

The reason why Singapore withdrew from UNESCO and has still not rejoined is not clear. Several documents verify that Singapore originally intended to cooperate with UNESCO and benefited from its membership. An UNESCO official, who is familiar with Singapore but seems to have some provisos against its government, believes that Singapore is by nature not compatible with the UNESCO. From his point of view, the understanding of culture and communication in Singapore is too far away from the liberal statutes of the international community. Another official, who represented a large country at the time of Singapore’s withdrawal, is convinced that Singapore simply followed the United States and the United Kingdom, either without any reflection or due to some pressure. But why only Singapore and not any other country should have followed is hard to comprehend.

Whatever the reason, there is no doubt that the understanding of culture and communication in Singapore is quite unique. This was true for the 146 years when Singapore was a British colony and has particularly been the case since the country’s independence in 1963 and separation from Malaysia in 1965. That is the reason why the development of news flows in Singapore, particularly during the rule of Lee Kuan Yew from 1965 until 2000, in context with the discussions about the “New World Information Order”, is the subject of this dissertation.

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15 In 1987, Amadou-Mahtar M’Bow was followed by Federico Mayor as director-general, who soon introduced a new strategy.
16 UNESCO: Letter from the Assistant Director-General in Charge of Communication to the Director-General About a Technical Inspection Mission to Singapore, 8 April 1968, Paris, not yet published.
18 Compare with the conversation with John Lent.
1.1.1 Restraints of the subject

This dissertation focuses on the development of the press in Singapore between the time of the establishment of the first two newspapers there, the *Prince of Wales Island Gazette* (1805, on the Malay island Penang) and the *Singapore Chronicle* (1823), and the recent launch of the *Today* paper (2000). Though the developments during colonial times are extensive, far more space is devoted to the last forty years. The reason for this is that the circumstances of the press have changed tremendously during this period; Singapore has developed *From Third World to First* (2000).

Radio (introduced in 1936) and television (1963) in Singapore are more or less left aside in this dissertation. The reason is that radio and television broadcasting were introduced much later and, as a result, have a much shorter and also less revealing history. Whenever they are mentioned, this dissertation’s intention is to emphasize the extent to which radio and television channels have become news sources for print journalists and, more importantly, their role as alternative media for the dissemination of news. Generally, the same applies to the Internet (1994). All other forms of media such as digital devices and mobile services are completely ignored since they have played practically no role in the news flows before the year 2000.

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21 The table is based on the data provided in other chapters.
The political, economic and technological developments are discussed in detail, because the print media generally rely heavily on their surrounding circumstances, in Singapore even more than in other countries. To illustrate this: No one can understand the pressure on the press without being familiar with the nature of elections, for example. So it is essential to describe such background issues.

In some chapters, references are given to developments in other countries. In order to put the circumstances of the press in Singapore before 1965 into context, the history of newspapers in general and the development of the press in China in particular are briefly described. Though such excursions are not essential, they are useful to understand the differences between the cultural role of communication in Singapore and elsewhere.

However, the two main questions of this dissertation are how the news flows have developed in Singapore and whether the idea of a “New World Information Order” is still useful to make the news flows there “more just and more efficient”. In order to investigate these topics, a number of related questions will be answered, including how the mass media in Singapore have developed. Another question is to what extent the idea of the “New World Information Order” is still up-to-date.

The central thesis of this dissertation is that the news flows in Singapore have become more efficient, but not more just in the past several decades. Therefore, it is still worth discussing the imbalances in the news flows there, even though the idea of the “New World Information Order” itself is unrealistic and outdated now.

Thus, the variety of newspapers, their number and ownership, as well as the legal regulations designed for the media and journalists in Singapore are some of the main criteria in answering the central questions and assessing the thesis of this dissertation.

1.1.2 Relevance of the thesis

The subject and thesis of this dissertation are relevant and interesting for various reasons. On the one hand, this dissertation reviews some discussions regarding the “New World

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24 Further criteria are mentioned in the following chapters.
Information Order”. On the other, this dissertation analyzes the development of news dissemination in Singapore. This dissertation is the first to bring both issues together. Each, however, is important on its own.

To begin with the importance of the “New World Information Order”: In recent years, it has become popular to talk about a process called “Globalization”. Within this debate, the “Digital Divide” has become a major issue. While some argue that the gaps between those with access to media and those who are too poor to access it are growing at an alarming rate, others argue that never in human history so many people have had access to media and that this trend would continue. But the problem is far more complicated than that, because access to media does not automatically guarantee just flows of news and manifold information. This is exactly what the Seán MacBride Report outlines.

Also, the developments in Singapore are more important than one might expect. The reason is that Singapore, the most advanced economy and leading media hub in Southeast Asia, is often taken as a role model. In 1987, Singapore’s then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew even showed the world how print media can be controlled, namely by restricting circulation. As a founding member of organizations such as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN, 1967), Singapore even has a direct say in some international issues. This means that developments in this small city-state are not only relevant to its citizens but might affect others in the region as well.

1.2 Structure and methods

This dissertation is divided into eight chapters plus annex of which each is split into several subchapters. The only purpose for grouping the content is to make it more accessible, although that might affect it. Hayden White even argues that history writing in general is nothing else than a catenation of single events in order to achieve a certain plot.
However, different scientific methods were used for this dissertation. Generally, they can be allocated either to “induction”, which means reasoning from the particular to the general, or “deduction”, which means reasoning from the general to the particular. Neither one of these methods can stand on its own. Therefore, both are used in this dissertation.

In total, 14 experts were questioned in Singapore in November and December 2004.\textsuperscript{30} Each interview lasted at least 30 minutes but most were more than twice as long. During the interviews, a pre-formulated questionnaire with 22 questions served as a guideline.\textsuperscript{31} Some questions posed were comparatively long and provocatively formulated. One reason for this is that the author wanted to signal that he is familiar with the issues, so that the respondents would not hesitate to go into details. The other reason is that the author of this dissertation wanted to see the reactions of the interviewees when more controversial issues were raised. The answers to these latter questions turned out to be the most revealing, especially when the recorder was switched off. Therefore, the interviewer decided to stop audio tapping some of the conversations.

Furthermore, twelve different cases were analyzed. Eight of them concern local newspapers and four of them concern foreign publications. Though each case is unique, several similarities can be observed. At the end, it was possible to draw more than half a dozen conclusions from them.

Above that, a number of conversations were conducted, either personally or by e-mail, during which experts were asked about their personal experiences and opinions. The transcripts of two of these conversations can be found in the annex of this dissertation.

Most important, however, was the intense study of the literature available.

\textbf{1.2.1 Availability of data}

In order to find materials, the author of this dissertation researched at several institutions. Research at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris, in the library of the School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS) at the University of London and in the material rooms of the Asian Media Information and Communication Center (AMIC) which is located at the School of Communication and

\textsuperscript{30} Except the interview with Arun Mahizhnan; he was interviewed in July 2005 in Beijing, China.

\textsuperscript{31} The questionnaire can be found in the annex.
Information at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore were the most productive. Many sources of information have also been found in the archive of the Institute of Asian Affairs in Hamburg and in the Berlin State Library. In total, more than 800 books, articles and websites have been identified which are relevant to this dissertation.

Those sources can be grouped by content, but also by date and place of publication. A significant number of sources deal with culture and communication. Interestingly, many of the older texts on this topic were published in Germany or France, while many of the newer texts come from the United States. The reason is probably that scientists in the United States started analyzing culture and communication later but with much more fervor.\textsuperscript{32}

Analyzing the origin of texts dealing with Southeast Asia in general and Singapore in particular, a similar phenomenon becomes apparent. Many of the newer texts have been published in the region or country itself, while many of the older texts were published in the respective colonial motherland.

If at all, the texts about news flows could be located with great difficulty only. Although scientists from all over the world have contributed to discussions regarding news flows, there has never been a central institution to archive them, apart from the UNESCO headquarters and the Press Foundation of Asia in the Philippines.\textsuperscript{33} Interestingly, a larger number of texts have been published by the Asian Media Information and Communication Center in Singapore, which might be taken as a further reason for the importance and relevance of this dissertation.

There is no longer text regarding the development of news flows in Singapore known to the author of this dissertation. However, a variety of related texts is available so that a careful selection of sources has been essential.

### 1.2.2 Selection of sources

As far as news flows are concerned, the report “Many Voices, One World” serves as the main primary source. Though it picks up on several texts which have been published earlier – some were explicitly prepared for sessions of the International Commission for the Study of Communication studies as a distinct field was introduced in the mid of the 20th century in the United States.\textsuperscript{32} Already in 1967 and 1968, the newly established Press Foundation of Asia organized a series of three conferences.\textsuperscript{33}
Communications Problems – the report stands out. The reason is that the report is an official
document published by UNESCO in 1980 and, as thus, was intensively discussed by
numerous scholars (whose texts are classified as secondary sources).

The most relevant secondary sources about the news flows, however, are the books by
authors such as Wilbur Schramm (published in 1949), Daniel Lerner (1958), Lucien Pye
this is a selection of authors whose texts have highly influenced the remarks about news
flows in this dissertation.

As far as the developments in Singapore are concerned, particularly the developments of the
press there, articles in newspapers and magazines published in Singapore itself (i.e. Straits
Times, established in 1845) or distributed there (i.e. Far Eastern Economic Review, 1946)
have been used. Besides, the two “Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew” (“The Singapore Story”, 1989;
“From Third World to First”, 2000) are considered as primary sources. Although it is not
known to what extend Lee Kuan Yew wrote those two books by himself, they are very
revealing due to their insider’s view.

The majority of the relevant secondary sources which describe the developments in
Singapore in general and the development of the press there in particular, however, were
published by the Asian Media Information and Communication Center between its founding
in 1971 and today. A significant number of texts have been found in its Media Asia journal; all
available issues have been screened for relevant articles.34

Further examples are the books by authors such as Charles Moses (published in 1978),
Eddie Kuo (1983), Ang Peng Hwa (1998), and Cherian George (2000). Exceptions are the
books by Mary Turnbull (1977), Soh Yew Peng (1998) and Francis Seow (1998); they were
published by other institutions. At least this is a selection of authors whose texts have highly
influenced the remarks about Singapore and its press.

In addition, numerous websites providing information about Singapore have been accessed
by the author of this dissertation. Of these, the sites provided by the Singapore Department
of Statistics and other official institutions turned out to be most useful; its contents were
analyzed by relevance for this dissertation35

34 Media Asia is a quarterly journal; it was started in 1974 and still exists.
2006.
Definitions

2.1 Definitions of culture-related terms

One of the central terms used in this dissertation is also one of the most vague and controversial, because it is used in daily life, in the sciences, in politics and the arts – each time in another context.  

Etymologically, the term “culture” can be traced back to the Latin word “colere” which can be translated as “maintenance”, “care” or “welfare”. But it is also used for husbandry (“cultura agri”), worship (“cultura deorum”), education (“cultura animi”) and lifestyle (“cultura humans”), so practically everything ranging from cosmetics to manners. This might explain why some centuries later Thomas Morus (1478-1535) and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) used the term “culture” for describing ways of thinking, while Voltaire (1694-1778) and Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) used it for describing habits of communities.

Meanwhile, the term “civilization” was introduced in French language. Originally, it was used for describing aspects beyond the human way of life. Today, the difference in most languages is that culture focuses on the habits, while civilization describes the citizens as members of society.

What is today accepted as the “classic definition” of culture was provided by Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917). According to “Primitive Culture”, first published in 1871, “culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as member of society” (“civitas”).

Edward Tylor adds that culture, so defined, is possessed by man alone. Thereby, he follows the argumentation of Johann Gottfried Herder, who compared the characteristics of man and orangutans in “Ideas about the Philosophy of the History of Mankind”. He came to the

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36 Dietrich Muehlberg: Woher wir wissen, was Kultur ist, Berlin, 1983, p. 1 et sqq.
38 Thomas Morus, posthumously also known as Saint Thomas More, was an English lawyer and politician. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing was a German writer and philosopher. François-Marie Arouet, better known as Voltaire, was a French writer and reviewer. Johann Gottfried Herder was a German philosopher and theologian.
conclusion that humans alone are predisposed to “senses” such as the creation of art and language. Since then, however, culture is often defined in contrast to nature.

Thomas Sterns Eliot (1888-1965), who knew Tylor’s book, noticed that the term may be used for both individuals and groups of people. But it arouses different associations if an individual, a group, class or nation is meant. Part of his thesis and of this dissertation too, is that the culture of an individual depends on the culture of the social group, and the culture of the group depends on the culture of the society – as well as the reverse.

In principle, this definition is still in use, but in the 1970s, some scientists of the “Birmingham School of Cultural Studies” noticed also some semiotic aspects: “The ‘culture’ of a group or class is the peculiar and distinctive ‘way of life’ of the group or class, the meanings, values and ideas embodied in institutions, in social relations, in systems of belief, in mores and customs, in the uses of objects and material life. Culture is the distinctive shapes in which this material and social organization of life expresses itself. A culture includes ‘maps of meaning’ which makes things intelligible to its members. These ‘maps of meaning’ are not simply carried around in the head: they are objectivated in the patterns of social organization and relations through which the individual becomes a ‘social individual.’” Thus, culture is the way the social relations of a group are structured and shaped and it is also the way those shapes are experienced, understood and interpreted.

Edward Hall (1914- ) summed up this definition by arguing that “culture is communication and communication is culture.” To him, culture is the most important link between humans and the basis for every inter-human contact. It is first and foremost a system of communication, “Any culture is primarily a system for creating, sending, storing, and processing information.” Like a telephone system, any communication has three aspects: its overall-structure (comparable to the telephone network), its components (switchboard wires and telephones) and the message itself (which is carried by the network). Comparably,

44 Compare with the UNESCO “Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies” in which the participants of the World Conference on Cultural Policies emphasize that culture in its widest sense “may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive, spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.” UNESCO: Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies, World Conference on Cultural Policies, Paris, 1982, p. 1.
messages could be divided into three components: sets (words), isolates (sounds) and patterns (grammar, syntax, etc.).

Edward Hall comes to three conclusions which build the theoretical framework of this analysis: Firstly, culture is not inherent, it must be learned. Secondly, the different elements of culture are interlaced. And, thirdly, since culture is an experience which is shared with others, it distinguishes social groups and points out their differences. So it strongly affects what psychologists describe as identity. In this sense, “culture is the most important connector between men and fundament of every inter-human contact.” This means, among other things, that culture practically exists as long as individuals identify themselves with it.

In this sense, the “Birmingham School of Cultural Studies” describes “cultural identity” as “identification with and perceived acceptance into a group that has shared systems of symbols and meanings as well as norms/rules for conduct. Cultural identity is created through symbolic and normative competence.” In other words: “When individuals identify with cultural groups they are able to enact culturally appropriate [...] with members of that groups.” So defined, the cultural identity is a combination of ideas about “being” and norms for “action.”

Although these definitions of culture (as communication), cultural identity (as condition of culture) and cultural diversity (as condition and result of various cultural identities and cultures respectively) are relatively precise and widely accepted, they are not so easy to apply. The reason is that none of them are stable but continuously in transition, because people are always interacting (cultural contacts). As a result, no culture is what it once was.

This is particularly true for the Southeast Asian archipelago on whose southern tip Singapore is located. Though the settlement was officially founded by British settlers, it was dominated by ethnic Malay for a long time. Today, around 77 percent are ethnic Chinese, many of

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47 Compare with the UNESCO “Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies” in which the participants of the World Conference on Cultural Policies state that “It is culture that makes us specifically human, rational beings, endowed with a critical judgment and a sense of moral commitment. It is through culture that man expresses himself, becomes aware of himself, recognizes his incompleteness, questions his own achievements, seeks untringly for new meanings and creates works through which he transcends his limitations.” UNESCO: Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies, World Conference on Cultural Policies, Paris, 1982, p. 1.


whom are American (ABCs) or British-born (BBCs). Each group and individual, however, claims to have an own culture and to be following own traditions.

Some argue that those “cross-cultural people” will sooner or later assimilate (and become integrated) into the dominating culture. Fred Casmir even believes that the “cosmopolitans” could form a “new, third culture”. Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980) speaks in this context of a “global village” and Wolfgang Welsch of a “global culture”.

A definite answer is hard to give because people may not identify themselves with their origin or environment, but rather with other personal traits such as their native language, religion, profession or any other affiliation.

2.2 Definitions of communication-related terms

If, according to Edward Hall, culture is communication, the question which automatically follows is what communication is. This is difficult to answer, because everything can be communication, at least potentially. Another reason is that human beings are so used to communicating from their very first moment of life that they are hardly aware of doing so. Thirdly, communication is fleeting; it cannot be stopped for observation.

Etymologically, the term can be traced back to the Latin word “communis”, which means “common”, or “communicare”, which means “to make something common to many” or “to give a share of something”. It can be found in the writings of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) who generally differentiated between the orator, the speech and the listeners. Centuries later, it was often used in the context of the Holy Communion. The specific sense of imparting or transmitting information, however, is first found in English language in John Locke’s (1632-1704) “Essay Concerning Human Understanding” (1690).

Nowadays, the term is used in various disciplines. It is used in electronics (to mark the connection of two points by means of electrical apparatus), in economics (to describe the infrastructure upon which the transportation of persons and goods depends) and in military studies (to explain the lines of communication along which troops are transported, for

50 Until 1999, Fred Casmir was teaching at the Pepperdine University in Malibu. Herbert Marshall McLuhan was a Canadian professor for English literature, communications theorist and, as thus, one of the founders of modern media studies. And Wolfgang Welsch is teaching at the University Jena in Germany.


instance).\textsuperscript{53} In any case, the meaning depends largely on the frame of reference employed and the relevance given to certain aspects.\textsuperscript{54}

As a result, there are numerous definitions available. Most known are the remarks by Harold Laswell (1902-1978) and Wilbur Schramm (1907-1987). Harold Laswell asked “Who says what in which channel to whom with what effect”, and Wilbur Schramm answered in his works: “A communicates B through channel C to D with the effect E”.\textsuperscript{55}

Most experts generally agree that communication requires at least three but usually all five of the following elements: an initiator or sender, a message, a mode or vehicle, a recipient and an effect. “Simply expressed, the communication begins when a message is conceived by a sender. It is then encoded - translated into a signal or sequence of signals - and transmitted via a particular medium or channel to a receiver who then decodes it and interprets the message, returning a signal in some way that the message has or has not been understood.”\textsuperscript{56}

Nevertheless, at least two general lines of thought or even schools have been crystallized over the past decades: The so-called “structural” line of thought or “Process School” includes perspectives from fields such as history. It understands communication as the “transmission of messages” and focuses on how senders and receivers encode and decode, and how transmitters use the channels and media of communication. Thus, its primary object is likely to be the media systems and its functions.

In contrast, the “behavioral” approach or “Semiotic School” has its roots in fields such as psychology. It understands communication as the “production and exchange of meanings” and is more concerned with how messages or texts interact with people in order to produce meanings. Thus, it addresses the “works of communication” as something which constitutes the individual as a member of a group or society. So both schools generally interpret communication as interaction and exchange of messages but they differ, apart from other aspects, mainly in what constitutes a message and its relevance.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{53} Compare with Johannes Peters: Einfuehrung in die Allgemeine Informationstheorie, Berlin, 1967, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{54} In the 1970s, Frank Dance identified more than 120 definitions. Later, Klaus Merten found around 140 definitions. Klaus Merten: Kommunikation, Eine Begriffs- und Prozessanalyse, Opladen, 1977, p. 9 et sqq.
\textsuperscript{56} During this process, both the sender and the receiver are subject to a multitude of cues which can influence the meaning as well as the understanding of the message; it might even change while one is in the act of examining it. James Watson: Dictionary of Media and Communication Studies, Communication, New York, 2000, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{57} For the “Process School”, a message is what is relayed during the communication process, while for the “Semiotic School” the message is a construction of signs. John Fiske: Introduction to Communication Studies, London, 1990, p. 2 et sqq.
Furthermore, it has become common to distinguish between levels such as “intrapersonal communication” for beings talking to themselves, “interpersonal communication” occurring between two or more beings and “group communication” requiring at least three participants. In most cases, communication is a two-way process (two-way flow). In contrast, “mass communication” is when one or more messages are transmitted to a larger number of recipients and the sender does not (yet) receive a (immediate) response. Then it is “indirect” or “unilateral”, as Gerhard Maletzke describes it.58

The typical vehicle for mass communication is the mass media. Ray Hiebert argues that mass communication “always requires a mass medium; without mass medium, mass communication can never occur”.59 Guido Fauconnier follows this argumentation only partly because he does not see a reason why, for instance, a public speech should not be regarded as mass communication: “The presence or absence of a microphone and loud speakers can hardly be considered as a criterion of mass communication here.” But he concedes that most of what is considered to be mass communication (press, radio, television, etc.) is indeed covered by this definition.60 This dissertation, however, is a (system) analysis primarily in the sense of the “Process School” with focus on mass communication using mass media.

2.3 Definitions of media-related terms

Grammatically, the term “mass media” consists of two words, “mass” and “media”. The latter one can be traced back to the Latin word “medium” which means “the middle”. In the sense of “intermediate”, it is first found in English language in Francis Bacon’s (1561–1626) “The Advancement of Learning” (1605).61 Its plural form is first recorded in “Greece, Ancient and Modern” (1866) by Cornelius Felton (1807-1862).62 And the combination of both probably first appeared in the early 20th century.63

62 Cornelius Conway Felton was an American professor of Greek literature and president of Harvard University.
As for communication, there are various definitions, models and theories available. Guido Fauconnier, for instance, describes mass media as the physical or technical means of converting communication messages along a given channel to a potentially unlimited number of recipients.\textsuperscript{64} And John Fiske groups mass media into “presentational media” (verbal or non-verbal), “representational media” (books, paintings, photographs) applying cultural respectively aesthetical conventions “to create a ‘text’ of some sort”, and the “mechanical media” (radio, television) which can make use of both.\textsuperscript{65}

Generally speaking, there are only two or three different approaches, “media-centric” and “society-centric” or “socio-centric.” The “media-centric” usually attributes a lot of autonomy to the media and focus on its activities, while the others regard the media as an outcome or even reflection of political, economical, technological or social developments.

In the specific case of Singapore, the mass media and the government are interlaced in several aspects, much more than in other countries. Therefore, the author of this dissertation prefers the “society-centric” approach. However, whenever the term mass media is used in this text, usually print media or the press is being referred to, because radio, television and the Internet are more or less left aside.

Since the time of Otto Groth (1875-1965), for whom periodicity (short frequency), universality (not to special), timelessness and publicity (availability to the people) were the main features of the print media, they are usually identified on the basis of technical information.\textsuperscript{66} Newspapers, for instance, are often grouped by format (broadsheet or tabloid), size (up to 570 mm) and volume (up to 500 pages).

Further criteria identifying and grouping newspapers are the frequency of publication (daily, weekly, bi-monthly) and circulation (up to 20 million), the ownership (state owned, privately owned, etc.), the purpose of publication (commercial, non-commercial), the price per copy (free or up to several US dollars), the method of distribution (subscription, street sale), the target group (e.g. businessmen), the profile of the readership (age, gender, income, etc.) and so on.

\textsuperscript{65} The classic example for electrical transmission is the Morse Code in which frequently used source symbols are sent via a short code symbol while source symbols infrequently used are sent by means of longer code symbols. Fred Haber: An Introduction to Information and Communication Theory, Reading, 1974, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{66} Otto Groth was a German media scientist and journalist.
Another outstanding characteristic of newspapers is its special style of wrapping messages into words and pictures. Usually the raw information is told in a narrative (constructed) or symbolic (arranged) mode ordered by relevance (inverted pyramid structure) which lets the information appear new. Such stories are usually called “news”. This shows that “news” and “new” are closely related.

Originally, this term derives from the Latin word “novus” which roots can still be found in the Portuguese “novo”, the Spanish “Nuevo” and the Italian “novizio”. The English-language version developed in the 13th century from the Old English “neowe” or “niowe” which is akin to the Frisian “nie” and sounds not much different from the Danish, Swedish and Norwegian “ny” or the German “neu”. In all of these languages, the term describes something that was - until recently - uncertain, unmade, untouched, undiscovered or completely unknown. At least is this the most important criterion for news: If something cannot be described as new, it cannot be news.

Media professionals argue that news must also fulfill other requirements (in order to gain attention). In a handbook for Reuters journalists, for instance, a number of other criteria are listed. Some are timeliness (newness), proximity (geographical nearness), prominence (popularity), consequences (for the reader) and social interest (emotional feelings).

In this analysis, however, it is less relevant what constitutes news, since the subject is how larger numbers of news items are transmitted, and by which media in particular. The author seldom separates the message from the medium. Instead, he follows the general line of thought of Marshall McLuhan, who argues that the message is conditioned by the medium (the medium shapes the message, shapes the sender and shapes the audience; and vice versa) and presumes that (in the “Gutenberg Galaxy”) the medium itself is not neutral. Thus, the variety of newspapers, their number and ownership, as well as the legal regulations designed for the media and journalists are some of the main criteria in this dissertation.

69 Lord Northcliffe (1869-1922), one of the first press barons in Britain: “News is what somebody somewhere wants to suppress; all the rest is advertising.” After James Watson: Dictionary of Media and Communication Studies, Communication, New York, 2000, p. 212.
Retrospection

3.1 Origins of the discussions about news flows

It is not clear who was the first to assess the imbalances in the flows of news. John Lent, who reviewed the discussions in 1982, does not mention any particular author.\(^{73}\) Neville Jayaweera states that Daniel Lerner, Lucien Pye and Wilbur Schramm were among the first who contributed seminal research and writings.\(^{74}\) That is certainly correct but none of them wrote about the topic before or during World War II. Daniel Lerner, a pioneer in the field of sociology, wrote several essays in the early 1950s and his most famous book in 1958. Lucien Pye published some essays in the late 1950s and a book on the subject in 1962. Alone Wilbur Schramm, who contributed more than two dozen books on this and related topics, began his research in the 1940s and published his first books in 1949.\(^{75}\)

It is possible that the first contributions were made in one of the newly independent countries where the working conditions of academics and students had changed dramatically after World War II. During colonial times, the higher schools and universities there were established for the children of colonialists. Examples are the Hong Kong University and the National University of Singapore, which were both founded by or on behalf of colonialists.\(^{76}\) For several decades, natives had hardly access. But with the independence, numerous “menials” flooded into the institutions and some even came into teaching positions a few years later.\(^{77}\) One of the first universities to experience this in Asia was the University of the Philippines (UP).\(^{78}\)

Henceforth, higher education did not need to serve expatriates anymore. Instead, the scientists were free to review developments which happened during colonial times and analyzed the heritage of their peoples for the common good. One of the central questions was to what degree these countries had become independent, if they were fully independent.

\(^{73}\) Compare with John Lent: The New World and International Information Order, Singapore, 1982, p. 11-16.
\(^{75}\) John Lent is communication professor at the Temple University in Philadelphia. Neville Jayaweera was director-general of the Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation in Sri Lanka. Daniel Lerner and Wilbur Schramm were communication theorists. And Lucien Pye was specialized in politics and culture. Daniel Lerner: The Passing of Traditional Society, New York, 1958; Lucien Pye: Politics, Personality and Nation Building, New Haven, 1962; and Wilbur Schramm: Mass communications, Urbana, 1949.
or just nominally. In one form or another, this question was raised in every field of science. While architects studied the influence of European housing, historians noted the importance of the ancient trading routes. It was just a matter of time until someone started researching the colonial influence in the field of culture and communication, finding that newly independent countries still rely on the infrastructure and materials left behind or even still provided by the former colonists. In other words: “The debate has emerged as a consequence of the achievement of independence by scores of countries after centuries of colonial rule.”

But it is also possible that the issue was first raised somewhere in the United States or Western Europe. At that time, culture as well as communication studies was still part of other fields, such as fine arts, engineering or business administration, depending on the artifact. One of the first having an Institute of Communication Research was the University of Illinois in Urbana, where Wilbur Schramm taught. And one of the first remarkable studies was conducted by the International Press Institute in Zurich in 1953; it focused on news flows in the United States, Western Europe and India.

The author of this text, however, tends to believe Fernand Terrou, who argues that one of the pioneers was the French journalist and politician Jacque Kayser (1900-1962), although just a few of his early essays have been found. Already in the late 1920s, Jacque Kayser was a well-known specialist of international problems and participated in the establishment of the League of Nations. Soon after World War II, he became one of the promoters of communication research in France. He participated at the “International Conference on the Freedom of Information” in 1948 in Geneva and since then regularly participated in United Nations and UNESCO activities regarding mass communication, serving either as a delegate of France or as an international expert. Also, he managed the Institute Français de Presse until 1963.

The conditions at the universities in the newly independent countries, the introduction of communication studies at the universities in the “West” and the biography of Jacque Kayser show at what an early stage the issue was politicized. Originally, the discussions must have started among academics within the universities but they soon reached lawmakers. One

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79 Andrew Szende is one of the few who researched intensively about news flows in Southeast Asia. Andrew Szende: From Torrent to Trickles, Managing the Flow of News in Southeast Asia, Singapore, 1986, p. 5.
80 Communication began to emerge as a distinct academic field in the mid of the 20th century. Marshall McLuhan was one of the early pioneers.
82 Jacques Kayser contributed articles to publications such as the Republique, Ouvre and Le Monde.
might even argue that it had never been an issue among academics alone, but was also debated among politicians from the beginning due to its controversial nature.

However, the first conferences of note were organized by the Philippine Press Institute. So it is no surprise that Crispin Maslog remembers that he was in the Philippines when the discussion came up.84 Already in the early 1960s, the institute held two series of conferences on the development of media and sparked interest in many of the issues. Over the years, its director Juan Mercado organized several seminars. In June 1965, for instance, experts discussed the correlation of the press and economic development in a workshop. From 1968 until 1971 alone, the Philippine Press Institute held 38 conferences, workshops and symposia.

Around the same time, UNESCO began to discuss the “disequilibria” in the flows of news in a series of meetings. At the 1968 “Symposium on the Information Media and International Understanding” in Ljubljana, for example, cultural imperialism was a topic of discussion. Also, the 1969 “Meeting of Experts on the Information Media and Sociology” in Montreal dealt with these issues. All of these conferences were covered by a number of magazines, particularly the *Journal of Communication* and the *Gazette Journal for Mass Communication Studies*. Both were established in the 1950s, extended in the 1960s and read primarily by academics and media professionals in a number of countries.85

John Lent argues that the discussions can be traced back to the “Bandung Conference” of 1955, which was attended by representatives from 29 newly independent African and Asian countries. These countries later formed the so-called “Non Aligned Alliance” opposing the neo-colonialism of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), of the United States of America (USA) and of any other “imperialistic nation.” In its “Final Communiqué”, its members demanded that the economic dependence of developing countries on industrialized countries should be lifted by providing technical assistance and that regional training centers and research institutions should be established.86

Following this line of thought, Robert Savio argues that the discussions could be traced back to the “New World Economic Order” or even to its forerunner, the “Bretton Woods System”.87

In July 1944 in the New Hampshire resort town of Bretton Woods, 730 delegates from 44

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84 Crispin Maslog is professor at the Nanyang Technological University.
85 The *Journal of Communication* was established in 1950 and the *Gazette* was established in 1955.
countries discussed the situation of the world economy. The common view was that the fascism in the 1930s had been largely caused by the collapse of the international trade. Therefore, John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946), who led the British delegation, recommended the establishment of a world reserve currency administered by a central bank, which would recycle trade surpluses to finance deficits in order to create a “more stable and fair system”. But the delegates opted for a system based on the free movement of capital and goods, with the US dollar as the key currency. European economies in particular benefited from this system; they soon did much better than developing economies. This is the reason why several newly independent countries started demanding a better deal in the 1960s. By rallying together in organizations such as the “Group 77”, they asked for fairer terms of trade and exchange, a “New World Economic Order”.

Tapio Varis even refers the discussions back to the Russian Revolution and the “Anti-Imperialist League” in the 1920s. However, there is no doubt that the imbalances of news flows became an increasingly popular topic of discussion. In fact, “no [other] mass media topic has generated as much international concern as the recent controversy that goes by the various names of the UNESCO debate, New International Information Order, New World Information Order, free flow of news or cultural imperialism/aggression arguments.”

### 3.1.1 The discussions in the 1970s and 1980s

In the early 1970s, the number of people and institutions involved in the discussions increased rapidly. The East West Communication Institute (EWCI) in Honolulu and the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Center in Singapore which was later renamed in Asian Media Communication and Information Center (AMIC) became two of the

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89 As a result, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (later divided into the World Bank and the Bank for International Settlements) and the International Monetary Fund was established in 1946. One of the central tasks was to provide capital to the war-ravaged European economies. World Trade Organization: What is WTO?, http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/gatt_e/whatis_e/whatis_e.htm, place and date of publication unknown, accessed 2004; and International Monetary Fund: About the International Monetary Fund, http://www.imf.org/external/about.htm, place and date of publication unknown, accessed 2004.
leading institutions.\textsuperscript{93} The EWCI issued several monographs, including one regarding communication in China (1976) and one on the right to communicate (1977). And AMIC founded the quarterly \textit{Media Asia} journal, in which several articles about news flows appeared. A third institution contributing materials was the Asia Research Service in Hong Kong.\textsuperscript{94}

Meanwhile, further conferences were held. Some of these include, in chronological order, meetings on “Developmental Communication Resource Materials” (1970), “Role of Government Information in National Development” (1971), “Communication Policies and Planning” (1972), “Communication and Change in Rural Asia” (1973) and “Cultural Identity and Film in the European Community” (1974). Some of the organizers were, in alphabetical order, the American Newspaper Publishers Association (San Francisco, USA), the International Association of Mass Communication Research (Leipzig, Germany), the International Institute of Communications (Washington D.C., USA), the International Press Institute (Oslo, Norway) and the Radio Broadcasting Union of the Arab States (Cairo, Egypt).

It is somehow understandable that John Lent expressed in 1982 his disappointment about this development: “Perhaps too many of the same people, representing the same philosophies, are spending too much time and resources on far too many conferences.” Instead, he argued, more historical and empirical research should be conducted.\textsuperscript{95}

Two academics following his advice were Rolf Scheller (1983) and Andrew Szende (1986). They analyzed the flows of news in Southeast Asia by counting articles in newspapers and by interviewing selected experts respectively. They came to the conclusion that there are several imbalances in the flows of news.\textsuperscript{96}

Andrew Szende argues that “the free flow of news has not been stopped completely” but “progress has been limited” so that the “regional flow of news still depends largely on the West, because “it is impossible for the national news agencies to compete with the international sources”.\textsuperscript{97}

\textsuperscript{93} The East West Communication Institute was established in 1960 by the U.S. Congress at the East West Center. And the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Center was established in 1971 by the Government of Singapore and the German Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation on the campus of the Nanyang Technological University. For further information see http://www.eastwestcenter.org/ and http://www.amic.org.sg/.
\textsuperscript{95} John Lent: The New World and International Information Order, Singapore, 1982, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{96} A few years earlier, Al Hester had undertaken one of the first content analysis to document the flows of news. Al Hester: The Western News Agencies, Problems and Opportunities, Mexico, 1976; Rolf Scheller: News Flow in Asia, A Study of 10 Countries, Singapore, 1983; and Andrew Szende: From Torrent to Trickle, Managing the Flow of News in Southeast Asia, Singapore, 1986, p. 96.
\textsuperscript{97} Andrew Szende: From Torrent To Trickle, Managing the Flow of News in Southeast, Singapore, 1986, p. 96.
His detailed analysis, which is an important source for this dissertation, concludes that the largest newspaper in Singapore, the *Straits Times*, in many cases did not mention any source at all and relied (in March 1983) largely on news provided by the Agence France-Presse.

(4) Sources of stories published on 28-30 March 1983 in four ASEAN newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Straits Times</th>
<th>New Straits Times</th>
<th>Indonesia Observer</th>
<th>Bangkok Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antara</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernama</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuters</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPI</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others or unclear</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(5) Sources of stories published on 24-25 June 1983 in four ASEAN newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Straits Times</th>
<th>New Straits Times</th>
<th>Indonesia Observer</th>
<th>Bangkok Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antara</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernama</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuters</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPI</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others or unclear</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rolf Scheller also states that the “the assessments of the present news and information flow are more critical than satisfying”. Less than a third of his respondents expressed satisfaction with the flows of news while two thirds voiced criticism over the imbalances.

Surprisingly, Rolf Scheller did not distinguish in his field study between obstacles within and outside the region. However, the results are still helpful. His respondents found the predominance of the Western news agencies to be most disturbing.

(6) Location of obstacles hindering the flows of news

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obstacles</th>
<th>Flows within the country</th>
<th>Inflows of news</th>
<th>Outflows of news</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

98 The tables are based on data provided in Andrew Szende: From Torrent To Trickle, Managing the Flow of News in Southeast, Singapore, 1986, p. 59, 60.
As a result of such findings, the number of conferences did not decline but continued to increase. The historically most important of them were those organized by the “Non-Aligned Movement”, because the participants were not just debating but setting facts. Already during the 1973 summit in Algiers, the idea of a “Third World News Pool” was born.¹⁰¹ Two years later, at the meeting in Lima, it was put into a resolution which was discussed during the following two conferences held in Tunis and New Delhi in March and July 1976 respectively.¹⁰² Sooner than anyone had expected, the pool was established.

Also, the delegates of the “Fifth Non-Aligned Conference” in August 1976 in Colombo emphasized the need for a “New International Information Order” and called for the “emancipation and development of national media as an integral part of the overall struggle for political, economical and social independence for a large majority of the peoples of the world who should not be denied the right to inform and to be informed objectively and correctly.” Therefore, they created a 14-member coordination committee of press agencies and a 12-member committee to examine tariffs and other barriers.¹⁰³

Sometimes it was even for researchers difficult to follow, because every few weeks a new concept was proposed. Most popular among them were the “free flow”- and “balanced flow”- concepts, but only few people really knew what these meant. However, many felt that anything was better than the status quo. Crispin Maslog, for instance, remembered in the interview with the author of this dissertation that he supported both positions back then.

¹⁰⁰ The table is based on data provided in Rolf Scheller: News Flow in Asia, A Study of 10 Countries, Singapore, 1983, p. 81.
¹⁰¹ The Non-Aligned Movement was an international movement of over 100 countries which considered themselves not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc and represented 55 percent of the world population and nearly two-thirds of the United Nations assembly.
¹⁰² The pool of news agencies was intended to improve the mutual exchange of information. Therefore, each participating news agency was entitled to transmit and to distribute news items within the framework of the pool.
3.1.2 The role of UNESCO in the discussions

The most important location, financer, organizer and player in the debate about the flows of news became the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) which had been constituted by representatives of 37 countries on 16 November 1945 in London.\textsuperscript{104} Although UNESCO encouraged research, cooperation and exchange in the field of communication from the very beginning, there was relatively little activity at its headquarters located in the war-ravaged Parisian business district during the term of the Italian former anti-fascist lawyer Vittorino Veronese (1910-1986). That changed as soon as he resigned due to health reasons in 1961.\textsuperscript{105}

René Maheu (1905-1975) was then appointed director-general.\textsuperscript{106} Earlier, the professor of philosophy had held a managerial post in the France-Afrique Press Agency in Algiers and was chief of the newly established UNESCO “Division of the Free Flow of Information”. This might explain why, soon after his inauguration, the UNESCO “Department of Mass Communication” was expanded and its budget increased to four million US dollars in 1963 and 1964.\textsuperscript{107}

At the next general conference, the delegates called on all governments to act in favor of UNESCO’s mass communication development program in a unanimous vote.\textsuperscript{108} This was a historic moment, because in doing so, they initiated a doctrine that information media plays a decisive role and should therefore be developed on all levels.\textsuperscript{109}

On this basis, UNESCO carried out - apart from numerous conferences - several comprehensive studies on media problems in developing countries.\textsuperscript{110} Among other things, it was found that 70 percent of the world population or 2 billion people lack adequate press,

\textsuperscript{107} The objective of the department was to stimulate the use of media and to promote exchange in news.\textsuperscript{108} Already in 1963, UNESCO had organized conferences on the flow of information. At the “Meeting of Experts on the Development of News Agencies in Africa”, it was discussed how to increase the flow of news in this particular area. Similar issues were topic of discussion at the 1968 “Symposium on the Information Media and International Understanding” and at the 1969 “Meeting of Experts on the Information Media and Sociology”. UNESCO: Records of the General Conference, 12th Session, Paris, 1963, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{109} Fernand Terrou: In Remembrance of Jacques Kayser, published in \textit{I.A.M.C.R. Bulletin}, number 1, Amsterdam, 1963, p. II.
\textsuperscript{110} A remarkable UNESCO study was carried out by Tapio Varis: International News and the New Information Order, Tampere, 1977.
radio, television and film facilities. These results were later confirmed through a number of
further analyses. They all showed that there are tremendous distinctions in the availability of
media and access to news, particularly between the “First” and the “Third World”. In the early
1980s, scientists were even able to prove that there are gaps within regions. In Singapore,
for instance, there were around four times more newspapers, radio and television sets
available than in Malaysia.

(8) Distribution of mass media per 1 000 people in the “First” and “Third World”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>“First World”</th>
<th>“Third World”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>328.0</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio receivers</td>
<td>741.0</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television sets</td>
<td>338.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(9) Distribution of mass media per 1 000 people in Southeast Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>Malaysia</th>
<th>Philippines</th>
<th>Singapore</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>201.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio receivers</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>158.0</td>
<td>131.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television sets</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>120.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings heated up the ensuing discussions. Consequently, at the 16th and 17th
general conferences in 1970 and 1972, the delegates demanded that news circulate in both
directions between the “First World” and “Third World”. To further this aim, a so-called
“Communication Council” should be formed in each country. UNESCO’s designated role was
to act as a platform and coordinator “free of political or commercial taint”.112

In this period, Amadou-Mahtar M’Bow (1921-) was appointed as the new director-general.
Before his assignment, he had served as Minister for Education and Culture in Senegal
during the country’s transitional period of internal autonomy (1957-1958) and resigned in
order to participate in the struggle for independence. When this was achieved, he returned to
politics and became Minister for Education (1966-1968) and Minister for Cultural and Youth
Affairs (1968-1970).113

From the first day in office at UNESCO, he shared the general opinion of that time that “more
can be done than we are usually disposed to think, and should be done. […] We have to do

111 “Third World” countries are defined as having a GNP per capita of less than 400 US dollars per annum. Both
tables are based on data provided in Rolf Scheller: News Flow in Asia, A Study of 10 Countries, Singapore, 1983,
p. 5, 42.
URL_ID=3386&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html, Paris, date of publication unknown, accessed
2005.
more, because not to do so is lazy and selfish to an inexcusable degree”, as his assistant Richard Hoggart summarized it.114

In this spirit, UNESCO sponsored a meeting of experts on communication in 1974 in Bogota and another meeting of experts on news media in 1975 in Quito. On both occasions, participants demanded an end to the disequilibria they saw in the flows of news. Therefore, “protection laws” should be passed which would empower exclusively national agencies to disseminate news from outside the region. In addition, a “Third World News Pool” should be established.

Consequently, some experts elaborated concepts for the establishment of regional news exchange systems and prepared a “Draft Declaration on Fundamental Principles Governing the Use of Mass Media in Strengthening Peace and International Understanding and in Combating War Propaganda, Racism and Apartheid”.115 This paper was one of the most controversial because article 12 states that individual countries are responsible for the activities of all mass media under their jurisdiction regarding the international sphere.116

None of these ideas were new. Even the idea of a “Third World News Pool” had already been outlined (Non-Aligned Movement: Algiers 1973, Lima 1975). One might argue that the debate had reached full circle with the Non-Aligned Movement (1961), the “Bandung Conference” (1955), the “Bretton Woods Conference” (1944), the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Center (1971), the East West Communication Institute (1960), the Press Foundation of Asia (1968), the Philippine Press Institute (1964), the Gazette (1955) and the Journal of Communication (1950).117

However, the more conferences were held and papers were presented, the more the positions differed. In order to achieve at least some basic agreements, the UNESCO organization suggested to the participants of the 19th General Assembly held in 1976 in Nairobi the assignment of the “International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems”. The Irish journalist, lawyer, politician and diplomat Seán MacBride was appointed

117 Compare with the previous pages.
its president. Its mission was to advise UNESCO on drafting a long-term mass media program. Therefore, Seán MacBride analyzed together with 15 experts the totality of communication problems in contemporary societies.

(10) Milestones in the history of UNESCO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Establishment of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>The organization recommends making free primary education compulsory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>South Africa withdraws from UNESCO due to “interference” in the country’s “racial problems”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Inauguration of the permanent headquarters in Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>René Maheu becomes director-general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Launch of several programs for sustainable development in communication and other areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>A convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage is adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow is appointed director-general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>The World Heritage Committee is established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Founding of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>The MacBride-report is published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>A declaration on cultural policies is adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>The USA withdraws citing disagreement over management and communication issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>UK and Singapore withdraw from the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>The UK returns to UNESCO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>A declaration on cultural diversity is adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>The USA returns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Singapore sends observers to the general conference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


119 Among the experts were the “grand old man of French journalism” Hubert Beuve-Méry, Itar-Tass-director Sergei Losev, Columbia’s most famous author Gabriel García Marquez, Mustapha Masmoudi, at the time director of the Tunisian news agency TAP and the Indian journalist Boobli Goerge Verghese. Seán MacBride: Many Voices, One World, Communication and Society, Today and Tomorrow, Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information Order, Paris, 1980, p. I., and other sources.

3.2 Main parts of the report

In 1980, after four sessions at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris and four further sessions in Sweden, Yugoslavia, India and Mexico, the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems published its final report “Many Voices, One World”. It is titled “Communication and Society, Today and Tomorrow” and has as its subtitle “Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information Order.”\(^{121}\) Basically, the title already says what the book is about. It is a study of the totality of communication problems in contemporary societies.\(^{122}\)

The report consists of five parts, each of which is divided into two to six chapters with three to eight subchapters. This seems very structured but actually it is just a composition of fragments; articles by experts combined with statistics by institutions and amended with short conclusions. The terms used are interpreted differently and in some cases they are not defined at all. That makes it difficult to review the report.\(^{123}\)

In the first part, headed with “Communication and Society”, a relatively broad overview of the historical, contemporary and international dimensions of communication problems is provided. Among other things, the authors argue that communication is the motor and expression of social activity and civilization. Starting with the simplest vocal and gestural signals rooting in the physical structure and continued in writing, “man’s second major achievement” which gave permanence to the spoken word, communication would not only maintain but also animate life.\(^{124}\)

To illustrate this: In the beginning, the human voice reached only those within its range, and the written message traveled no faster than a runner, horse, bird or sailing ship. But with the invention of printing presses, which allow the reproduction of messages at high speed and in great number, “the modern age of communication” began.\(^{125}\)

\(^{121}\) In order to collect materials und get familiar with the positions, the commission organized several conferences such as the “International Seminar on the Infrastructure of News Collection and Dissemination” held in Stockholm in 1978. It was attended by around 100 representatives of news agencies, broadcasting organizations and research institutions.

\(^{122}\) In the preface, Seán MacBride wrote “modern” societies, but “contemporary” is probably the better term to describe the content of the report. Seán MacBride: Many Voices, One World, Communication and Society, Today and Tomorrow, Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information Order, Paris, 1980, p. XVII. Therefore, only the most important chapters are reviewed.


\(^{124}\) Techniques for reproduction were available before the invention of printing presses but it has had such overwhelming impact that the authors chose to take it as the beginning of the “modern age of communication”. Seán MacBride: Many Voices, One World, Communication and Society, Today and Tomorrow, Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information Order, Paris, 1980, p. 6, 7.
Further milestones mentioned are the invention of telegraphy by Charles Wheatstone (1802-1875) and Samuel Morse (1791-1872) around 1840, the invention of the telephone by Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922) in the late 1870s and the first transmission of a human voice by radio by Reginald Fessenden (1866-1932) in the early 20th century. But the inventions alone did not change anything by themselves. It was the people who seized the opportunities and who recognized the (social, political, economical, cultural or spiritual) needs which were the deciding factors.\(^{126}\)

To the authors of the report, communication means the exchange of messages as an individual or collective activity for sharing ideas, facts and opinions. Its main functions are identified as being information (collection, storage and dissemination of data), socialization (allows people to act as a member of society), motivation (promotion and stimulation), debate and discussion (exchange of information and opinions), education (transmission of knowledge), cultural promotion (dissemination of cultural activities), entertainment (diffusion of the arts for recreation and enjoyment) and integration (possibility to access, understand and share messages). Communication is not seen as an isolated phenomenon, it is considered to be an agent.\(^{127}\)

But this definition differs from the definitions provided in other parts of the report. In chapter four, for instance, the focus of the definition of communication is on its effects. There, the authors argue that communication immediately affects the psychological and social framework of people, making communication and the industry surrounding it different from all other phenomena.

In this sense, information and entertainment are not considered to be commodities but rather "merit goods" which are so valuable to society that its supply should not be governed entirely by market forces. Similarly, imbalances should not only be seen under quantitative but also under qualitative aspects.\(^{128}\)

Interestingly, the authors speak about imbalances (and inequalities) as a matter of fact. At no point do they question whether they actually exist. Instead, they even argue that flaws have always existed, particularly between minorities controlling the communication and majorities...
exposed to the impacts. From their point of view, the “freedom of thought” and the “freedom of expression” have “always been contested”. Three of the examples mentioned in the report are Socrates who paid with his life for “corrupting the young”, the French Revolution and the struggles for independence in former colonial territories.

However, the authors clearly state that despite any ideological differences, there is no alternative but to establish a new order. Therefore, the different means of communication and their impact are elaborated in the second and much longer part of the report, entitled “Communication Today”.

Here, the role of language, both spoken and written, is analyzed. The authors predict that national languages will become more important, but do not answer whether they support the adoption of one or more “world languages”. Instead, they emphasize the need to fight against illiteracy, because the total number of illiterate people is continuing to increase, although in terms of percentage, it is declining due to the gradual expansion of access to education.

In more or less the same manner, the developments of postal and telephone services are described. Due to the fast growth of the populations, the total number of people never having sent a letter or made a phone call had grown alarmingly in spite of an ever-expanding infrastructure. Particularly the “slow developments in poorer countries” appeared to the authors as “a real obstacle”, because such services are not only considered to be the result of economic growth, but also as a condition for overall progress.

The authors devote a lot of space to the development of mass media, because “no other medium has the potential to reach so many people so efficiently” to disseminate information for educational, cultural and entertainment purposes. Fortunately, there has been much progress. Within just one decade, the number of people untouched by mass media rapidly declined: From 1950 to 1975, the total daily circulation of newspapers increased by 77 percent to more than 400 million copies. By the time of the publication of the report, the

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130 “In every age, man has fought to be free from dominating powers – political, economic, social, religious- that tried to curtail communication.” Seán MacBride: Many Voices, One World, Communication and Society, Today and Tomorrow, Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information Order, Paris, 1980, p 172.
131 At the time of the publication of the report, there were around 3 500 languages spoken of which 500 were also written. It was estimated that following 16 languages are spoken by more than 50 million people each: the family of Chinese languages, English, Russian, Spanish, Hindi, Portuguese, Bengali, German, Japanese, Arabic, Urdu, French, Malay-Bahasa, Italian, Teluga and Tamil.
132 At the time of the publication of the report, there were more than 800 million people (above the age of 16) illiterate. Seán MacBride: Many Voices, One World, Communication and Society, Today and Tomorrow, Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information Order, Paris, 1980, p. 49, 50 and 51-53; and Clyde Sanger: Closing the Education Gap, p. 23-24, published in Media Asia, volume 4, number 1, Singapore, 1977, p. 23-24.
number of dailies stood at around 8 000. During the same period, radio transmission capacity more than tripled. In 1950, some 50 countries had no broadcasting facilities. Around 1960, the number had shrunk to 12, and in 1973, only three were left, while the number of radio receivers grew by 417 percent, so that there were approximately one billion receivers in the world – statistically one for every four persons.¹³³

Though television was introduced much later, it expanded even faster. In 1950, only five countries had a regular television service. This figure increased fourfold by 1960 and just one decade later, more than 100 countries had a regular television service, and the number of televisions skyrocketed by 3 235 percent and reached the 400 million mark. This expansion has been accompanied by the installation of around 2 100 satellites since the launch of Sputnik in 1967.¹³⁴

But the authors also stress the numerous remaining imbalances: In quite a few countries, more than nine-tenths of the daily press is only sold in cities. Field surveys in five countries (Costa Rica, India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Tanzania) show that technical information in particular is seldom disseminated to villagers in a timely and appropriate manner. Other analyses yielded similar results: 440 of the 991 newspapers in Brazil, for instance, were published in only two out of 22 areas (Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo).

Such disparities between regions alarmed the authors. The developing world (Asia, Africa and Latin America) is home to three-quarters of the world population but only half the number of all newspapers and only a quarter of the total circulation. By the time the report was published, circulation averaged at one copy for every three people in North America, for every 15 in Asia and for every 90 in Africa. Eight African countries and three Arab states had no daily newspaper at all.¹³⁵

Computers are more or less neglected in the report. Although the authors recognized that computers have become capable of performing more than one billion operations per second - a million times more than the pioneer model from 1944 - and that the costs of processing

¹³⁵ Around 66 percent of the press circulation in Asia, 46 percent of all radio receivers and 63 percent of all television sets in Asia are available in Japan, although it has just five percent of Asia's population. Seán MacBride: Many Voices, One World, Communication and Society, Today and Tomorrow, Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information Order, Paris, 1980, p. 123-133.
storage units have fallen by 180 times over 25 years, they devote less than three pages to this important issue and therefore severely underestimate its increasing importance.\textsuperscript{136}

However, the authors draw a number of conclusions from their findings. One is that all these changes represent an irreversible trend in the development of communication. Another is that there is interdependence, not competition, between different media and this trend continues to be true for the latest innovations.\textsuperscript{137}

Furthermore, the authors remind of the problem of “one-way flows” and the specific danger of media concentration. From their point of view, concentration in ownership is not just a temporary trend but a “worrying phenomenon”. Instead, they favor plurality and recommend adopting appropriate models in order to better the news flows.

\section*{3.2.1 Recommendations of the commission}

Parts III and V of the MacBride report are the most relevant to this dissertation. Both discuss the imbalances in communication in general and in news flows in particular. Part III is entitled “Problems and Issues of Common Concern” and describes the flaws and imbalances, “the core of the debate on problems of communication”. In Part V, entitled “Communication Tomorrow”, recommendations for a “more just and more efficient information order” are provided.

A central theme in both parts is that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression”, as guaranteed in the “Declaration of Human Rights”: “This right includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”\textsuperscript{138}

According to the report, these rights are seldom applicable, because the number of obstacles is almost infinite. They are classified as being either “evident” or “non-evident”. Some of the examples given are intimidation, repressive legislation, censorship, blacklisting of journalists,  

\textsuperscript{136}Personal computers, later known as PCs, were not introduced yet. The authors expected that the trends in computer development would continue “at least into the early 1980s”, but were doubtful in long-term. Seán MacBride: Many Voices, One World, Communication and Society, Today and Tomorrow, Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information Order, Paris, 1980, p 64-66.  


banning of books, monopolies established by political action, bureaucratic or judicial obstructions, parliamentary privileges and restrictive professional practices.\textsuperscript{139}

But even the absence of these obstacles would not necessarily mean that freedom of the press exists. Other obstacles include economic and social constraints and pressures, de facto monopolies, inadequate infrastructures, narrow definitions of what is news, what should be published or what may be debated. Also, entrenched cultural attitudes and taboos and the unquestioned reverence for authority can play a role in limiting the citizens’ right to be informed and “should be eliminated”.\textsuperscript{140}

According to the report, the most widespread practice is censorship, although it is often limited to certain subjects such as the protection of the young, pornography, violence, or religious matters. Censorship is mostly based on legislation. It can occur in numerous ways, two of them being “prior censorship”, where material is submitted to a censor for approval before the reproduction, and “post-publishing, pre-distribution censorship” or “post-distribution censorship” where materials are banned, confiscated or restricted.\textsuperscript{141}

As far as the flows of news are concerned, however, the authors generally differentiate between “one way” and “two way” flows. The latter one is very uncommon because news flows generally tend to travel from bigger to smaller countries, from those with power and technological means to the less advanced ones, from the developed world to the developing world, and, on the national level, from the center of power centers to the rural areas.

According to the report, these imbalances occur for historical, cultural and linguistic reasons. The authors do not hesitate to establish direct links between former colonial powers and their one-time possessions which would result in selection, both through editorial decision as well as in the interest level among the recipients.

To illustrate this: Zimbabwe, for instance, is a major topic in the British press, while the French press devotes far more space to the Central African Republic. The converse is also true: the Indian reader tends to be much better informed about developments in Britain than in France or Germany. Even within Europe such phenomena can be observed because the news agencies and media in more powerful countries generally dominate the industry.

\textsuperscript{139} Not mentioned here are invidious obstructions such as physical violence including harassment, torture, kidnapping and murder.


News flows between the East and the West were out of the ordinary. During the Cold War, there was relatively little exchange between the capitalist and socialist world. But the situation within the South is much worse. The authors would not even call it an exchange because it practically did not exist.

Another way used to describe the imbalances is the so-called “vertical model”. Ideally, communication is a continual exchange between equals or at least reciprocally responsive partners. In practice, this ideal was never entirely realized, probably because flows usually tend to travel in one direction: from the top downwards.

For the authors, this inevitably has effects on the type of work professionals carry out. Their duties are to “translate” information into simple terms and to gain and hold the people’s attention as much as possible. This tends to eclipse more important objectives and in the process, ordinary issues and ordinary people become more or less excluded.\textsuperscript{142}

However, the authors admit that all these problems are intertwined and that the solution of one often depends on the solution of others. Since it is not a matter of time-lag, it would be wrong to expect that developing countries could catch up. In fact, the disparities and imbalances are becoming greater and more serious, which is the main reason for recommending the establishment of a “new and more just information order”.

In total, 82 recommendations are provided in the fifth part of the report, entitled “Communication Tomorrow”. Due to contrary opinions of the members of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, some of the recommendations are contradictory.\textsuperscript{143} Nevertheless, the recommendations clearly indicate movement in a certain direction, which is why the report is still useful.

First of all, communication should no longer be regarded as merely an incidental service and its development should not be left to chance. Instead, communication should be integrated into overall development strategies.\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{144} “Communication can be an instrument of power, a revolutionary weapon, a commercial product, or a means of education; it can serve the ends of either liberation or of oppression, of either the growth of the individual personality or of drilling human beings into uniformity”. Seán MacBride: Many Voices, One World, Communication and Society, Today and Tomorrow, Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information Order, Paris, 1980, p. 252.
To further this aim, basic services should be continually expanded. Elementary education should be made available to all and illiteracy wiped out by supplementing schools with appropriate non-formal structures. Also, the postal service and telecommunication networks should be expanded or introduced where they are not yet available.\textsuperscript{145}

On the local level, it would also be helpful to establish community presses and to encourage the production and distribution of local publications. Audio tapes, (low-cost) radio, (small-format) television and video systems can help make this possible. This requires production capacity for these materials in each of the areas to be developed, so that local publishers must not rely on external sources.

Appropriate training in primary and secondary schools or in reading, listening and viewing groups can help alleviate difficulties in perusing the media. Local community resource centers should be set up if financial means allow it. These could also be helpful in the establishment of (national) libraries and archives for the benefit of the general public.\textsuperscript{146}

On the regional and national levels, infrastructure of the mass media should be strengthened. To achieve this, strong national news agencies and viable, regional networks should be set up in order to increase the exchange of news in all major language groups.\textsuperscript{147}

In addition, research institutions and facilities for training media professionals should be established.

A difficult question is whether national languages should be promoted. Generally, the commission recommends it, particularly in developing and multicultural societies, even if it is necessary to favor some at the expense of others. Meanwhile, the importance of cultural diversity is emphasized. Therefore, cultural identities of people should be strengthened by promoting conditions for the preservation of cultures.

However, since everyone has the right to communicate, which includes the right to be informed (to seek and receive information and ideas through any media regardless of national frontiers) and to inform (to hold and impart opinions without any interference), the independence of the "gatekeepers" in particular should be safeguarded.

\textsuperscript{147} Strong national news agencies are vital for improving a country's national and international reporting. Compare with AMIC: A New World Information Order, Cooperation is the Key Word, p. 102-111, published in Media Asia, volume 6, number 2, Singapore, 1979, p. 102-111.
Though the commission does not propose special privileges to protect journalists in the performance of their duties, it states clearly that freedom of speech, press, information and assembly are vital to upholding human rights, seen as one of the main tasks of the media and journalists.\textsuperscript{148}

For the commission, freedom and responsibility are indivisible because freedom without responsibility would invite distortion and other abuses. But in the absence of freedom, there can be no real responsibility. So this concept airs a general concern for the role of journalists in society and their needs.\textsuperscript{149}

Following this line of thought, distinctions should be made between media institutions, owners and managers on the one hand and journalists on the other. In addition, effective measures should be designed to limit the process of concentration and monopolization in order to reverse the trend towards reducing the number of “gatekeepers” at a time when the number of recipients is growing and the impact of news is increasing.

Last but not least, industrialized countries in general and transnational media companies in particular are addressed. They should all become more aware and familiar with the cultures and situations in developing countries.\textsuperscript{150} Although the present imbalances in news flows can only be solved by improving conditions in the developing world, people in the industrialized world should make contributions for correcting these imbalances.

To sum it up, the commission recommends that developing countries restructure and strengthen their media and that industrialized countries support these efforts with knowledge, financial and technical means.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
\textbf{General} & Adoption of a new understanding of communication \\
& Strengthening the cultural identities of the people \\
& Guaranteeing the right to get informed and to inform \\
& Abolishment of censorship and any other form of information control \\
& Measures against concentration in ownership and monopolization \\
\hline
\textbf{Local level} & Expansion of the primary and secondary schooling system \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{148} Any “censorship or arbitrary control of information should be abolished” because “free access to news sources by journalists is an indispensable requirement for accurate, faithful and balanced reporting”. Seán MacBride: Many Voices, One World, Communication and Society, Today and Tomorrow, Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information Order, Paris, 1980, p. 263, 266.

\textsuperscript{149} Another question is how to deal with the negative effects of inaccurate or malicious news. Generally, there should be a right of reply but the publication of corrections should be voluntarily. Seán MacBride: Many Voices, One World, Communication and Society, Today and Tomorrow, Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information Order, Paris, 1980, p. 263, 264.

\textsuperscript{150} The media in the industrialized world should generally spend more space and airtime for reporting about events in developing countries.
### 3.3 Perceptions of the report

Although the circulation of the first edition of the report *Many Voices, One World* was relatively low at 7,000 copies, it sparked interest in every corner of the world. The reason is that it was distributed free of charge to the participants of the 1980 UNESCO General Conference in Belgrade and therefore was read by academics and politicians from more than 150 countries.\(^{151}\) As a result, it was reviewed in numerous magazines. A large number was published in *Media Asia*.

The arguments for and against the report are numerous and largely depend on the standpoint and perspective of the writer. Inger Oestedahl, who analyzed the impact from a judicial point of view, shows that (as in other post world war debates) three principal parties have formed: the “Capitalist Bloc” (West) led by the United States, the former “Socialist Bloc” (East) led by Soviet Union or Russia, and the “Third World” (South) which was mainly represented by supporters of the “Non-Aligned Movement”.\(^{152}\)

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**Table: Highlights of the Cold War**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>During the “Yalta Conference”, Franklin Roosevelt meets Joseph Stalin and Winston Churchill</td>
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<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Harry Truman, Joseph Stalin and Winston Churchill meet at the “Potsdam Conference”</td>
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<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>According to the “Truman Doctrine”, the USA supports “peoples resisting attempted subjugation”</td>
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<td>1947</td>
<td>The “Marshall Plan” for rebuilding Europe is passed but excluding East European countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>The USA reacts to the Soviet “Berlin Blockade” with an airlift</td>
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<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>The NATO declares any attack against one of its members as an attack against all</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>During the Korean War more than one million people lose their lives without any political result</td>
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<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>To counter the perceived threat from the NATO, the Warsaw Pact is established</td>
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<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>The USA becomes involved in the Vietnam War at which end its troops pull out of the country</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>British troops control the Suez Canal</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>The Hungarian Uprising is suppressed by Soviet troops</td>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>The Soviet Union launches a Sputnik satellite and therewith demonstrates its strength</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>The USA invades the “Bay of Pigs” in Cuba</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>East Germany constructs the Berlin Wall</td>
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\(^{151}\) The 21st general conference of UNESCO was held from 23 September until 28 October 1980 in Belgrade.

The report obliges neither the “West” nor the “East” to implement many of its recommendations. Among other details, both were asked to give more media attention to events in the “South” and to “de-colonize” information by taking a more objective approach to the aspirations and concerns of the developing countries. Furthermore, they should put an end to the “pernicious activities” of newsrooms and stations established outside the national frontiers and to ensure that correspondents refrain from hasty judgments and ideological propaganda.\(^{153}\)

However, neither the Reagan administration nor any of its important strategic partners had much sympathy for the report.\(^{154}\) They criticized it for favoring government involvement in mass media at the expense of commercial private media. From their point of view, expressions such as the “right of people to inform and be informed” and the “people’s right to seek, receive and impart information” are nothing but individual rights. Therefore, its purpose is to protect individuals from the government and from other authorities.\(^ {155}\) Any intervention in the mass media, however benign it may appear, even in the interest of “balancing”, was looked upon with skepticism.\(^ {156}\)

Some even suggested that the principal reason that notably the “Soviet Bloc” and the “Third World” advocated a new order was simply the wish to control and censor the flows of news to their populations. In fact, many of those who condemned the dominance of “Western” media companies represented systems in which internal monopolies imposed censorship on all incoming and outgoing news.

It was doubted that they were really concerned with the fact that quantitatively news flow less from the periphery to the center and from poor to rich than vice-versa within their own society. And qualitatively speaking, it was doubted whether they were really interested in


\(^{154}\) Ronald Reagan (1911-2004) was the 40th president of the United States of America, serving from 1981 until 1989.

\(^{155}\) They considered, moreover, that human rights exist to the benefit of individual citizens whereas the countries of the “Soviet bloc” (and most developing countries) generally put equal or more emphasis on the human rights of the collective.

letting their populations have access to all the news and giving them the opportunity to freely express their undistorted views on different subjects.\textsuperscript{157}

From the “Western” point of view, where the press is often understood as a tool or instrument of the public for the proper functioning of democracy, any interference in the flows of news runs diametrically against the doctrine of “Human Rights”, according to which information should be allowed to flow freely, within as well as between countries. Another argument was that it would be in direct violation of the values enshrined in the first amendment of the US constitution (“Bill of Rights”), which guarantees the free flow of news.

Indeed, there it is stated that the “congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”\textsuperscript{158} This basic law was emphasized at the 1981 Tailloires conference during which the participants stressed “the universal right to be freely informed”, opposed to “any interference with this fundamental right” and called for the elimination of any kind of “censorship and other forms of arbitrary control of information and opinion”.\textsuperscript{159}

In support of these rights, Peter Galliner, Edward Pinch and other members of the Zurich-based International Press Institute expressed several reasons to be concerned that “Third World” news agencies could become a “very real threat to the freedom of the press and free flow of news”. One, for example, is that the majority of these agencies are under “full control” of autocratic governments. “Hence, a news agency pool or regional news agencies could become merely exchanges of official government statements.”\textsuperscript{160}

Furthermore, it is important to notice that the United States generally opposed international organizations such as the UNESCO and even the United Nations back then. The main reason is that notably the Reagan administration feared losing influence and power in the international relations due to the rising number of votes and the increasing demands of “Third World” countries in such organizations. Thus, the UNESCO itself was put extremely under pressure. The strongest attacks came from the Heritage Foundation. It did not even hesitate

\textsuperscript{157} Inger Oesterdahl: Freedom of Information in Question, Freedom of information in International Law and the Calls for a New World Information and Communication Order, Uppsala, 1992, p. 146.
to misinform the American media in order to harm the reputation of the UNESCO organization in general and the director-general in particular.\textsuperscript{161}

The representatives from the “Socialist Bloc”, however, had a very different perspective because the media played another role in their systems. There, the media was not understood as having a primary role critically observing those in power and calling attention to its shortcomings, like a watchdog.

Instead, the press was seen as an instrument of the communist party. So, in contrast to the “West”, where the flows of news ideally travel upwards from the public focusing on the politicians, the flows of news in the “East” is ideally being directed downwards from those in power to the general public.\textsuperscript{162}

The theoretical framework was provided by authors such Lenin. For him, “freedom of the press meant freedom for the rich to publish and for the capitalists to control the newspapers, a practice which in all countries, including even the freest, produces a corrupt press.”\textsuperscript{163}

According to Lenin, the freedom of the press is nothing else than an “illusion as long as capitalists possess the best printing houses and the largest reserves of paper, as long as the capitalists rule the press. This becomes more apparent and more cynical the more democracy and the republican order is developed. True equality and genuine democracy can only be achieved by depriving the capitalist of the possibility to hire writers, to bribe and publish newspapers and this in turn calls for the overthrowing of capitalist slavery and the ousting of the exploiters as well as the suppression of their resistance.”\textsuperscript{164}

Besides, there were also strategic reasons why the Soviet Union was so much in favor of the “New World Information Order”. Inger Oesterdahl argues that some delegates believed that serious discussion over a longer period of time could create a situation where the freedom of press would become a negotiable issue.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[164] The statement is often used both by non-socialist and socialist authors to illustrate the communist or socialist conception of the press. Vladimir Lenin: Borgerlig Demokrati och Proletaer Diktatur. Teser Antagna pa den Kommunistiska Vaerldskongressen i Moskva den 2-6 Mars 1919, Moscow, 1928, p. 8-9, after Inger Oesterdahl: Freedom of Information in Question, Freedom of Information in International Law and the Calls for a New World Information and Communication Order, Uppsala, 1992, p. 150.
\end{footnotes}
However, the discussions only partly concerned the report, media and freedom of the press. As explained before, it was an ideological battle to be won in accordance to the “Domino Theory”, the “Monroe” and “Truman” doctrines and comparable concepts on the Soviet side. That is one of the reasons why the idea of the “New World Information Order” is unrealistic. There was never a chance to establish it.

On 28 December 1983, the American Secretary of State George Schultz sent a letter to UNESCO Director-General Amadou-Mahtar M’Bow, stating that the United States of America was withdrawing from UNESCO at the end of 1984. The official reason announced in the media was that the US administration was unhappy with the management of UNESCO.

But, on the following day, Seán MacBride said in a radio interview that the actual reason for the withdrawal must have been the organization’s “absolutely justified” criticism on the Reagan administration (“The Americans believe that those who pay for [the] band could decide what music is played”). With that, he formulated what many people probably thought. However, the withdrawal of one of the two superpowers ended his dream of a new “One World” information Order.

### 3.3.1 The perspective from the South

The perspective from developing countries was totally different than those of the “East” and the “West”. It was neither about capitalism nor communism. Instead, it was about independence and sovereignty, autonomy and autarky. There was a common belief that after the liberation from colonial oppression, full sovereignty could only be achieved if all

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165 According to the “Monroe Doctrine”, formulated in 1823, no one has the right to intervene in national affairs. Originally, it proclaimed that the Americas should be free from European influence. The “Truman Doctrine”, formulated in 1947, states that the United States of America would support any “free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures”, particularly communism. And the “Domino Theory”, more a metaphor than a theory, was originally used by US-President Dwight Eisenhower to justify the American war in Vietnam. It was believed, if Vietnam falls to communism, then Cambodia and Laos would be next, and eventually all of Southeast Asia.


167 During a meeting of the UN Committee on Information in 1985, some delegates, who appeared to be from the “Soviet Bloc”, labelled the activities of the media of “some” (meant are the delegates from “Western” countries, notably the United States) as “psychological warfare, trying to justify acceleration of the arms race and its extension into outer space and preparing peoples for the possibility of war.” United Nations: Draft Report, Committee on Information, Session from 17 June until 5 July 1985, New York, 1985, p. 2-5.


forms of “neo-colonialism” (the wish to impose one’s will on others) and “cultural imperialism” (the wish to impose one’s values on others) are resisted.170

For authors such as Robert Savio, the founder of the first “alternative” news agency, it was unacceptable that foreign powers had still so much influence on developing countries.171 In one of his articles, published shortly after the MacBride report, he illustrates the problem: “If tomorrow, a special envoy of the ‘Daily News’ from Sri Lanka writes that the economy of the Federal Republic of Germany is showing signs of a crisis, this fact would have no consequence. But if, tomorrow, the special envoy of ‘Die Welt’ were to write the same about the Sri Lanka economy, the impact […] would be quite different.”172

In general, most academics, media professionals and politicians from developing countries were satisfied with the report and supported the recommendations of the commission. The Organization for African Unity (OAU), for instance, declared in 1981 that the establishment of a “New World Information Order” is “essential” and acknowledged that this aspiration gained the “wholehearted support, at worldwide level, of a large part of public opinion”. The delegates furthermore noted “with concern” that “part of the world press and of the mass information media persists in taking advantage of its privileged position on the international scene by disseminating false information and by placing wrong interpretation on the aspirations of the recently liberated countries, their need in all areas, the objectives of their sovereign governments, the obstacles to their development” and their cultural identities.173

It is indeed remarkable that they were so much in favor of the report, since it makes a number of demands on developing countries.174 First of all, the report stipulates that they should outline national communication policies as a prerequisite for progress. As a next step, large investments should be made to expand the educational, postal and telephone systems, to establish a national news agency and regional networks as well as training, research and community centers, and so on. To comply with all these recommendations would have been

170 Two other popular terms at the time were “Decolonization” and “Democratization of Information”. Both basically mean that all parties should have the same factual opportunity to participate. Inger Oesterdahl: Freedom of Information in Question, Freedom of Information in International Law and the Calls for a New World Information and Communication Order, Uppsala, 1992, p. 142.
174 AMIC: Toward a New World Information Order, Consequences for Development Policy, p. 31-33, published in Media Asia, volume 6, number 1, Singapore, 1979, p. 31-33.
very costly for their meager budgets. Even Robert Savio did not believe that it is possible to fulfill all the obligations: “In the Third World, […] industrialization with its mass phenomena does not yet exist; therefore the media do not have a significant market, they are few and they are poor. And, with few media, you cannot build a national news agency.”

Nevertheless, some of the most prestigious projects were realized. Among the first were the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) and the News Agency of Tanzania (Shihata), which both became fully operational in the early 1980s. Within a few years, even regional news networks were established. In Africa, the Pan African News Agency (PANA) committed itself to a “fresh view of African peoples”. In Arab countries, the Federation of Arab News Agencies (FANA) contributed to political developments. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the National Information Systems Network (A’SIN) was established. In Asia, the Organization of Asia-Pacific News Agencies (OANA) was formed, which later launched the Asian News Network (ANN). And on the global level, the Non-Aligned News Agency Pool (NANA Pool) was designed to bridge the gaps between the continents.

But not all recommendations were considered helpful. Notably the recommendations concerning press freedom and freedom of speech aroused suspicion. They claimed that the “Western” style of independent, critical or negative reporting does not suit the fragile situation in developing societies. Therefore, it would be a necessary prerequisite that institutions control the flows of news in order to keep countries and peoples from falling apart.

For “Western” representatives, this was difficult to comprehend. From their point of view, the evolution of a community depends primarily on debate, dissent and a strong tradition of tolerance in order to find a consensus in a cooperative and creative manner. But the “Southern” representatives complained about the lack of social cohesion in their countries, stressing that they cannot be blamed for not (yet) having democracy. Furthermore, they pointed out that it took two or three hundred years for the “West” to go through the development process and that developing countries are merely still en route. Thus, the

177 Robert Stevenson identified three types of news organizations, all dedicated to implementing different definitions of the New World Information Order: “They were the Third World national agencies, specialized regional and global services, and second-tier Western agencies with a special interest in cooperating with Third World partners.” Robert Stevenson: Communication, Development and the Third World, The Global Politics of Information, New York, 1988, p. 79.
“West” would have no right to force a system of free press upon them when they are not yet ready for it.179

Several representatives of Asian countries even argued that their situation is special, as a statement by Kuldip Nayar, former chief of the United News of India agency, shows: “We Asians form almost two-thirds of the world’s population, and I am sure we should make news by the dint of numbers alone […] We have a point of view which needs to be expressed fully and adequately. You may call it the Eastern point of view or the Asian […] It is a point of view with a positive content – something different, something real. We who have been subject people for centuries, we who have always looked towards Washington, London or Paris are not free to fend for ourselves. We have a history; we have a culture, a tradition. We are not just jumble of events, names and dates thrown about, as the West generally depicts us and probably sees us. We represent a whole stream of thought, a wave of reaction, traditions, reaching far into the past, a distinct attitude and a way of life.”180

Following this line of thought, the participants of the first “Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies in Asia and Oceania” held in 1979 in Kuala Lumpur emphasized the originality of the region before recognizing that the “developing countries of our region are still suffering from a dependence upon colonial legacies”. Furthermore, they admitted that individuals generally should have the right “to acquire an objective picture of reality by means of accurate and comprehensive information through a diversity of sources and means of information available to them, as well as to express themselves through various means of culture and communication.” But this freedom is limited because the media has “responsibility for contributing to the common task of nation-building and to the further development of the cultural identity of peoples and ethnic minorities, so ensuring national cohesion and creating abilities to derive the utmost benefit from enriching influences coming from outside.”181

Another document revealing the “Asian Perspective” is the “Bangkok Declaration”.182 Therein, it is even argued that “while human rights are universal in nature, they must be considered in the context of a dynamic and evolving process of international norm-setting,

181 UNESCO: The Kuala Lumpur Declaration, As Adopted by the Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies in Asia and Oceania, Microfiche number 81s0839, Paris, 1979, no page numbers.
bearing in mind the significance of national regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds.¹⁸³

Andrew Szende, who analyzed the flows of news in Southeast Asia, confirms that there is a certain attitude towards the news media there: “The basic role of the press in the region is to act as an educational medium, amplifying the views of the government and helping the public understand how the country is being developed and the role they can play in that development.”¹⁸⁴

From today’s point of view, it seems that it was more important to the people in Asian countries to make their own decisions than to eliminate any imbalances. In both documents it is at least stressed that “all countries, large and small, have the right to determine their political systems, control and [...] social and cultural development”, particularly communication strategies and practices.

To further these, a number of regional concepts were introduced. One is that of “Development Journalism”, whose primary function is not merely to keep an eye on government actions but to promote the development of a country.¹⁸⁵ CV Rajasundaram defines it as the “discipline and practice of communication in the context of developing countries”. Peter Godling adds that “Development Journalism” could promote national progress by stressing the educational function of news, raising awareness and producing stories about social needs or problems in the hope of stirring governments into action. But others dismiss it as “government say-so journalism”.¹⁸⁶ Another example is the debate about “Asian Values in Journalism” which implies that journalists in Asia would have more responsibility for their respective society.¹⁸⁷

However, there has been no unity on any one perception or concept regarding the report. That underlines the thesis that the “New World Information Order” never really had a chance to succeed. The reason for this disunity is that the peoples and experts reacting to the report

¹⁸⁷ The two main promoters of “Asian Values” were Malaysia’s former Prime Minister Mohammad Mahathir and Singapore’s former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. One of the few critical of the concept is the former Malaysian deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim. He argued that “it is altogether shameful, if ingenious, to cite Asian values as an excuse for autocratic practices”. A few years later, he was arrested because of “bad behavior”.

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have different backgrounds.\textsuperscript{188} This applies particularly to the diversity of Southeast Asia where socialist countries such as Vietnam and capitalist countries such as Thailand, rich countries such as Brunei and poor countries such as Cambodia, large countries such as Indonesia and small countries such as Singapore are geographically so close together.\textsuperscript{189}

Therefore, it is recommended to select one and look closer at it. How the press and its circumstances have developed in Singapore is the subject of contemplation in the following chapters.

\textsuperscript{188} “Therefore, no one spokesperson for the less developed countries makes all the criticisms nor will all critics emphasize each issue in the same way.” William Stover: Information Technology in the Third World, Can I.T. Lead to Humane National Development?, Boulder, 1984, p. 43.

Circumstances

4.1 Early development of the press in Asia

It is often believed that the idea of regularly publishing newspapers and magazines was conceived in Western Europe or in the United States of America, where the press played an active part in the struggle for independence and freedom.

In Western Europe, the Fugger Newsletter is usually seen as a prototype of modern newspapers. The newsletters were used to inform the agents and clients of the “Fugger Empire” about recent developments and upcoming events.\(^{190}\) Another example is the Weekly News that was published from 1621 in Italy, Germany, Hungary, Spain and France. By the end of the 17\(^{th}\) century, such publications were not only distributed throughout Europe and elsewhere, some were also founded in the colonies.\(^{191}\)

In Britain’s colonies in America, for example, the bookseller Benjamin Harris (~1660–1716) published the Public Occurrences, Both Foreign and Domestic in 1690.\(^{192}\) Being a free spirit, he was frequently in trouble with the authorities, both in London and in the colonies. He printed the paper without a license and offended the authorities so that the first issue of the paper was also its last.\(^{193}\)

Already a few years later, a second newspaper appeared in the British colonies in America. It was called the Boston News-Letter and was published by John Campell, whose younger brother later managed the Pennsylvania Gazette of Philadelphia, which became one of the leading newspapers in America during colonial times.

So it is certainly correct to conclude that Europeans exported the idea of regularly publishing newspapers to the “uncivilized world”, where they served expatriates only. The Freshest Advices Foreign and Domestic, for example, carried almost exclusively news from Europe to the British settlers and ignored local news.\(^{194}\) One might even argue that the press in the modern sense is nothing else than an outcome of the colonization, although it is a bit more complex than that.

\(^{190}\) The Fuggers were a prominent family of bankers and merchants in Germany.
\(^{194}\) Meaning the Boston Gazette. David Copeland: Colonial American Newspapers, Character and Content, Cranbury, 1951, p. 12.
Charles Moses and Crispin Maslog have shown that the press does not have a single origin but evolved in different regions at different times. They argue that in East Asia, particularly in China and Japan, the press started much earlier, but that the developments in Europe had much more impact.

Historians such as Lin Yu Tang even believe that the beginnings of the press in China can be traced back to the Spring and Autumn Period (722-481 B.C.) of the late Chou Dynasty (1034-256 B.C) which is the “Golden Age” in Chinese history as characterized by Confucius and Lao Tse. But this is doubtful, as the inventions necessary for the production of newspapers and magazines were only made some centuries later. Paper, for instance, was not invented before the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) and the crudest form of printing - woodblock printing - was not invented before the Sui Dynasty (581-618).

However, already during the Tan Dynasty (618–907), a court gazette called Ti Pao was published in China; which is comparable to Julius Caesar’s Acta Diurna to a certain extent. Its articles were fabulously written, similar to the classical Chinese essays of that time, but the idea behind them was the collection and dissemination of news.

It became so popular that additional editions were launched: the Chao Pao which means “Palace Press”, the Bien Pao which means “Border Press”, and the Yi Pao which means “Courier Press”. The most popular was a condensed version of the original called Hsiao Pao which means “Little Press”. It was distributed directly to the peasants and enjoyed a great amount of freedom until the mid-Song Dynasty (960–1279) when in 1160 the Confucian scholar Chou Lin Chih wrote the following letter to the emperor:

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195 Charles Moses (1900-1988) was a British-born Australian broadcasting executive who managed the Australian Broadcasting Commission for more than three decades. Filipino Crispin Maslog is professor at the School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. He was interviewed for this dissertation.


197 The Zhou Dynasty can be divided in the Western Zhou and Eastern Zhou periods, whereby the latter one can be divided into the Spring and Autumn Period from 722 B.C. until 481 B.C. and the Warring States Period from 471 B.C. until the unification of China in 221 B.C. The most prominent thinkers during the Spring and Autumn Period were Confucius and Lao Tse, whose historical existence is debated. The main difference in the writings of the two thinkers is that Lao Tse was more interested in myths than rational wisdoms.

198 The method of producing paper out of cotton rags is first mentioned in 105 A.D. Woodblock printing was invented in 593. Printing with movable types using clay was introduced in 1038.

199 The Acta Diurna, sometimes translated with “Daily Public Records”, were official notices carved on stone or metal.

200 “Ti” is usually the official resident of the representative of local governments in the national capital; “Pao” means report or paper.


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“At times when drastic measures were promulgated by Your Majesty, through your edicts, there were always rumor-mongers who took the opportunity to spread sensational news misleading the public. For instance, when Your Majesty summoned some of your old ministers back to power the other day, there was a great deal of talk about the town emanating from an unknown source. On close examination I found out that such rumors always started from the tabloid news, which leaked out from the Bureau of Official Reports and are the work of the official agents of the residences. In recent years whenever there is news in the air and the public is held in suspense, these agents would snatch the chances and write news down on little scripts and circulate them abroad. This is so-called Hsiao Pao. […] The news from Hsiao Pao is often inaccurate or even groundless fabrication but scholars at the capital would say, on hearing such news, ‘we have already seen in the Hsiao Pao’, and magistrates in the countryside would say on hearing the news, ‘we have received the Hsiao Pao already’. If it were true, the news should not have been permitted to leak out, and if it were false, it was misleading. […] I humbly petition that Your Majesty should issue an edict prohibiting their circulation with definite forms of punishment attached to it.”

Meanwhile, Johannes Gutenberg (1398-1468) invented a method of printing using movable types in the 1440s in Europe, making printing easier and more efficient. Within a few decades, the technique spread around the globe. Already in 1593, missionaries brought a printing press to the Philippines and published Asia’s first modern book there. The Spanish-language “Doctrina Cristiana” was a small catechism book on Christian faith.

Also, Asia’s first modern newspaper was printed in the Philippines. Its Spanish-language successor, Felices, launched in 1637 by Thomas Pinpin (~1580-1640), was more than simply a reprint or translation of European papers. It also carried some original articles: one is about a Spanish naval victory over the Dutch near Manila, for example, and another describes a military operation against rebels in the South.

The first modern newspapers in Mainland China were started by foreigners. Two examples are the English-language Eastern Western Monthly Magazine, which was launched by a British missionary in 1833 in Canton, and the translation of it, the Shanghai Hsui Pao, which started publishing in 1862 in Shanghai. Another example is the country’s first daily

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202 The emperor accepted this petition so that many papers suddenly stopped publishing. In the Ming Dynasty (960-1279), even a special department was set up to ensure that no false or undesired news was dismissed. The Song Dynasty is marked by the reunification of China, and the Ming Dynasty is best known for the mass production of porcelain. Henry Mao: History of Mass Communication, Singapore, 1974, p.3.


204 Despite the title, it was actually a newspaper. Charles Moses: Mass Communication in Asia, A Brief History, Singapore, 1978, p. 33.
newspaper, the English-language *North China Daily News*, which was established in 1864 after the British defeat of the Manchu in the Sino British (Opium) War.\(^{205}\)

The press in the Pearl Delta started similarly. The first newspaper in Hong Kong was the English-language *Canton Register* which was established in 1823. Further papers were started as soon as the island was ceded to Britain under the “Treaty of Nanking” in 1842.\(^{206}\) All of them, however, were founded by foreigners. Interestingly, some of them like the *China Mail* (1845) and the *South China Morning Post* (1903) still exist.\(^{207}\)

From a historical point of view, it seems that the closer to Europe and the further away from China one is, the higher the influence of colonialists. While two of China’s neighbors, Korea and Japan, acquired at least some of their earliest methods from China, the whole development of the press in Southeast Asia can be attributed to Europeans.\(^{208}\) The reason is not geographical distance alone; its history is closely related to the European Industrial Revolution and the European adventures that followed.\(^{209}\)

In Indonesia, for instance, where the Dutch ousted the Portuguese and Spanish, all of the first publications were founded, owned, ran and read by the Dutch. An example is the Dutch-language *Bataviaise Nouvelles en Politque Raisonenmenten* which was started in 1744 in Batavia (later renamed Jakarta). The first paper in the local language did not come out before 1855 when *Bromartine* was started. Even in the second half of the 19\(^{th}\) century, there were still more papers in Dutch available than in local languages.\(^{210}\)

Similar observations can be made in Thailand, although it was never a colony. The first printing press there was established by a French missionary in 1662, and the first newspaper, the *Bangkok Recorder*, was launched during the reign of King Rama III (1824-1851) in 1844 by an American missionary.\(^{211}\) The paper only published 16 issues and ceased publication in 1845 but it was revived in 1864 in two versions, one in English and the other in Thai under the title *Siamese Recorder*.\(^{212}\)

\(^{205}\) There were two Sino-British (Opium) Wars, one from 1834 until 1843 and the other one from 1843 until 1860.

\(^{206}\) The “Treaty of Nanking” led to the opening of ports plus the handover of Hong Kong from China to Britain.

\(^{207}\) Lijun Yan: China, Development of Press and Broadcasting, Brief Early History, published in Shelton Gunaratne (Ed.): Handbook of the Media in Asia, New Delhi, 2000, p. 499 et sqq.


\(^{209}\) The Spanish overtook the Philippines from the Portuguese, the Dutch gained Indonesia from the Spanish, the British prevailed in Burma, Malaysia and Singapore, the French occupied Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and the Germans ran the settlement of Tsingtao in Mainland China.

\(^{210}\) Naswil Idris: Indonesia, Development of Press and Broadcasting, Brief Early History, published in Shelton Gunaratne (Ed.): Handbook of the Media in Asia, New Delhi, 2000, p. 266 et sqq.

\(^{211}\) King Rama III. was the last traditional monarch in the kingdom. His successors modernized the country.

\(^{212}\) Even the first book in Thai was printed by a foreigner. Daradirek Ekachai: Thailand, Development of Press and Broadcasting, Brief Early History, published in Shelton Gunaratne (Ed.): Handbook of the Media in Asia, New Delhi, 2000, p. 431 et sqq.
Also, in what is known today as Malaysia and Singapore, the then three scattered British territories (Singapore, Malacca, Penang) of the Straits Settlements, foreigners brought the first movable type printing presses and launched the first newspapers.\textsuperscript{213} Interestingly, all of the first printing presses in the region were exclusively reserved for English-language publications and only few missionaries were granted the right to import and make use of the presses.\textsuperscript{214}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Language</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>A Spelling Book</td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A System Arithmetic</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Selection of Hymns</td>
<td>Malay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>The Gospel of Matthew</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assembly's Catechism</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>Malay Tracts</td>
<td>English / Malay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>Watts First Catechism</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Lessons</td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three Tracts</td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>Watts First Catechism</td>
<td>Malay</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Printing presses were introduced first in Penang in 1806, in Malacca in 1815 and in Singapore in 1823. Among the pioneers were William Milne, who applied for a land grant in Singapore in order to establish a mission, and Samuel Milton, who selected the land for the mission and requested permission to run a printing press. The petition was granted on 23 January 1823 “with regard to the establishment of a printing press in aid of your labor, the Lieutenant Governor gives his full sanction to the measure, and will be happy to assist the undertaking by the patronage and support of government, as far as circumstances admit.”\textsuperscript{216}

The region’s first newspaper was the \textit{Prince of Wales Island Gazette} which appeared in 1805 in Penang. On the tip of the peninsula, the first newspaper was the \textit{Commercial Register}, which was started by a Christian missionary and soon merged with the \textit{Singapore Chronicle}.\textsuperscript{217} This single-sheet bi-monthly was established in 1823 by Francis James Bernard, who had escorted Stamford Raffles on his historic visit to Singapore in 1819 and

\textsuperscript{213} The establishment of the Straits Settlements was laid out in the “Anglo-Dutch Treaty” of 1824 in which the Southeast Asian archipelago was divided into a British zone (in the north) and a Dutch zone (in the south). Cecil Byrd: Early Printing in the Straits Settlements, Singapore, 1970, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{214} One exception was the \textit{Chinese Monthly Magazine} which appeared from 1915 onwards in Malacca. It was circulated in Thailand, Vietnam and China where the Manchu had banned the printing of Christian papers in the early 19th century. It is considered to be the world’s first Chinese-language paper. Chen Mong Hock: The Early Chinese Newspapers of Singapore, 1812-1912, Singapore, 1967, p. 1-3.

\textsuperscript{215} The table is based on Cecil Byrd: Early Printing in the Straits Settlements, Singapore, 1970, p. 15.


\textsuperscript{217} Eddie Kuo: Singapore, Development of Press and Broadcasting, Brief Early History, published in Shelton Gunaratne (Ed.): Handbook of the Media in Asia, New Delhi, 2000, p. 404.
later served as the superintendent of the British police.218 The editorship was then passed on to James Loch and later to John Henry Moor. Also the ownership was handed on from one foreigner to another, namely to the Scottish merchant James Fairlie Carnegie who was living in Penang at the time. He planned to circulate the paper throughout all three Straits Settlements but a group of Singapore residents set up a rival paper.219

Hence, the second newspaper that appeared in Singapore was the four-page weekly *Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*.220 It was launched in 1835 by a handful of influential men, including Edward Boustead, a merchant, William Napier, the city’s first lawyer and George Drumgoole Coleman, an architect.221 In order to keep up with the competition, the *Singapore Chronicle* halved its cover price. Unfortunately, it did not succeed because the former editor, John Henry Moor, took up a position at the *Singapore Free Press* and took many advertisers along with him. Consequently, the *Singapore Chronicle* folded two years later. Its owner transported its printing press to Penang, where he had bought the inefficient *Prince of Wales Island Gazette* and renamed it the *Pinang Gazette and Straits Chronicle* in 1838. As a result, the *Singapore Free Press* remained the only paper in Singapore for several years.222

So Charles Moses and Crispin Maslog conclude correctly: “While [East] Asia gave birth to paper and printing – the two main tools for mass communication – it was Europe that nursed these inventions into full manhood. As a result perhaps of the Industrial Revolution that swept Europe first, printing was developed ahead there and brought back to [Southeast] Asia in more modern form by the early Christian missionaries from the 16th century onward.”223

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Place of Publication</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1637</td>
<td>Successos Felices</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Manila</td>
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<tr>
<td>1744</td>
<td>Bataviaise Nouvelles en Politique Raisonenmenten</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Batavia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td>Begal Gazette / Calcutta General Advertiser</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1785</td>
<td>Madras Courier</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Madras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>Bombay Herald</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Bombay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>Prince of Wales Island Gazette</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Penang</td>
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<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>Del Superior Govierno</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Manila</td>
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<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Chinese Monthly Magazine</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Malacca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Dig Darshan</td>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>Calcutta</td>
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218 Soh Yew Peng believes that the first name of Mr. Bernard was Frederick, but this is probably inaccurate. All other sources mention the name Francis. Compare with Soh Yew Peng: The Development of Singapore’s Modern Media Industry, Singapore, 1998, p. 1, 2.
220 Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 6, 7.
222 Until 1842, when a potential rival, the *Straits Messenger*, started publishing.
224 The table is based on information provided in Charles Moses: Mass Communication in Asia, A Brief History, Singapore, 1978, p. 3 et sqq; and other sources.
1824  Singapore Chronicle  English  Singapore
1828  Canton Register  English  Hong Kong
1832  Colombo Journal  English  Colombo
1833  Eastern Western Monthly Magazine  English  Canton
1845  China Mail  English  Hong Kong
1845  Straits Times  English  Singapore
1846  La Esperanza  Spanish  Manila
1855  Bromartini  Javanese  Surakarta
1861  Bulletin de l’Expedition de la Cochinchine  French  Hanoi
1861  Nagasaki Shipping List and Advertiser  English  Nagasaki
1862  Shanghai Hsiu Pao  Chinese  Shanghai
1864  Bangkok Recorder  English  Bangkok
1858  Chung Wei Hsin Pao  Chinese  Hong Kong
1864  North China Daily News  English  Shanghai
1865  Gia Dinh Bao  Vietnamese  Saigon
1868  Siam Daily Advertiser  English  Bangkok
1872  Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shimbun  Japanese  Tokyo
1896  Tongnip Sinmun  Korean  Seoul

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>1832</td>
<td>Colombo Journal</td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>Eastern Western Monthly Magazine</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Canton</td>
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<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>China Mail</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
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<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>Straits Times</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>La Esperanza</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Manila</td>
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<td>1855</td>
<td>Bromartini</td>
<td>Javanese</td>
<td>Surakarta</td>
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<td>1861</td>
<td>Bulletin de l’Expedition de la Cochinchine</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Hanoi</td>
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<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Nagasaki Shipping List and Advertiser</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Nagasaki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>Shanghai Hsiu Pao</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
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<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Bangkok Recorder</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
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<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>Chung Wei Hsin Pao</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
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<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>North China Daily News</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
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<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>Gia Dinh Bao</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Saigon</td>
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<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>Siam Daily Advertiser</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
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<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shimbun</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
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<td>1896</td>
<td>Tongnip Sinmun</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Seoul</td>
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### 4.1.1 The “Golden Age” of newspaper publishing

The “Golden Age” of newspaper publishing began in Asia, in particular on the Southeast Asian archipelago, in the middle of the 19th century. The reasons are manifold but the most important being the overall growth of the economy and increasing purchasing power. Trade was booming, especially since the British East India Company lost its monopoly in trade with China in 1833.

Before that time, the ports in Southeast Asia played just a small but notorious role, because Chinese goods bound for Britain as well as British wares bound for China were only allowed to be carried directly between the two countries exclusively by the British East India Company. To evade this regulation, shipping documents were often forged to obscure reality. But the penalties were extremely high and the Singapore port in particular benefited when the legislation was lifted. Within only two decades, so many cheap and willing workers emigrated from China to Singapore that the number of Chinese exceeded the number of Malays.

Two other factors that decisively accelerated the growth of the economy were the regular use of steam ships starting in 1842 and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Due to the steam

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225 In Japan, for instance, the Yokohama Mainichi Shimbun was started in 1872. In the following year, the Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shimbun was launched.

226 The British East India Company had been granted a “Royal Charter” trade privilege by Elizabeth I. in 1600.

engines, ships no longer needed to adjust their schedule around the monsoon season. Much time was saved, because the “canal route” is much shorter than the “cape route” around the horn of Africa. Both made the flow of news much more effective.

These developments were advantageous for the press in two ways. Firstly, the number of potential readers increased. Secondly, the time of transmission of news to and from Western Europe was decreased. The newspaper that benefited most of it was the newly established English-language Straits Times.

How the small weekly came to be conceived in the first place remains a mystery. According to Mary Turnbull, who reviewed the historical development of the Straits Times, the American Catchick Moses bought a printing press from the Armenian Marterus Thaddeus Apcar. With this, she follows the argumentation of Charles Burton Buckley, who ran the Singapore Free Press from 1884 until 1887 and reviewed the “Anecdotal History of Singapore” in the late 1890s on the basis of his own articles. The only difference in their versions is that Charles Burton Buckley emphasizes the role of the Armenian merchant, and that Mary Turnbull spends great effort and several pages correcting this detail. However, the English journalist Robert Carr Woods was appointed as founding editor. He published the first issue of the Straits Times on 15 July 1845. Here is an excerpt from the editorial:

“We need not seek out arguments in support of the unfettered liberty which the Press should possess, because there are few in whose breast a doubt is entertained respecting the benefits derived and derivable from Public Journalism. The Press is allowed to be ‘the fourth estates’ and ought never to be wanting in an unequivocal and zealous maintenance of its object, since it embraces a defense of the immunities and privileges of a free people. A knowledge of the fact that the Press is free serves to deepen the conviction that its end is fulfilled so long only as it upholds fearlessly the integrity of national institutions, laying bare to the eye whatever abuses spring up or exist, and by its faithful advocacy of public rights secure to the governed protection against the innovations or misrule of the governing. These

228 The first steam ship, the “Vander Capellen”, arrived 1827 in Singapore; and the first regular service carrying mail from Ceylon to China, via Penang and Singapore, was opened in 1845 with the arrival of the “Lady Mary Wood” in Singapore. Mary Turnbull: A History of Singapore, 1819-1975, London, 1977, p. 11; and Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore. 150 Years of The Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 16.


are the primary uses of the Press, to which the communication of intelligence and miscellaneous information are merely secondary." 

Other newspapers founded in this period in Singapore were the *Straits Guardian* (1856), the *Shipping Gazette* (1858), the *Straits Produce* (1868), the *Straits Intelligence* (1883) and the *Singapore Herald* (1886, not to be confused with a subsequent paper of the same name which is mentioned in another part of this dissertation). With the start of *Jawi Perankan* (1876, Malay), *Singai Varthamani* (1876, Tamil) and *Lat Pau* (1881, Chinese), even the first non-English-language newspapers were launched.

There is another reason why the second half of the 19th century became the “Golden Age” of newspaper publishing. Both the invention of the electrical telegraph by Charles Wheatstone (1802-1875) and the prototype of electromagnetic transmission using a dot-and-dash system by Samuel Morse (1791-1872) in the late 1830s made the exchange of messages over long distances easier and more effective. Sooner or later, every news bureau stopped using mail wagons and pigeon-carriers and switched to telegraphy instead. Already on 6 August 1844, the world’s first news received by telegraph appeared in the British press; it was a telegram from Windsor Castle announcing the birth of Queen Victoria’s second son.

One of the first regularly using the new technology was Bernhard Wolff (1811-1879), who had learned his business at the Havas agency in Paris, published the *National Zeitung* and opened Wolff’s Telegraphisches Bureau in 1849. Within a few years, he dominated the German market, crowding out other agencies such as Louis Hirsch’s Telegraphisches Buero in Berlin, Herald Depeschenbuero in Frankfurt and Boesmann’s Telegraphisches Buero in Bremen.

Meanwhile, in 1848, ten men representing six leading newspapers in the United States discussed David Hale’s (*Journal of Commerce*) idea to pool their resources by producing a single telegraphic report. Together, they established the Associated Press agency which

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235 Not discussed here is the invention of modern typewriter which was patented in 1867 by Christopher Sholes, Carlos Glidden and Samuel Soule who sold the patent to a partner of the E. Remington and Sons company.
236 *Reuters*, for instance, had sent pigeons by rail to Brussels, to fly back to Aachen on the next day.
began selling news items in New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore. Samuel Julius Reuter (1815-1899) also became interested in the new technology. Starting in 1850, he made use of the submarine cables across the “English channel” between Dover and Calais so that the sea presented no longer a barrier.

Before newspapers in Singapore were able to benefit from it, submarine cables had to be laid. The first one was installed between Singapore and Hong Kong in 1869. Additional cables were laid to connect Singapore, Penang, Hong Kong and Madras in 1872. The main reason for the delay was that cabled news was initially very expensive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(15) Milestones in the early history of international news transmission</th>
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<tr>
<td>1835</td>
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<td>1873</td>
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<td>1876</td>
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However, the new vehicle for the transmission of news was not only faster. It also totally changed the style of how news was written. Before, most articles were written in a narrative form, often starting with superficial impressions of the scenes. But since the transmission of each single character cost money and the connections could get interrupted, the reporters were instructed to send the most important facts first. One might even argue that the inverted pyramid structure in which news are published today is nothing else than an outcome of the introduction of telegraphy.

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241 Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 64.
As another result, the number of stories about events overseas increased. However, due to the historical development and local circumstances, the editor usually reported the British point of view for a predominantly British or European readership anyway. A good example is the reporting of the Russian-Japanese War (1904/05). Though the war mainly took place in Manchuria, prominence was given to the British point of view on it (Britain supported Japan against Russia).  

4.1.2 The role of the press in the colonial era

Basskaran Nair describes the British Empire as a media empire, meaning the British imposed their media structure on its colonies, hoping that even after independence the colonies would continue using British-styled organizational structure and media resources – and he believes that Singapore was no exception. That is certainly correct, but the situation was a bit more complex. Neither those who brought printing presses to Southeast Asia nor those who established the first newspapers in the region were government officials. Most of them were missionaries, merchants or soldiers. As with most people who leave their home country, either force by someone else or of their own accord, they must have had a definite reason, either for leaving or for going elsewhere.

The free spirit Benjamin Harris had such a reason; he wanted to start anew in the British colonies in America. Also Robert Carr Woods, the founding editor of the Straits Times newspaper, must have had something in mind when he went to India at the age of 24. Later, he claimed that he had worked there as a journalist but it is more likely that he was just a stringer or occasional correspondent. However, he had been “obliged to leave there” because he had been mistaken for a political spy after traveling incognito more than once to remote areas in order to research the “native character”. Thus, he moved on to the British settlement of Singapore, which was probably the best place for him to bury his embarrassing past in Bombay and to rebuild his fortune afresh.

Another reason that Basskaran Nair’s argumentation is not fully convincing is that no one believed at this time that the Straits Settlements would become independent anytime soon. Actually, the British settlers were already satisfied when they were able to make a living.

245 Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 15.
Even the editors had to take up part-time jobs. Robert Carr Woods, for instance, worked as a law agent. And his successor, John Cameron, worked as a coal merchant, wine importer and cigar dealer in order to finance his position at the *Straits Times*. “To write for daily bread”, complained Robert Carr Woods in an editorial, “is a very irksome labor; invention will not always obey the summons when it is wanted; the taste of the public is sometimes capricious; the hand may be paralyzed by sickness when it should be writing; the head may throb with fever when it should be thinking intensely”. 246

One of the reasons was that there were not many noteworthy events happening in Singapore back then, apart from the “enjoyment of all the pleasure which a footing on such classic ground must inspire”, as Stamford Raffles had formulated it on 31 January 1819 in a letter to the orientalist William Marsden (1754-1836) the day after signing the treaty which provided the foundation of the first trading post. 247 According to the first official census taken in 1824, there were only around 11,000 people living in Singapore, including 74 Europeans. 248

This shows that there were not only a small number of potential readers but also only few news items to be reported on, such as the occasional fire or robbery. In order to fill the space, editors published the horse racing program, reviewed amateur theatrical performances and recommended playing cricket for “keeping away that dread disease” - meaning cholera.

Even the news items from overseas were either already outdated or already familiar to the readers, often both, because the journey from Britain to Singapore was, at more than three months, very long (that is, before the opening of the Suez Canal), and it was common in Singapore to meet in the evenings at the Commercial Square or at the “Scandal Point” for gossiping. 249 As a result, the Singapore newspapers were considered to be a good gift for friends overseas rather than being a local force, because they portrayed what was going on in Singapore (and outdated news from overseas).

This changed with the immense interest in news caused by the outbreak of the Sino-British (Opium) War in the 1840s, particularly among the increasing number of Chinese refugees in Southeast Asia. Due to its central location between the headquarters of the British East India Company in Calcutta, which was responsible for the military operations, and the battlefield in

249 The Commercial Square is today known as Raffles Place.
China, Singapore was well placed to gather information about the war. The *Singapore Free Press* published several special editions of war news and increased its regular size to twelve pages. The war even inspired the emergence of a direct competitor; the *Straits Messenger* was launched in 1842.

One difficulty of that time for newspapers and editors was that they were closely watched by the colonial administration. Starting with the “Gagging Act” of 1823, all newspapers were required to be licensed and to submit their materials to the authorities before publication (pre-publication censorship). When John Crawfurd invested money in the *Singapore Chronicle*, he had to assure that “the paper is to be entirely under the control of the local authority. Its object is to be exclusively commercial […] All personal and party discussions will be excluded.” The Chinese-language press was also under British control; the editor See Ewe Lay of *Lat Po* was considered to be a loyal subject because of his social status.

But this does not mean that the press was an organ of the British East India Company or established in order to impose British values. Instead, the editors promoted their own position. They reported that no seat was provided for the press in the police court, complaining that “members of the press have a right to be treated as gentlemen, and are not compelled to stand like prisoners.” For a similar marginal reason, the postal service also had to endure some criticism.

As far as possible, the newspapers supported the positions of their readers. In the case of the English-language *Straits Times*, the readership was composed of predominantly British and American settlers who came to Singapore in order to work as agents for international companies. Together, they forced the governor to stop intervening and censoring grand jury presentments. In 1846, the *Straits Times* even devoted almost an entire issue to criticism of a proposed act, demanding that two-thirds of a committee responsible for customs rates should be elected by rate-payers; the paper accused the colonial administration for being top-heavy and wasteful.

However, since all the important newspapers were founded, owned, ran and read by the British, they were adamantly pro-British. This means that the press generally supported the
inflow of news and values from the West and often hesitated to criticize the colonial administration, partly because the influence of the press was limited. Or, as Ang Peng Hwa, said of the *Straits Times*, “When it was founded, it was a trade journal. Trade was done by business. And business was done by the colonialists.”

4.2 Developments in the early 20th century

For the press, the 20th century began with a spectacle: the Russian-Japanese War in 1904/05. It was the world's first war in which an “Asian” nation defeated a “Western” nation: “Never in history has Singapore witnessed a spectacle of such impressive array as the passage of the Baltic fleet on Saturday afternoon”, commented an editor, “and never, according to all the chances of war and precedents of history, will she ever witness it again”. Unfortunately, he was proven wrong. Ten years later, World War I broke out, during which around nine million people were killed on the battlefield and nearly as many on the home fronts due to food shortage, genocide and ground combats.

In this context, people’s interest in news rapidly increased starting at the beginning of the century. So it is not surprising that further newspapers were launched. In Kuala Lumpur, the *Malay Mail* was started in 1896. In Penang, the *Straits Echo* was founded in 1903. In Ipoh, the *Times of Malaya* was set up in 1904. And in Singapore, the *Eastern Daily Mail* (1905) and the *Malaya Tribune* (1913) were launched. The latter even emerged as a competitor to the *Singapore Free Press* and the *Straits Times* because it catered to the English-speaking educated classes, including wealthy Chinese. But the *Malaya Tribune* lost out to the competition. The *Straits Times* doubled its circulation. And the *Singapore Free Press* was converted into a morning paper in order to be the first to report about the events in Manchuria and Western Europe.

In addition, several Chinese-language newspapers were launched, but none of them survived for long. The *Sing Po* was established in 1890 and folded nine years later. The *Thien Nan Shin Pao* was founded in 1898 and shut down seven years later. The *Jit Shin Pau* was run from 1899 and folded four years later. The *Chong Shing Yit Pao* was established in 1907 and closed down two years later. And the *Sun Pao* was introduced in 1909 and shut

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256 Ang Peng Hwa in the interview with the author of this dissertation.
258 All of these newspapers appeared in English language.
down just a few months after. The Tamil-language Al-Imam ("The Leader") shared a similar same fate; it was introduced in 1906 and ceased publication two years later.  

The main reason for these unsuccessful operations was the false belief that peace would prevail and trade would continue to boom. Instead, a rising number of commodities were in short supply and prices exploded. Paper, usually ordered from Korea, became particularly expensive due to the Russian-Japanese War (in Manchuria). So the duration of a newspaper’s survival largely depended on its savings. The Thoe Lam Jit Poh, for instance, began just a few months before the Russian-Japanese War in 1904 and survived only a few months because its liquid capital of 30 000 dollars was exhausted in early 1905.  

Another effect was that the editors were getting bolder. In particular, Alexander William Still from the Straits Times showed courage. On 8 October 1913, he explained his understanding of the press in an editorial, “For our own part, we cherish the liberty of the press simply for its value to the community as a whole. […] But in the modern constitution of society, the press has great functions to perform. It is the chief safeguard against corruption. […] Our business is to do what we deem right and necessary in the public interest, and no law court can be the keeper of our conscience.”  

In the same year, the first libel case against a newspaper was filed and several followed. The most notable case was brought before the courts in 1921, when Alexander William Still had argued that the Singapore Cold Storage Company was operating at a loss. The Straits Times lost the case and was ordered to pay 5 000 Singapore dollars, according to Mary Turnbull. The journalist Arthur Wilson estimated that all libel cases against the Straits Times under the editorship of Alexander William Still cost the sum of 30 000 dollars. But it was a good investment because the paper was henceforth known as “Thunderer of the East” – in remembrance of the Times in London.

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262 A decade earlier, on 14 June 1900, a Straits Times writer had demanded, “A country, colony or republic is doomed when the principle of authority is gone. We shall, in our columns, avoid giving offence to individuals. If we unwittingly fail on that point, our columns are open for redress. But we act on the principle that it is better to avoid offending people than to have to tender apology.” Straits Times: Editorial, Singapore, 14 July 1900, after Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 60.  
264 Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 69, 70.  
265 Even the small, four-sheet Chinese-language Thien Nan Shin Pao contributed to the development of the press in Singapore, because it was careful in its selection of news items. Although it focused on China, it did not reproduce the “wonder” tales and “hearsay” reports which were so common in other papers.
Meanwhile, the *Straits Times* was converted into a private company with a capitalization valued at 100,000 Singapore dollars (1900). Not only does this mark the end of the “good old days” when the editor was also the proprietor, it also marks the beginning of the professionalization of the press, because only profitable papers had a chance to survive the calamities caused by the Russian-Japanese War (1904-1905) and World War I (1914-1918).

So it might be concluded that in the early 20th century, the press was maturing and becoming a big business. In 1923, the multimillionaire rubber magnate Tan Kah Kee (1874-1961) invested a larger sum in the establishment of the *Nanyang Sian Pau*. And in 1929, one of the “Tiger Balm Oil” brothers Aw Boon Haw (1882-1954) established the *Sin Chew Jit Poh*. Both papers soon enjoyed a good share of the market but never reached the circulation number of the *Straits Times*.

### 4.2.1 World War II and the Japanese oppression

In the Western hemisphere, it is often believed that World War I and World War II broke out in Europe. Actually, both had forerunners in Asia: the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894/95, after which Taiwan was ceded to Japan, the Russian-Japanese War in 1904/05, after which Japan annexed the Korean peninsula, and the Second Sino-Japanese War from 1937 until 1945, during which Japan occupied Southern China. The origins of these conflicts are complex but one was the growing “Japanese Nationalism” which refers to a blend of patriotic and nationalist ideas combining the “Samurai” code “Bushido” with the “Hachiman” cult and contemporary ideologies.

When the Japanese military came to power in the aftermath of the Great Depression (“Black Friday”, 1929), it cut all major links with the rest of the world by withdrawing from the League of Nations (“Treaty of Versailles”, 1919) and the “Washington Naval Agreement” (1921). Simultaneously, the military put the media under control by establishing a national

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266 In spring 1900, the plant and assets of the *Straits Times* were sold for 85,000 dollars, after keen bidding drove the price higher than expected, to a young man on behalf of a syndicate that converted it into a private company.  
269 “Bushido” is an ethical code of conduct that was developed between the 11th and 14th century and formalized during the years of the Tokugawa shogunate for the members of the Samurai class. “Hachiman” is the Shinto god of war and divine protector of the Japanese people.  
270 After the “Black Friday”, many people feared heavy financial losses due to the close relations between Japan and the United States, and therefore welcomed that the international links were cut off. The “Washington Naval Treaty” limited naval armaments.
information department and giving exclusive authorization to the Domei Tsushin news agency. As a result, the number of newspapers in Japan dwindled from around 1,200 in 1937 to 55 five years later and the few which survived carried henceforth officially approved information only.\textsuperscript{271} Basically the same thing happened in the Southeast Asian countries occupied by Japanese troops, including Singapore.

When war broke out in Europe, the news spread quickly throughout Asia. Already on 2 September 1939, the \textit{Straits Times} reported the German invasion of Poland and the ultimatum by Britain and France which followed. The next day, several radio stations broadcasted the speech by Britain’s Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain (1869-1940) live and in full length, declaring that Britain is at war with Germany, while the press echoed the general opinion of its readers that the time of broken promises was over.

Back then, all the newspapers in Singapore were in full support of the British position. The \textit{Straits Times} even sponsored a war fund which raised more than six million Singapore dollars and some editors, such as Ivan Palmer, quit their jobs in order to join the allied forces against the axis powers.\textsuperscript{272}

Although the battles were still far away, many difficulties arose in the region. Within a few months, food became scarce. Electricity, water and transportation were becoming major problems.\textsuperscript{273} Paper was also getting to be in short supply and the number of staff continued to dwindle.\textsuperscript{274} In this period, the editors depended almost fully on what the authorities released and what news agencies such as Reuters transmitted.\textsuperscript{275}

Since the editors were asked not to publish strategically critical information such as specific reference to naval ship movements or about the arrival of reinforcement troops, the press played an active part in bolstering a false feeling of security. In January 1941, the \textit{Singapore Free Press} reported that “the majority of well-informed people do not believe that the Japanese in their present difficulties will branch out on fresh ventures.”\textsuperscript{276} At this time, the Japanese military was already preparing its next attacks.

\textsuperscript{272} Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 103, 104.  
\textsuperscript{273} A pen worth 15 dollars in pre-war days fetched 500 dollars in March 1944 and 5,000 dollars another year later. Eunice Thio: The Syonan Years, 1942-1945, p. 103, published in Ernest Chew (Ed.): A History of Singapore, Singapore, 1991, p. 95-114.  
\textsuperscript{274} With the outbreak of the war, the \textit{Straits Times} was reduced to 16 pages, and by 1941 shrank again to 12 pages of smaller size.  
\textsuperscript{275} In addition to the news that was transcribed from radio broadcasts.  
As late as 6 December 1941, two days before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the *Singapore Herald* still made the people believe that “peace can […] be saved”. The newspapers did not report for two days that Penang had fallen, although the island is only a few hundred kilometers away. And even 24 hours before the siege of Singapore, the newspapers did not clearly point out the danger so that only few citizens fled.\(^{277}\)

To be fair, no one had expected that Japan would attack the American Pacific fleet in Pearl Harbor, invade Hong Kong, Thailand and the Philippines, and drop bombs on Singapore’s main public squares within such a short period of time.\(^{278}\) The effects were tremendous. In the United States, the public was shocked by the significant number of sunken ships which were all named after states in America (Tennessee, Nevada, Arizona, etc.) and called for immediate action.\(^{279}\) In Southeast Asia, however, there were not many options open. Singapore had just a few planes. And only the “Prince of Wales” and the veteran cruiser “Repulse” were deployed to protect the naval base, the main object of the defense plan.\(^{280}\)

Surprisingly, the Japanese attacked the island not only from the sea but mainly from the hinterland in the north by bike and on foot. There are numerous accounts describing this attack, particularly regarding the brutality of the Japanese troops. However, starting on Christmas in 1941, the aggressors began broadcasting from a wireless station in Penang urging citizens to light their homes in order to protect themselves from B29-bombers. In addition, they dropped leaflets on Singapore to surrender. Meanwhile, the local newspapers still expressed the hope that further British troops would arrive.\(^{281}\)

### (16) World War II in Asia

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>The “Marco Polo Bridge Incident” leads to the Second Sino-Japanese War</td>
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<td>1940</td>
<td>Japan occupies French Indochina and signs an agreement formalizing the “Axis Powers”</td>
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<td>1941</td>
<td>In response to an oil embargo, Japan attacks the United States at Pearl Harbor</td>
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<td>1942</td>
<td>Japan invades Malaya, Borneo, Burma and parts of the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia)</td>
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<td>1944</td>
<td>General MacArthur concentrates troops in Southeast Asia in order to fight back the Japanese</td>
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<td>1945</td>
<td>On 6 August, an atomic bomb is dropped on Hiroshima</td>
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One of the first newspapers that ceased publication was the *Tribune*, because its office had received a direct hit during an air raid and the emergency printing plant, which had wisely been installed in the editor’s home, was not adequate. It folded on 11 February 1942.\(^{282}\) On

\(^{277}\) Instead, many people demanded weapons because they still believed that the Japanese troops could be stopped: “Give us guns and we will fight!”

\(^{278}\) “Japan strikes against Britain and US”, headed the *Straits Times* in the afternoon edition of 8 December 1941.

\(^{279}\) The attack killed more than 2 400 servicemen and 68 civilians. Twelve warships and 188 aircrafts were destroyed or damaged. A few hours after the attack, president Franklin Delano Roosevelt declared war on Japan, but the allied forces decided to fight against Germany first and to attack Japan later.

\(^{280}\) Both ships were destroyed in early February 1942.


\(^{282}\) Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 111.
the following day, most of Singapore’s media professionals fled. The editors of the *Malaya Tribune* and the *Straits Times*, Edwin Maurice (Jimmy) Golver and George William Seabridge, took a boat to India, while the war correspondent of the London-based *News Chronicle*, Burly Dickson Brown, was already on his way to Australia. Some like *Singapore Free Press* editor David Waite died while trying to escape. Among those who stayed in Singapore were the *Straits Times*’ editors Harry Miller, George Peet and Leslie Hoffman, the paper’s chief editor after the war. Consequently, the *Straits Times* was reduced to a small single-sided sheet and distributed free of charge.

On the evening of 15 February 1942, the editors received a message from Governor Shenton Thomas that all units remain in the position which they occupied that morning. On the same day, Lieutenant-General Arthur Percival (1887-1966) surrendered unconditionally. The Union Jack was lowered and the Rising Sun was raised – ending 123 years of British rule. To Britain’s new Prime Minister Winston Churchill (1874-1965), the fall of Singapore was the “worst disaster and largest capitulation in British history.”

Those who suffered most during the Japanese occupation were the British and the Chinese, although the latter had supposedly been liberated from “Western Imperialism” by an Asian nation. In the first week of the occupation, approximately 20 000 Chinese lost their lives. The reason was that many Chinese living in Singapore had been engaged in China’s battles against Japan. Only the Malays and Tamils were treated relatively well and many asked to join the Indian National Army to fight for the independence of India.

Apart from Leslie Hoffman, who was interrogated for two months, the Japanese took no special measures against journalists other than interning them in prisons and camps. There, Harry Miller and Guy Wade produced news sheets in order to boost the morale of the 700 to 3 500 internees. The *Karikal Chronicle* appeared for only three months and was then replaced by the *Changi Guardian*. Both are revealing sources because of their detailed reports about the experiences of the survivors of “The Last Days of Singapore”.

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283 Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 112.
286 A first-hand account of the massacre is the memoirs of Mamoru Shinozaki who worked as a press attaché at the Japanese consulate before the war and was sent to prison when the war broke out. Later, he served as director of the education and welfare department. Mamoru Shinozaki: Syonan, My Story, The Japanese Occupation of Singapore, Singapore, 1975. Compare with Thumboo Danaraj: Japanese Invasion of Malaya and Singapore, Memoirs of a Doctor, Kuala Lumpur, 1990.
287 The *Karikal Chronicle* appeared for the first time on 19 February 1942, but only published 14 issues because the internees were moved to another prison where the *Changi Guardian* and the *Changi Chimes* were printed. Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 116, 117, 121-124.
There was also resistance media.\textsuperscript{288} Already in early 1942, the Malayan Broadcasting Corporation had transferred equipment to Batavia and set up a pirate radio station, broadcasting on the Singapore wavelength, but it did not last long due to the Japanese invasion of Indonesia. And Robert Scott, who had headed the “Far Eastern Bureau” of the British Ministry of Information, formed a secret “Camp News Committee” that received allied broadcasts and disseminated the news in town, which was highly illegal. Its impact, however, was marginal.\textsuperscript{289}

Meanwhile, the mass media came fully under the control of the Japanese, who provided jobs denied to local people during colonial times.\textsuperscript{290} Goh Peng Hian, for instance, who could not find an employment as a reporter when he left school in 1933, obtained a position at the newly established \textit{Syonan Times}.

The first Japanese-controlled newspapers already appeared a few days after the fall of Singapore.\textsuperscript{291} The \textit{Syonan Times}, formerly known as the \textit{Straits Times} and later renamed in \textit{Syonan Shimbun}, became the dominant newspaper for English-language readers. And the \textit{Syonan Jit Poh}, formerly known as the \textit{Sin Chew Jit Poh}, became the most important newspaper for Chinese-language readers.\textsuperscript{292} In total, 15 newspapers were published in Singapore during the Japanese occupation. They were all controlled by the Synonan Newspaper Association - “Syonan” was the Japanese name for the island and means “Light of the South”.\textsuperscript{293}

In addition, the Singaporeans were encouraged to learn Japanese, listen to Japanese music and to watch Japanese movies.\textsuperscript{294} The calendar was changed from the year 1942 to 2602, and clocks were put forward two hours to Tokyo time.\textsuperscript{295} The purpose of all this was to introduce the Japanese way to people’s daily lives.

\textsuperscript{288} National Archives: The Japanese Occupation, Singapore, 1942-1945, Singapore, 1985, p. 117 et sqq.
\textsuperscript{289} Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 110 et sqq.
\textsuperscript{291} Perhaps the most successful revival was the \textit{Malay Mail}. It had ceased publication two days before the fall of Kuala Lumpur, and its successor resumed publication only eleven days later and henceforth supported the Japanese. In 1943, the Japanese governor even gave a lunch in honor of its editor, Francis Cooray, because he had contributed so much to the “understanding between Nippon government officials and the public.”
\textsuperscript{292} From 1942 onwards, the \textit{Straits Times} was edited by Tatsuki Fujii, who had been released from prison in exchange for British internees.
\textsuperscript{293} Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 116 et sqq.
Apart from local sports and some cultural activities, the journalists did not have much to write about. All the relevant information was provided by the Japanese military or the Domei news agency, which was basically the same thing. This is also why neither the Japanese nor the citizens of Singapore were informed when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945, killing more than 70,000 people.\(^{296}\)

Consequently, the news of Japan’s surrender came as a sudden but welcome surprise.\(^{297}\) “World at peace again; Formal surrender of Japan concluded”, declared the *Syonan Shimbun* in its last issue on 3 September 1945 and announced that British troops would land two days later. But General Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964), who commanded the Allied Pacific fleet, ordered that no landing should take place until all the formalities were fulfilled. So it took three more uneasy weeks before the liberation forces landed.

Interestingly, two Japanese Domei war correspondents helped to revive the press in Singapore. They freed *Straits Times* chairman Robert Burns and his editor George Peet from prison and brought them to their former office, so that the *Straits Times* was the first newspaper to be revived after the war.\(^{298}\)

However, the war had several long-term effects. One was that non-Caucasians became actively involved in the media industry. Besides the Chinese, the Malays and Tamils also benefited from this. Another result is that the women who had been mobilized by the Japanese did not retreat to their homes when the British returned. They remained in the labor force, either because of necessity or by choice. So it was just a question of time until they were appreciated as readers and as consumers of products advertised in the newspapers.

There is also no doubt that it was the Japanese rather than the British who enhanced Singapore’s role as a regional media hub, since it was the Japanese who had moved their regional headquarters to the island and had held top-level consultations there.\(^{299}\) All this, however, should not blur the fact that it was a very violent and oppressive period.

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\(^{296}\) In November 1944, American Air Force bombers raided Singapore’s harbor and, from July 1945 onwards, Allied planes appeared with increasing frequency.

\(^{297}\) Internees at Changi Prison heard about Japan’s formal surrender on 15 August 1945 on secret wireless sets, but it was not officially announced until two days later.

\(^{298}\) Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the *Straits Times*, Singapore, 1995, p. 116 et sqq.

4.3 The press in the struggle for independence

In contrast to other countries such as the Philippines, where the people and with them the press had actively fought for independence, in Singapore this was not the case. There was no famous editor like Jose Rizal (1861-1896) and also no partisan newspaper such as the Manila Times (1898). The independence of Singapore was granted rather than being hard won.

When the British arrived in September 1945, a colorful parade was held. The citizens were proud that they had survived the wartime cruelties and that “their” forces brought an abrupt end to it. The Straits Times ran following headline on that day, 7 September 1945: "Singapore is British again – Our day of liberation.”

The story behind this headline is even more revealing, because it illustrates the confused situation in the aftermath of World War II. Colonel John Dumeresque instructed the editors to stop printing because all newsprint was reserved for the official Malayan Times, but the chairman of the Straits Times ordered his staff to go ahead in defiance of the ban. That was the first time that a newspaper overrode a command by the authorities and it was also the first time that the authorities hesitated to enforce their command.

In other words: The British authorities were welcomed back with relief because it was benign; and because of its relatively weak position in returning. Also, unlike that of the Japanese, its image was not marred by cruelty or the dragooning of the population. But the unquestioning trust in its ability to protect the territory and to solve its problems had been shattered. Literally speaking, Raffles’ statue, which had been moved away by the Japanese, was returned to its place but it had somehow faded in color.

In the aftermath, the press quickly adopted the role of a watchdog, but continued to support the British on many occasions. The editors downplayed the situation just described and

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300 In the Philippines, the fight for independence already began at the end of the 19th century when the native “Katipuneros” attacked the Spanish during the Philippine Revolution (1896-1898). It resulted in the first “Philippine Declaration of Independence” on 12 June 1898.
302 Straits Times: Singapore is British Again, Singapore, 07 September 1945, p. 1.
303 See Daljit Singh (Ed.): Singapore, An Illustrated History, 1841-1884, Singapore, 1884, p. 50 et sqq.
305 When Franklin Gimson arrived in April 1946, he followed the tradition started by Stamford Raffles that governors arrive by ship, although he actually came by plane. However, he did not become “Governor of the Straits Settlements” as all of his predecessors in the pre-war period had been titled. Instead, he was appointed as “Governor of the Crown Colony of Singapore”. At first glance, this seems to be a marginal difference but it is not. Henceforth, Penang and Malacca, two of the three towns of the Straits Settlement were part of what was known as the Federation of Malaya, and Singapore was conceded to be a self-contained territory. Harold Pearson: A History of Singapore, London, 1956, p. 186.
proved its positive attitude by recognizing the great difficulties the British had to face. In September 1945, the *Straits Times* even devoted its entire front page with a conciliatory article in order to prevent a panic that was spread by the official *Malayan Times*, which printed that the Japanese military “banana” currency was worthless.\(^{306}\) And in the following month, it accepted that the introduction of income tax was inevitable, although its readers were strongly against it.

The interim government drew the conclusion that an independent newspaper could be more useful than an official one, because independent newspapers are generally more critical and also higher regarded by readers.\(^{307}\) So the authorities stopped enforcing censorship but continued to keep their eyes on the press, since it alerted them to numerous problems that needed to be solved, for example leaks in pipelines.\(^{308}\) The press probably never enjoyed so much freedom, credibility and respect than in this short period: “If ever there was a time when the *Straits Times* had a useful job of work to do in Singapore, it’s now, in this phase of rehabilitation.”\(^{309}\)

The first postwar issues carried more international news from Reuters than local news. Even the first general strike on 20 January 1946 did not make it on the front page. Instead, the debates in the United Nations, the civil war in China and the violence in Palestine were reported. Even the few anti-colonial editorials which were printed were taken from prominent newspapers in America or news agencies. This dependence even increased after 1 July 1946 when the cable rates between America and Malaya were halved and services such as Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI) became affordable.\(^{310}\)

The press, however, flourished. By January 1948, the circulation of the *Straits Times* had already shot up to 42 000 copies per day and rose to more than 50 000 copies in early 1950. The *Singapore Tiger Standard, Sunday Times* and *Sunday Mail* were also doing well. In addition, numerous magazines were launched, including the *Radio Weekly, Young Parents, Go Magazine, Home and Décor* and *Singapore Trade*.

Consequently, the publishers of the *Straits Times* listed the company on the Singapore Stock Exchange and spent more than 500 000 Singapore dollars for new machines and additional

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\(^{307}\) The *Malay Tribune* folded in 1951.

\(^{308}\) In return, the *Straits Times* praised that the people “could not ask for a more genuinely sympathetic, considerate and liberal attitude towards the civil population by the military government.”

\(^{309}\) *Straits Times*: Singapore Diary, Singapore, 03 October 1945, after Mary Turnbull: *Dateline Singapore*, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 143.

\(^{310}\) Mary Turnbull: *Dateline Singapore*, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 145, 146, 149.
By the end of 1952, the **Straits Times** already had a regional network of around 100 correspondents, including Mary Heathcote as the first female writer.

Political reporting, however, started relatively slowly with strikes and riots, but speeded up with the “Suez Crisis” in November 1956. While the **Singapore Free Press** supported the British position as upholding international law, the **Straits Times** passionately argued that the British actions were morally indefensible. This was the first time the **Straits Times** did not defend British politics and, as a result, it received many letters from angry readers.

Meanwhile, numerous local associations and parties were founded, including the Malayan Democratic Union (MDU, 1945) and the Malay Nationalist Party (MNP, 1945). Another one was the Malayan Communist Party (MCP, 1930). It tried to make the people believe that its guerilla troops beat the Japanese, although in reality it did not contribute to Japan’s surrender. While the British feared this group as being a dangerous force, many local politicians welcomed it as a possible coalition partner.

There was a common belief that independence could only be achieved through merging with Malaya and that this could only be achieved with the support of the communists. In order to achieve this, a referendum was held in 1962. Two options were presented to the public: the first envisaged that Singapore would become a federal state with no more autonomy than the other eleven states of Malaysia. The second option was that all Singapore citizens would become citizens of the federation but retain a large extent of their autonomy. Each required a two-thirds majority.

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312 In October 1960, the **Straits Times** even had its own correspondent in Congo covering the activities of the Malayan special contingent of the United Nations peacekeeping mission. While the international agencies dealt mainly with big topics such as the diplomatic discussions at United Nations headquarters in New York, reporter Wee Kim Wee found himself in the unique position of being able to get news out ahead of both the Malayan radio and the local people. Via Brazzaville and London, he dispatched his information within just two hours to Singapore using the cheap British Commonwealth rate of a penny a word. That was even faster and more efficient than the military was able to do it. Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 225.
313 The strategically important Suez Canal, finally opened in 1869, had been financed by the French and the Egyptian governments. Later, the Egyptian government’s share was bought out by the British. Since all of them had economic interests in it, Egypt was pitted against an alliance between France, Britain and Israel. In 1956, an armed conflict erupted over the issue. When the USSR threatened to intervene on behalf of Egypt, the USA feared a larger conflict and forced the British and French to withdraw. The “Suez Crisis” resulted in the resignation of the British Prime Minister Anthony Eden and marked the completion of the shift in the global balance of power from Europe to the USA and the USSR respectively.
315 Already on 25 September 1945, more than two weeks before the British landed, the “Central Executive Committee” issued a manifesto stressing that it wants “to establish a democratic government in Malaya [including Singapore] with an electorate drawn from all races of each state and the anti-Japanese army.”
316 In the years between 1945 and 1947 alone, they organized altogether 119 strikes, of which around 85 percent were successful.
Around 73 percent chose the second option and 26 percent left the form blank because the pro-communist Barisan Sosialis (founded in 1961) opposing the idea of a referendum had recommended doing so. But this move had been anticipated by the People's Action Party, founded in 1954 by Lee Kuan Yew, as seen in the insertion of a clause that all blank or invalid votes would be counted as being on the side of the People’s Action Party (the second option). Though this method was highly controversial, the ruling party used the mandate to merge Singapore with Malaysia on 16 September 1963. But this was not the only outcome. The referendum (as well as the earlier election in May 1959) was accompanied by extremely heated exchanges between the media and politicians.

Although newspapers in Singapore generally supported the merger with Malaysia, some were critical how it was achieved. Notably the English-language press got in trouble with the local political parties, particularly Leslie Hoffman's *Straits Times* with Lee Kuan Yew’s People’s Action Party (1954). Already in 1956, a top-level politician had accused the "mouthpiece of British colonial interests" (meaning the *Straits Times*) that it “favors only those who in its opinion are playing the colonial game.” Also, Lee Kuan Yew had the impression that the *Straits Times* was “vehemently anti-PAP to prevent us from winning and forming the government.”

Both argued that newspapers which were owned and run by foreigners cannot truly represent the interests of the local people. But at that time, the *Straits Times* was no longer foreign-owned. Thus, the editors protested and soon, freedom of the press became a big issue in Singapore: “Not for hundred years has the freedom of press in Singapore been in such danger as it is today.”

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317 In total, 624 000 people were allowed to vote, and nearly 90 percent of those eligible voted.
318 The problems with the Chinese-, Malay- and Tamil-language press were over Chinese chauvinism towards the other ethnical groups.
319 Lin Chin Siong in a speech in the Legislative Assembly on 4 October 1956. Published in Straits Times: Unknown, Singapore, 10 May 1956, after Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 201.
320 On 16 December 1960, the *Straits Times* devoted a full-length editorial to the issue of freedom of the press. "It is plain that if the Press were completely free, the matter of its freedom would not have to be discussed. It is no less plain that if the press were completely controlled, the matter of this control could not be debated. [...] The position today is that no newspaper can be printed and published without government permission. It needs a second permit for its sale in the other territory. These permits must be renewed annually. They can be refused without reason being given, they can be withdrawn without notice, the courts have no jurisdiction and the newspaper no redress. The press is not free. It may be asked why the press should claim a greater freedom than the individual whose fundamental freedoms are restricted by legislation which permits detention without trial. The answer is simple, and it should be convincing. If a newspaper is subversive, if its editors are seditious, if the press stirs up communal strife – the activities for which personal freedom can be lost – the evidence is there in black and white. Newspapers cannot commit their crimes in secret. The printed word is never too terrified to testify.” *Straits Times*: Editorial, Singapore, 16 December 1960. Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 223.
Since a solution was not in sight, the *Straits Times* decided to move its main office to Kuala Lumpur, where the company already owned the *Malay Mail*. In context with the election and merger, Lee Kuan Yew warned on 18 May 1959 that “any newspaper that tries to sour up or strain relations between the federation and Singapore after May 30 will go in for subversion.” Leslie Hoffman took the case to the International Press Institute in Zurich which was meeting in West Berlin at the time, but not much came out of it.

“This was a very significant moment in the media history of Singapore”, said Arun Mahizhman in an interview with the author of this dissertation, because never before had the press been so directly confronted. How heated the situation was, is also shown by the fact that even Chinese- and Tamil-language newspapers came under fire. The *Kerala Bandu* was banned for five months, and the *Nanyang Siang Pau* was intercepted on the causeway to Kuala Lumpur without any explanation.

However, the political parties in both parts of the federation failed to reach a power-sharing agreement, which led to the announcement of Singapore’s separation from Malaysia in a radio broadcast on 9 September 1965 at 10 a.m. This decision brought the newspapers in a difficult situation, especially those which had moved from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur or vice versa. Neither the Singaporean nor the Malaysian government put pressure on the publishers at this early stage, but it was clear that each wanted to have an own national paper.

The Chinese-language *Nanyang Siang Pau*, which already had plans for the separation of the company, abandoned its Kuala Lumpur office within ten days and moved back to Singapore, while the Malay-language *Utusan Melaya* went in the opposite direction. The decision for the *Straits Times* was tougher, because at least 70 percent of its owners were based in Singapore and up to 90 percent of the editors located in Kuala Lumpur. Since it had readers on both sides of the new border, it henceforth published two versions, one for Federation of Malaysia and the other one for independent and newly separate Singapore. But this was obviously not a long-term solution.

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321 See the documentation of the interviews.

322 One of the main issues was how the different ethnical groups would be represented in the government. Lee Kuan Yew: *The Battle for a Malaysian Malaysia*, Singapore, 1965, p. 5 et sqq.

323 After riots in Kuala Lumpur broke out, the Tunku Abdul Rahman declared a state of emergency in Malaysia in 1969. At the end of the emergency, journalists were urged to guarantee loyalty to the king.


326 At this time, the *Straits Times* described itself as the “National Newspaper” which was hard to justify after separation, but it would have also been embarrassing to drop this masthead immediately.
So it might be concluded that the press played a very small role in the struggle for Singapore’s independence, if any, because there was not much struggle at all. In fact, some writers for the *Straits Times* even asked the British to stay in the country. But the foreign press demanded their retreat. The London-based *Observer*, for instance, criticized that the “current cost of British Far Eastern operations, based on Singapore, is reckoned at 350 million pound sterling a year” and asked whether “we can afford this […] when our economy is fighting for its life.”

Also the London-based *Guardian* could not accept that the government was spending 600 000 pounds sterling per day for the troops in Singapore while 600 000 people in Britain were unemployed: “Britain should not be asked to make economic sacrifices at home in order to maintain Singapore as a costly alternative to [the British garrisons at] Aldershot or Catterick.”

(17) Major events in Singapore from 1819 until 1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>Founding of the settlement on the southern tip of the Malay peninsula by Stamford Raffles</td>
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<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>Formation of the Straits Settlements (Singapore, Malacca, Penang)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Singapore becomes a British crown colony</td>
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<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>The opening of the Suez Canal increases Singapore’s accessibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Japanese troops conquer the city</td>
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<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Japan surrenders, the British return</td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Establishment of the People’s Action Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Lee Kuan Yew becomes prime minister</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Members of the communist faction of the People’s Action Party form the Barisan Sosialis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>After a referendum Singapore joins the Federation of Malaysia</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Singapore leaves the federation and becomes an independent country</td>
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4.4 The press in the nation-building process

In contrast to other countries such as the Philippines, where nationhood developed during the struggle for independence, no one had intended Singapore to become a separate, independent country. Thus, the ruling People’s Action Party did not only have to tackle the practical problems of building an independent economy and defense. It also had to create among the citizens a feeling of identity and solidarity with their newly independent territory, “making them feel they are Singaporeans instead of Chinese, Malays, Indians and

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Neither prime minister Lee Kuan Yew (1923-) nor any of his ministers had any doubt that the media were of vital importance in this process.

Unfortunately, relations between journalists and notably Lee Kuan Yew were still tense. Anthony Polsky, who tried to explain the quarrels of *Lee Kuan Yew Versus the Press* in 1971, argues that the “ruthlessness and increasing despotism of his rule” were an outcome of a series of four crises, starting with his conflict with the communists in the late 1950s, often described as “Riding the Tiger.” But his argumentation is not fully convincing, because it does not reflect to what extent the press was involved in the crises. It is also hard to believe that Lee Kuan Yew was just reacting to the events around him, as he never conceals his prejudice towards what he perceived to be the sub-standard quality of the *Straits Times* and other newspapers.

Some years later, Lee Kuan Yew even said: “I read reports of all the bright students going into engineering, the sciences, medicine, economics, and so on. The not-so-bright go to political science and sociology. When they cannot get a good job, they go on to journalism.” On another occasion, he noted that all kinds of professionals (doctors, lawyers, engineers) have to pass stringent examinations and are bound by rules of conduct except for journalists: “What amazes me is that this powerful instrument does not require of its practitioners special professional training nor codes of conduct to govern them. You can be a journalist without understanding the impact on the minds of millions when you write smut and circulate it through millions of copies to literate and semi-literate people.”

Lee Kuan Yew’s negative attitude towards the press probably results from earlier experiences. When he returned from Cambridge to Singapore in late 1949, “press reports and photographs […] caused [several] riots with loss of life.” One clash happened in 1950 and became known as the “Maria Hertogh Riots”. It lasted for three days during which in total 18 people were killed (nine by the rioters and nine shot by the police) and more than 170

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330 The other crises were the “Confrontation” caused by Indonesia’s president Sukarno against the federation, Singapore’s expulsion from the federation and the Suez crisis. Anthony Polsky: Lee Kuan Yew Versus the Press, p. 183, 195, 196, published in Pacific Community, volume 3, number 1, Singapore, 1971, p. 183-203.
Another clash with 36 dead and many more wounded happened on Prophet Mohammed’s birthday in 1964. It was ignited by a Malay-language newspaper which had alleged that the Malay minority was being oppressed by the Chinese majority.\(^{333}\)

Also, the “bad” behavior of the press before, during and after the merger with Malaysia obviously angered Lee Kuan Yew.\(^{334}\) Not only did he have the impression that the press “saw the non-communist leadership as a Trojan horse of the Chinese-speaking communists”, it even seemed to him that the English-language newspapers were “bitterly hostile to the P[eople’s] A[ction] P[arty]”.

Thus, he warned the editors that “they would give it to them as hard as they were giving it to us” and fired his “first salvo” by arguing that it was an open secret that the “mouthpiece of the British colonial interests” (meaning the *Straits Times*) would scoot to Kuala Lumpur as soon as People’s Action Party won the next election.

Interestingly enough, he turned out to be right. The *Straits Times* moved to Kuala Lumpur and Lee Kuan Yew lost his remaining respect for those “birds of passage” flying away to the federation to “proclaim from there that they would die for the freedom of the press in Singapore”. Even more embarrassing, the *Straits Times* moved back to Singapore after Singapore’s separation and completely changed its editorial bias then.\(^{335}\)

Consequently, Lee Kuan Yew began propounding his own concept, according to which politics should be reserved for professional politicians only, so no person or group of persons, organizations or associations would be allowed to comment on national politics without first joining or forming a political party.\(^{336}\)

The role Lee Kuan Yew wanted the media to play, he explained in a speech at the meeting of the International Press Institute in Helsinki on 9 June 1971: “The mass media can help to present Singapore’s problems simply and clearly and then explain, how, if they support certain programs and policies, these problems can be solved. Most important, we want the mass media to reinforce, not to undermine, the cultural values and social attitudes being


\(^{334}\) Immediately after Singapore’s separation from Malaysia, he expressed anger about a photograph which allegedly showed him smiling on the occasion of the separation, although some argue it showed the prime minister near to tears. Mary Turnbull: *Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times*, Singapore, 1995, p. 262.

\(^{335}\) The company was split into the [New] Straits Times (Malaysia) which remained in Kuala Lumpur, and the Straits Times Press (Singapore).

inculcated in our schools and universities. The mass media can create a mood in which people become keen to acquire the knowledge, skills and disciplines of advanced countries. Without these, we can never hope to raise the standards of living of our people."

Henceforth, the stated objectives of the press in the 1970s, as announced by the Times Organization Group of Newspapers, were to “inform, to educate, to activate, and to entertain.” “To inform” meant keeping readers abreast of developments in Singapore and abroad. “To educate” involved explaining major news events and creating a deeper awareness of the problems. “To activate”, the most controversial aim, meant helping to seek solutions to community problems by providing forums for the exchange of views. And “to entertain” meant to “communicate without boring”. 337

One unknown scholar argued in 1971 that even some sort of intimidation was used to keep the media in line. “There exist then various checks and controls on the news media in Singapore today. They range from […] laws […] to discrete phone calls from top government officials to newspaper editors. […] Any newspaper man knows for a fact of life that if he had the bravado to publish Government classified information (a la Pentagon Papers) it is not his Publishing Permit that would be withdrawn or to a Court of Law that he would be dragged to, but to a Police Cell at the Central Police Station followed by a systematic search of his editorial offices by Internal Security Department, which is not for normal men a very happy state of affairs.” 338

Thus, not everybody was satisfied with this situation. In 1970, Deputy Prime Minister Goh Keng Swee commented that “we have in Singapore intellectual conformity in place of intellectual inquisitiveness and the sum total is a depressing climate of intellectual sterility.” A few years later, Toh Chin Chye, chairman of the People’s Action Party, complained that “the people of Singapore feel restless, that the government is doing or making decisions which they feel are being rammed down their throats.” 339

But, in general, the limited role of the press was accepted, even by journalists. Thus, the early 1970s marked not only the end of “expatriate editorship”, after the manager of the *Straits Times* had to flee because of tax problems, it also marked the beginning of

339 Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 298
“government say-so journalism.” This is the first indication that the news flows in Singapore had not become more just.

Nevertheless, the newspaper business flourished. In the early 1970s, there were twenty locally published papers available: eleven dailies and nine Sunday papers, with a total daily circulation of around 370,000 copies. Seven were in English, eight in Chinese, three in Tamil and two in Malay. The leading newspaper was the English-language Straits Times (1845); it had a daily circulation of almost 230,000 copies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>Catchick Moses buys a printing press and appoints Robert Carr Woods as editor</td>
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<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>The first issue of the Straits Times and Singapore Journal of Commerce is published on 15 July</td>
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<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>Robert Carr Woods turns the paper into an afternoon daily</td>
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<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>John Cameron becomes editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>The editors subscribe to Reuters news service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Bicycles are bought for suburban delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>The plant and assets are sold in an auction and turned into a private corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Alexander William Still is appointed as editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>The first libel case is filed against the paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>George William Seabridge changes the format and increases the size to 24 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>The first rotary press installed; several vans are bought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>The paper is delivered by plane to Kuala Lumpur and Penang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>The first advertisements are printed in color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>After the Japanese conquered the city, the last issue is published on 15 February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>The Japanese use the printing press for the Syonan Times, later renamed in Syonan Shimbun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>The Straits Times resumes publication on 7 September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>The editors subscribe to the Associated Press and United Press International news wires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>A teleprinter is installed to link the headquarters with branch offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>The company is publicly listed at the stock market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>A.C. Simmons is appointed managing director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Leslie Hoffman is appointed editor-in-chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>After a dispute with Lee Kuan Yew, the headquarters are moved from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>A.C. Simmons regains his post as Managing Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>The Straits Times moves back to Singapore and completely changes its editorial bias</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

340 In 1973, the Straits Times came under fire when the comptroller of Inland Revenue accused the company of alleged tax evasions on secret commissions paid into the accounts of a foreign subsidiary. A.C. Simmons, who, although he had worked for the Straits Times half of his life, had nothing do with the allegations, fled via Malaysia and Hong Kong to New Zealand and never came back to Singapore, since all those responsible had either already died or left Singapore. When he died in 1987, his sons brought their father’s ashes back to Singapore, which was considered to bringing unfavorable “feng shui food”. Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 305, 306.

Development

5.1 Dominance of the People’s Action Party

The period from 1965 to 2000 was a turbulent time in Singapore’s history. Apart from major events on the international level such as the “American War” in nearby Vietnam (1965-1973), politicians in Singapore had to face several difficulties. One was to uphold social peace and stability. Another one was to diffuse a general feeling of alienation between the different ethnic groups living in the independent and newly separate city state which was far away from being a nation.

The politicians believed that only a strong government could cope with these challenges. This is not surprising because many politicians in the region were this opinion; as described in the previous chapters. In fact, every political party intends - must intend - to gain as much power as possible in order to form a capable government. But in Singapore, the development as well as the outcome of the political competition is unusual.342

When Singapore was part of the Federation of Malaysia, there was a variety of parties representing different concepts. By backing the Singapore Alliance Party, the Malaysia-based United Malays National Organization (UMNO) tried to oust the Singapore-based People’s Action Party (PAP), which was trying to expand its influence on the peninsula. In the 1963 general election, eight different parties plus several independent candidates lined up.343 The People’s Action Party was challenged in every single constituency.344

A new party having good chances to form or at least to be part of the government was Barisan Sosialis. It was founded by former left-wing members of the People’s Action Party such as Lee Sie Choh and Lim Chin Siong after they had been expelled or had left the party because they were unhappy with the more moderate faction surrounding Lee Kuan Yew.345

The election was accompanied by very heated media campaigns. The People’s Action Party accused its competitor for being a front for communism. This charge was vehemently denied

343 The People’s Action Party, Barisan Sosialis, United People’s Party, Singapore People’s Alliance, Pan-Malayan Islamic Party, United Democratic Party, Worker’s Party and the Party Rakyat.
by the members of the Barisan Sosialis, although it was obvious that some of its members
admired the Chinese brand of revolutionary socialism. In return, the Barisan Sosialis tried to
spread fear among the citizens that freedom would be curtailed if the People’s Action Party
rose to power.

In light of these events, the Internal Security Council launched operation “Cold Store” on 2
February 1963. Hundreds of pro-communists were arrested, including several leaders of the
Barisan Sosialis and other organizations which were coincidentally challenging the People’s
Action Party.346

Furthermore, the ruling People’s Action Party kept the official campaigning period (between
nomination and polling day) to a legal minimum of nine days. This period coincided with
festivities in Malaysia so that opposition parties had difficulties getting election materials
printed. Only the People’s Action Party had all its posters and brochures ready.347

As a result, the People’s Action Party won nearly 47 percent of the vote: 37 out of 51 seats.
Subsequently, Barisan Sosialis felt that it was pointless to continue the political struggle. One
by one, they resigned from parliament. By 1968, there was not a single opposition in
parliament left.348 It took a full decade until they returned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of seats</th>
<th>Fielded by the PAP</th>
<th>Unopposed</th>
<th>Contested</th>
<th>Won by the PAP</th>
<th>Seats for the PAP</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>72.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>97.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>98.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>95.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>97.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>97.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

348 They left the seats vacant because they thought that it would be more useful to “take the fight to the streets”. In
the following election, they asked the voters for blank ballots but only few followed.
349 The table is based on data provided in Singapore Elections: Index, http://www.singapore-elections.com/,
Singapore, 2001, accessed 2005; and Elections Department Singapore: Past Parliamentary Election Results,
(20) Number of votes won by the People’s Action Party in the parliamentary elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Eligible voters</th>
<th>Total voters</th>
<th>Turnout in percent</th>
<th>Obtainable by the PAP</th>
<th>Won by the PAP</th>
<th>Percentage change to previous election</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>617650</td>
<td>587433</td>
<td>95.10</td>
<td>581615</td>
<td>272924</td>
<td>46.90 -7.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>759367</td>
<td>84833</td>
<td>91.80</td>
<td>815130</td>
<td>65812</td>
<td>86.70 +39.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>908382</td>
<td>812926</td>
<td>95.50</td>
<td>636452</td>
<td>494268</td>
<td>77.70 +5.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>1095817</td>
<td>957297</td>
<td>95.60</td>
<td>1342435</td>
<td>848025</td>
<td>63.20 -16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1290426</td>
<td>685141</td>
<td>95.00</td>
<td>783612</td>
<td>477760</td>
<td>61.00 -2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1495389</td>
<td>944624</td>
<td>95.60</td>
<td>1408656</td>
<td>848025</td>
<td>63.20 -12.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>1669013</td>
<td>944624</td>
<td>95.60</td>
<td>1408656</td>
<td>848025</td>
<td>63.20 -12.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1692384</td>
<td>947716</td>
<td>95.00</td>
<td>783612</td>
<td>477760</td>
<td>61.00 -2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>1881011</td>
<td>765332</td>
<td>95.90</td>
<td>716745</td>
<td>465751</td>
<td>65.00 +4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2001 | 2036923         | 675306       | 94.60              | 625267                | 470765        | 75.30 +10.03                          

Meanwhile, Lee Kuan Yew cemented his power within the People’s Action Party. One of his first steps was the introduction of a closed cadre system in which “the cardinals appoint the pope, and the pope appoints the cardinals”, as Pang Cheng Liao describes it. At the top is the so-called “Central Executive Committee” which chooses the cadres. The only distinction between an ordinary member and a cadre is the latter’s right to vote every two years for the party’s top leaders. Nobody knows how many cadres there are because their names are kept secret. Originally, there were probably around 500 “temporary cadres” appointed. Diane Mauzy guesses that each year another 100 cadres are recommended. However, in such a closed system, it is apparent that the same group of people is elected again and again.

Henceforth, power was kept to a handful of men headed by Lee Kuan Yew, who saw them as architects of a new society. Among them were the “economic and social visionary” Goh Keng Swee, the “organizational utility man” Lim Kim San and the “history maker” Devan Nair. The parliament continued to perform several functions. It was a good forum to acquire political skills and visibility for the less experienced politicians. They discussed bills drafted by the leadership and with that prevented hasty or bad legislation. The backbenchers playing the role of opposition were able to criticize details of the implementation, but not any

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355 Lam Peng Er: Lee’s Lieutenants, Singapore’s Old Guard, St. Leonards, 1999, p. I.
principles. So the main function of the de facto one-party parliament was limited to legitimize what a small group of leaders had come up with.\(^{356}\)

One of the main tasks of this group was to recruit “talents” because “captain” Lee Kuan Yew believed that “whether we score a resounding success, did not depend on the captain alone. Each member of the team has a decisive role to play.”\(^{357}\) Therefore, they systematically scanned the top echelons of all sectors in Singapore “to look for men and women in their 30s and 40s whom we would persuade to stand as our candidates.” Inspired by the drama of the American spaceship Apollo 13, when one false move by any of the astronauts on board would have left them drifting out in space, Lee Kuan Yew even used the help of a psychologist to test the candidates.\(^{358}\)

In addition, the government initiated the establishment of several “para-political” organizations which were linked directly to the prime minister’s office.\(^{359}\) Those organizations were used to identify grassroots leaders as early as possible in order to get them in party line.\(^{360}\) Already in the 1960s, the People’s Action Party began establishing kindergartens - by the late 1990s, there were more than 300 of them. Meanwhile, the government limited the scope of the opposition by passing the “Societies Act” in 1967 which requires any gathering of more than ten people to be registered.\(^{361}\)

One of the best recruiters was the civil servant Hon Sui Sen. He placed promising talents not only in political but also in business positions, notably in Government-linked companies (GLCs).\(^{362}\) Among many others, he chose the physics lecturer Tony Tan to manage one of the largest banks in Singapore, the Overseas Chinese Banking Corporation, and the civil


\(^{357}\) Lee Kuan Yew in an article published in the Straits Times on 14 June 1959, after Lam Peng Er (Ed.): Lee’s Lieutenants, Singapore’s Old Guard, St. Leonards, 1999, p. ix.


\(^{359}\) As a result, the number of party members increased by 2 000 per annum. Approximately 70 percent joined the party either for employment or a similar reason such as prestige. In the 1990s, the People’s Action Party had more than 12 000 members. Today, even the youth wing of the party, the “Young PAP”, is said to have more members than any of the opposition parties.


\(^{361}\) The 1988 amendment tightened the act so that any registered society making political statements beyond the scope of the stated constituency can be de-registered. Today, around 200 groups are registered every year, whereas typically only two or three have their applications denied. Recently, a martial arts sports club was denied because many of its would-be members had criminal records, another one was a cult group and a third one was the gay and lesbian group “People Like Us”. Diane Maizy: Singapore Politics Under the People’s Action Party, London, 2002, p. 131; and David Birch: Singapore Media, Communication Strategies and Practices, Melbourne, 1993, p. 8, 9.

\(^{362}\) From 1961 until 1968, Hon Sui Sen was chairman of the Economic Development Board. Later, he became chairman of the Development Bank of Singapore.
servant Goh Chok Tong to run the national shipping Neptune Orient Lines. Both later became deputy prime minister and Goh Chok Tong even succeeded Lee Kuan Yew as prime minister.363

It is often denied that family relationship with Lee Kuan Yew or membership in the People’s Action Party boosted the career of anyone.364 But the fact is that his son, Lee Hsien Loong, was appointed as Junior Minister to the Ministry of Trade and Industry and head of the youth wing of the People’s Action Party during his father’s term in office. Later, Lee Hsien Loong even became finance and deputy prime minister.365 Since August 2004, he is prime minister of Singapore. Further examples can be found in the following list:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Relationship to Lee Kuan Yew</th>
<th>Latest or highest known position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freddy Lee Thiam Yew</td>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>Chairman of Vickers Ballas, the leading brokerage firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis Lee Kim Yew</td>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>Partner in the country’s biggest law firm Lee &amp; Lee which handles most property transactions in Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee Suan Yew</td>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>Director of Hotel Properties Ltd. (stepped down because he had accepted discounts when buying a flat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwa Geok Choo</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>Partner in the law firm Lee &amp; Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee Hsien Loong</td>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee Hsien Yang</td>
<td>Son</td>
<td>President of Singapore Telecommunication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee Wei Ling</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Head of the National Neuroscience Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho Ching</td>
<td>Steppdaughter</td>
<td>Executive Director of the government investment company Temasek Holdings which has high stakes in media companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee Suet Fern</td>
<td>Steppdaughter</td>
<td>Director of Asia’s leading logistics company Sembcorp Logistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lim Suet Boey</td>
<td>Steppdaughter</td>
<td>Senior Vice President of Sembcorp Utilities which belongs to Sembcorp Industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmund Lee</td>
<td>Nephew</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer of DBS Vickers which belongs to the country’s largest bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwa Soon Bee</td>
<td>Brother-in-law</td>
<td>Chairman of the Jurong Bird Park and the Zoological Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwa Chong Seng</td>
<td>Nephew-in-law</td>
<td>Deputy Chairman of the government investment company Temasek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho Sing</td>
<td>Steppdaughter’s brother</td>
<td>Vice President of Singapore Precision Industries and Director of Advanced Materials Technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho Peng</td>
<td>Steppdaughter’s brother</td>
<td>Director at the Education Ministry of Singapore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

365 Carolyn Choo: Singapore, The PAP and the Problem of Political Succession, Singapore, date of publication unknown, p. 123 et sqq.
Special attention was paid to the mass media because they were considered being essential to maintain power and to develop the country. Based on the experiences in the 1950s and 1960s when reporting had caused or at least promoted several riots (e.g. the “Maria Hertogh Riots” in 1950 and the “Mohammed Birthday Riots” in 1963), Singapore’s politicians drew two conclusions: first, that the mass media, if in the “wrong hands”, might disturb the political stability and second, that the mass media, if in the “right hands”, can play a constructive role in the nation-building process.  

In other words: From the leadership’s point of view, the media was seen as a “double-edged weapon”, as then Minister of Culture Jek Yeung Thong said in an article published on 20 September 1971 in the British newspaper *The Mirror*. Therefore, the mass media should not only be properly controlled, but also properly managed.  

To further the aims, the People’s Action Party infiltrated several members into the media industry. In 1982, even S.R. Nathan, the former director of the security and intelligence service of the Ministry of Defense, was placed on top of the managerial board of the Times Organization.  

Jusua Jeyaretnam, the first opposition candidate to become a member of parliament after a decade of one-party parliament, criticized this decision as a “total clampdown on any news or view that may be considered in any way a criticism of the government policy or program” and argued that the censor himself had moved into the publishing house.  

The former newspaperman George Peet, who had revived the *Straits Times* after the Japanese surrender, wrote as the last entry in his notebook in capital letters, “The End of the *Straits Times*. Lee Kuan Yew appoints intelligence man Executive Director of *Straits Times*. It is said that even Peter Lim, who had put the name of S.R. Nathan forward, felt so bad about it that he spend weeks agonizing whether to resign on principle.”  

According to Mary Turnbull, the leadership made use of its contacts in late 1985, when Lee Kuan telephoned from the airport en route to a Commonwealth meeting to prevent the  

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367 Compare with the previous chapter.  
369 The first change initiated in communications was a restructuring of part of the government. The Ministry of Information took over all the activities of the Department of Information and had three components: a headquarters to coordinate the functions of the two other components, a broadcasting division and a publicity division. Under the new communication structure, the core decision making body was compromised of the minister, the parliamentary secretary and two political assistants. Basskaran Nair: Communication in Colonial and Independent Singapore, Singapore, 1980, p. 6, 7.  
370 As a result, the journalists’ morale was very low. Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the *Straits Times*, Singapore, 1995, p. 336, 338.
appearance of a story concerning the collapse of an electric conglomerate.³⁷¹ Already when S.R. Nathan was appointed, Lee Kuan Yew briefed him in the following way: “Nathan, I am giving you the Straits Times. It has 140 years of history. It’s like a bowl of China. You break it, I can piece it together, but it will never be the same. Try not to.”³⁷² Not only did S.R. Nathan “not break it”, he did such a “good” job that he was elected sixth President of the Republic of Singapore a few years later (1999).

Further examples can be found in the following list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Former position</th>
<th>Latest or highest known position in the media section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S Dhanablan</td>
<td>Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Executive chairman of the government investment companies GIC and Temasek, which both have stakes in media companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lim Kim San</td>
<td>Minister for Finance</td>
<td>Executive chairman of Singapore Press Holdings which has practically a monopoly in the newspaper business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeo Ning Hong</td>
<td>Minister for Communications</td>
<td>Director of Singapore Press Holdings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lim Chee Onn</td>
<td>Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office</td>
<td>Chairman of Singapore’s largest mobile telecommunication company Mobile One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goh Chee Wee</td>
<td>Minister for Trade, Industry and Labor</td>
<td>Chairman of NTUC Media which publishes several magazines and operates two radio stations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Chan Heng Loon</td>
<td>Secretary in the Ministry for Transport</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer of Singapore Press Holdings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngiam Tong Dow</td>
<td>Secretary in Prime minister’s office</td>
<td>Director of Temasek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Sin Leng</td>
<td>Deputy Secretary in Ministry for Trade</td>
<td>Director of Pacific Internet which is one of Asia’s largest Internet providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lim Chuan Pho</td>
<td>Deputy Secretary for Communications</td>
<td>Executive vice president of Singapore Telecommunication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lai Seck Khui</td>
<td>Deputy Secretary for Trade and Industry</td>
<td>President of Times Publishing Limited, whose activities range from commercial printing and book publishing to retail bookstores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lim Ho Kee</td>
<td>Deputy Director of Monetary Authority</td>
<td>Director of the Singapore Post which plays a key role in the distribution of print media in Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Iswaran</td>
<td>Deputy Director of Ministry for Finance</td>
<td>Managing director of Temasek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audrey Lee</td>
<td>Executive Director of InfoComm Authority</td>
<td>Executive director of Singapore’s second largest telecommunication company Star Hub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee Cheok Yew</td>
<td>Deputy Director of Ministry for Trade</td>
<td>Chief executive of SPH MediaWorks which set up two terrestrial television channels and was later merged with MediaCorp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Daniel</td>
<td>Director of Ministry for Home Affairs</td>
<td>Managing editor of the English- and Malay-language newspaper division of the Singapore Press Holdings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most controversial is the position of Ho Ching, daughter-in-law of Lee Kuan Yew and wife of his son Lee Hsien Loong who is currently prime minister of Singapore. As director of the government investment company Temasek, she has a direct say in the appointments of the

³⁷¹ Minister for Culture Ong Teng Cheong, for instance, regularly held luncheon meetings for editors to meet government ministers.
boards of all large media companies in Singapore, including Media Corporation of Singapore and Singapore Press Holdings.\textsuperscript{374}

However, the leadership put the media and journalists increasingly under pressure. It started in 1959 when Lee Kuan Yew warned that “any newspaper that tries to sour up or strain relations between the federation and Singapore after May 30 will go in for subversion”, and it continued in 1971, when three local newspapers (\textit{Nanyang Siang Pau}, \textit{Eastern Sun} and \textit{Singapore Herald}) and in 1987 when even four foreign publications (\textit{Time}, \textit{Asian Wall Street Journal}, \textit{Asiaweek} and \textit{Far Eastern Economic Review}) were closed down or restricted in circulation. All of these cases, reviewed in another part of this dissertation, are based on a handful of laws, particularly the “Newspaper and Printing Presses Act.”\textsuperscript{375}

5.1.1 Laws restricting the media and journalists

As a former British crown colony, Singapore inherited most of its laws from Britain or India, where the headquarters of the British East India Company was located. Several laws such as those dealing with sedition, libel and defamation are modeled after British examples. Almost 90 percent of the Penal Code as well as of criminal procedures is based on the Indian legal system.

Over the years, almost every law was modified or amended, and further laws were passed in order to take the special circumstances of Singapore’s multi-cultural society into account. That is also true regarding the constitution. It originates from the “Second Charter Justice” of 1826 and was written in 1963 when Singapore joined the federation with Malaysia. The constitution came into full effect with the separation in 1965 and was revised in 1985.\textsuperscript{376}

Regarding the media, article 14 is the most relevant because it grants the right to “freedom of speech, assembly and association.” According to this, “every citizen of Singapore has the right to freedom of speech and expression”. But unlike in Britain or India, where courts have ruled that this sentence includes freedom of the press, and in contrast to the recommendations of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, this right is restricted in the following paragraph.

\textsuperscript{374} See the table “Selection of 15 positions held by relatives of Lee Kuan Yew”.
\textsuperscript{375} See the chapters “The role of the press in the nation-building process” and “Pressure on the local press”.
This clause empowers the parliament to pass laws restricting freedom of speech for a variety of reasons, “in the interest of the security of Singapore or any part thereof, friendly relations with other countries, public order or morality and restrictions designed to protect the privileges of Parliament or to provide against contempt of court, defamation or incitement to any offence.”

The courts in Singapore have taken the view that laws restricting freedom of speech are allowed under the constitution. Legally, however, the restrictions can override the right of expression itself. In practice, this means, as Ang Peng Hwa shows, that there is no need to worry about constitutional implications if - let’s say - a defamation suit is brought about or a newspaper license is revoked.377

The fact that all printing presses and newspapers are required to be licensed and that these licenses must be renewed annually is spelled out in the “Newspaper and Printing Presses Act” (NPPA), which was introduced in 1974 and strengthened in 1977. It practically regulates the whole newspaper industry:

“No person shall print or publish or assist in printing or publishing of any newspaper in Singapore unless the chief editor or the proprietor of the newspaper has previously obtained a permit granted by the Minister authorizing the publication thereof, which permit the Minister may in his discretion grant, refuse or revoke, or grant subject to conditions to be endorsed thereon.”378

Since the law applies to all newspapers and magazines in Singapore, both local and foreign, only those which are explicitly desired or at least tolerated are allowed to be circulated.379 Every newspaper can be shut down without reason at any time: “The Minister may in his discretion grant to any person in Singapore a license to keep and use a press for the printing of documents and may at any time withdraw the license either permanently or for such period he thinks fit.”380 The only way to appeal is to write to the president of the republic, whose decision is final.

Furthermore, the “Newspaper and Printing Presses Act” ensures that the press does not fall into the “wrong” hands, regulating it by employing a system of “management shares”, which grant voting rights 200 times that of ordinary shares. Since the 1977 amendment bars anyone from holding more than three percent of ordinary shares, at least one percent must be “management shares” and those “management shares” can only be held by persons approved by the minister. As a result, the authorities have a say in all important decisions: the composition of board directors of all publishing companies and through them the appointment of group editors, publication editors, section editors, etcetera.\footnote{Ang Peng Hwa: Media Ethics in Singapore, Pushing Self-Regulation in a Tightly Controlled Media Environment, p. 81, published in Vekat Iyer (Ed.): Media Ethics in Asia, Singapore, 2002, p. 80-89.}

Here is a simplified example: Let’s say that a newspaper company issues 100 shares, 99 of which can be ordinary shares held by up to 99 different persons. At least one must be a “management share” held by a person approved by the minister. So when it comes to voting, holders of 99 ordinary shares have 99 votes and the one person holding the one “management share” has 200 votes and can overrule any decision of the others. As a result, nothing can be done without at least the silent consent of the authorities.\footnote{Yawning Bread: Control of the Press, The One Percent Lever, http://www.yawningbread.org/arch_2001/yax-239.htm, Singapore, 2001, accessed 2003.}

If any kind of difficulties arise, despite this tight licensing and management system, a wide range of further laws is available. The “Internal Security Act” (1960) empowers the government to ban “biased” publications. The “Undesirable Publications Act” (1967) prohibits the distribution of undesirable publications such as pornography. And the “Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act” (1990) enables the government to restrain the publication of people who cause ill-will between religious groups.\footnote{Ivan Lim: Media Monitors in Singapore, p. 74-75, published in K.S. Venkateswaran (Ed.): Media Monitors in Asia, Singapore, 1996, p. 73-80.}

Those laws were not only employed against the editors of the \textit{Nanyang Siang Pau} ("Newspaper and Printing Presses Act"), \textit{Eastern Sun} and \textit{Singapore Herald} ("Internal Security Act") but also against opposition politicians such as Jusua Jeyaretnam ("Defamation Act").

When the head of the Worker’s Party became the first opposition member of parliament after a decade of one-party parliament, he was welcomed because Lee Kuan Yew thought that “he was useful as a sparring partner […]. Besides, he filled up space on the opposition side
of the political arena and probably kept better men out.”³⁸⁴ But already a few years later, Jusua Jeyaretnam was brought down by a series of charges and fines.

Just for saying during an election rally in 1997 that “Mr. Tang Liang Hong has just placed before me, two reports he has made to the police against, you know, Mr. Goh Chok Tong and his people”, eleven suits were filed against him by members of the ruling People’s Action Party. They argued that this innocuous sentence would imply and be understood to mean that the plaintiffs were guilty of an act serious enough to merit a police report. The court ordered Jusua Jeyaretnam to pay 20 000 Singapore dollars but the High Court upped the damages to 100 000 Singapore dollars. Three years later, Jusua Jeyaretnam was expelled from parliament for being bankrupt.³⁸⁵

5.1.2 Concepts of responsible journalism

At first glance, journalism in Singapore follows the same rules as journalism in many other (“Western”) counties.³⁸⁶ The first rule of the “Code of Professional Conduct” of the “Singapore National Union of Journalists” emphasizes that “every member shall maintain good quality of workmanship and high standard of conduct.”³⁸⁷ The question is what constitutes good quality and high standards.

(23) “Code of Conduct” of the “Singapore National Union of Journalists”

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Every member shall maintain good quality of workmanship and high standard of conduct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No member shall do anything that will bring discredit on himself/herself, his/her union, his/her newspaper or other news media or his/her profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Every member shall defend the principles of freedom in the honest collection and dissemination of news and the right of fair comment and criticism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Every member shall realize his/her personal responsibility for everything he/she prepares for his/her newspaper or other news media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Every member shall report and interpret the news with scrupulous honesty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Every member shall use only honest methods to obtain news, pictures and documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>No member shall accept any form of bribe whether for publication or suppression nor permit personal interest to influence his/her sense of justice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Every member shall respect all necessary confidence regarding sources of information and private documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Every member shall keep in mind the dangers in the laws of libel, contempt of court and copyright.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Every member shall observe at all times the fraternity of their profession and shall never take unfair advantage of a fellow member.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to clarify this, a number of concepts have been introduced which are all based on the general assumption that Singapore is as fragile as an egg and therefore the government must hold it firmly so that it does not drop and break.\(^{389}\) It largely depends on the standpoint, whether one agrees with it or not.

Interestingly, the overwhelming majority of all experts interviewed for this dissertation are convinced that this assumption reflects the situation when Singapore was merged (1963) with the Federation of Malaysia and then separated from it (1965). Only the scientist Tan Ern Ser and the journalist Patrick Daniel believe that it still describes the situation today. All others think that “the egg is getting stronger” or is not fragile anymore at all.

However, there is a general concern that in multi-cultural societies like Singapore, ethnic matters and religion can be “explosive issues”. All interviewees are afraid that street disorders could arise due to reporting in the media. “Could it arise? Yes, it could”, says Arun Mahizhnam: “But would it arise? Not likely”. He believes that the “media leadership is capable of carrying out responsible media discourse on race, religion and language.”

A central issue is whether a newspaper should report it if a street fight breaks out between Chinese and Malay and some people get killed.\(^{390}\) Asked in a seminar for ASEAN journalists in Singapore in March 1989, Cheong Yip Seng answered: “Very simple, I wouldn’t carry it.

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\(^{390}\) This scenario is based on an actual event in Geylang where there was a street brawl involving a Chinese and a Malay. The story did not run in the press for fear of reprisals between the two ethnic groups.
Publishing the story would mean the whole city get to know. There is no guarantee that
people wouldn’t misinterpret it.\(^{391}\)

But when a Chinese politician made a racial slur against the Tamils living in Singapore in a
speech in parliament in 1992, he chose another option. Although Lee Kuan Yew had asked
him to drop the story, Cheong Yip Seng carried it in the \textit{Straits Times} newspaper but cooled
it down. When asked about it in an interview with the author of this dissertation, he answered
that he would make the same decisions and statements today.

This correlates with the opinions of other interviewees. They all believe that it would not be
possible anymore to suppress such a story because it would spread over the Internet and
through mobile phones anyway. One even argues that it could be more dangerous not to run
it. But all suggest not to glorify such a story. And Cherian George adds that the race must not
be mentioned because it might not be an ethnical conflict. Instead, it could also be about girls
or money.\(^{392}\)

However, one of the first concepts discussed was taken from the Manila-based Press
Foundation of Asia. It is closely related to the discussion about the “New World Information
Order” and suggests that journalists in developing countries contribute to national progress
by producing stories about social needs or problems. What notably some American authors
dismiss as “Government Say-so Journalism” is taken very seriously in other countries. In
Peru, for instance, several programs were launched to train journalists and feed them with
“development news”.\(^{393}\) But in Singapore, no comparable action was taken. Instead, all
journalists were asked to support the government.\(^{394}\)

In February 1988, Lee Hsien Loong stressed in a speech at the “Singapore Press Club” that
“you must educate Singaporeans – not just with facts, but also in terms of national education
and values. One way or another, the press moulds the perception of Singaporeans. It should
do so constructively – both supporting national campaigns and also day to day, in the way
the news is presented, analyzed, emphasized.”\(^{395}\) He concluded by giving a lesson in
journalism, saying that to be a good journalist in Singapore requires a political sense of what

\(^{392}\) See the documentation of the interviews.
\(^{393}\) CV Rajasundaram: Manuel of Development Communication, With Special Reference to Broadcasting,
Singapore, 1981, p. 17; and Owais Aslam Ali: Freedom of the Press and Asian Values in Journalism, Karachi,
\(^{395}\) One of the latest campaigns was against smoking. Basskaran Nair: From Main Street to Cyber Street, A
is important, an understanding of the issues, the ability to explain complex topics, without
descending to trivia, and finally having something to say and being able to say it well.\(^{396}\)

Meanwhile, Lee Kuan Yew (Lee Hsien Loong’s father) and Mohamad Mahathir, the prime
ministers of Singapore and Malaysia respectively, promoted the concept of “Asian Values.”\(^{397}\)
It is hard to trace its origins but the idea probably goes back the establishment of the
Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN, 1963).\(^{398}\) Its official aim is to “foster
cooperation and mutual assistance among its members”, but David Birch shows that it is
“principally a communication strategy” which stresses the region’s common heritage and
values in order to maintain a credible cohesion in dealings with third parties.\(^{399}\)

However, the concept of “Asian Values” assumes that every culture in Asia has its own
values but there are some values common to all Asians which differ from the values in
“Western” cultures. In Indonesia, for instance, the five lines of the Buddhist code of ethics
Pancasila are usually seen as the general guideline. In Malaysia, the comparable five lines
are known under the term Rukunegara. Singapore alone has no such guideline. Therefore,
Lee Hsien Loong formulated Five Core Values in a white paper which was passed by

| (24) The five core values in Malaysia and Singapore |
|---|---|
| **Malaysia** | **Singapore** |
| Belief in God | Nation before community and society before self |
| Loyalty to King and Country | Family as the basic unit of society |
| Upholding the Constitution | Community support and respect for the individual |
| Sovereignty of the Law, and | Consensus, not conflict |
| Good Behavior and Morality | Racial and religious harmony |


\(^{397}\) Mohamad Mahathir: The Social Role of Mass Media, p. 51 et sqq., published in Abdul Razak (Ed.): Press
Laws and Systems in ASEAN States, Jakarta, 1985, p. 51-61; Zaher Mikhail: Asian Journalism, Challenges,
Problems and Solutions, p. 166-168, published in Media Asia, volume 13, number 3, Singapore, 1986, p. 166-
168; Melinda de Jesus: Asian Values, Do They Exist?, p. 3-6, published in Media Asia, volume 23, number 1,
Singapore, 1996, p. 3-6; Mrinal Pande: Asian Values in Journalism, p. 8-11, published in Media Asia, volume 23,
47-48, published in Media Asia, volume 23, number 1, Singapore, 1996, p. 47-48; and Xiaoge Xu: Asian Values
Revisited in the Context of Intercultural News Communication, p. 37-41, published in Media Asia, volume 25,


(25) Code of ethics in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indonesia (Pancasila)</th>
<th>Malaysia (Rukunegara)</th>
<th>Singapore (The Pledge)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I undertake the precept to refrain from destroying living creatures. I undertake the precept to refrain from taking that which is not given. I undertake the precept to refrain from sexual misconduct. I undertake the precept to refrain from incorrect speech. I undertake the precept to refrain from intoxicants which lead to carelessness.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Our Nation, Malaysia is dedicated to: Achieving a greater unity for all her people; maintaining a democratic way of life; creating a just society in which the wealth of the nation shall be equitably distributed; ensuring a liberal approach to her rich and diverse cultural tradition; and building a progressive society which shall be oriented to modern science and technology.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;We the citizens of Singapore, pledge ourselves as one united people, regardless of race, language or religion, to build a democratic society based on justice and equality so as to achieve happiness, prosperity and progress for our nation.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is difficult to answer whether such values really exist. David Birch shows that they do not emerge willy-nilly out of the flux of the people's lives. They are rather imposed on the lives, often in such a subtle form as to disguise their religious or political nature. But this does not mean that they are not related to inherent cultural values or cannot be adopted.

However, it was just a matter of time until the concept of "Asian Values" was transferred to the media. The 1987 "Code of Ethics" of the "Confederation of ASEAN Journalists" (1976) is one such example. Among other things, it requires all journalists in the region to "pay due regard to the multi-ethnic, cultural, and religious fabric of ASEAN countries". They "shall not write reports, opinions or comments which would endanger the security of his/her country, or foment armed confrontation between his/her country and any other ASEAN country, striving at all times, instead, to promote closer friendly relations among them."

In addition, the 1988 "Consultation on Press Systems in ASEAN" resolved that "efforts [should] be made to eliminate possible dissonance arising from differences in perception between [...] the government, the media and the public" and that "the press [should] be considered a partner in development, with the responsibility of [...] helping society progress in development and nation building."

Asked whether Asian journalists really have or should have more responsibility than journalists in Western countries, the experts interviewed for this dissertation expressed

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differing points of views: While some agree, others argue that such an idea is farcical because a “journalist is a journalist” and there is only “good and bad journalism”. Ang Peng Haw’s view is the most interesting. He sometimes has the impression that many Asian journalists take less responsibility because in practice they often merely obey the laws and do not scrutinize their government’s actions. ⁴⁰⁴

The “Next Lap”, however, started when Lee Kuan Yew resigned and Goh Chok Tong succeeded him as prime minister. At his swearing-in ceremony on 28 November 1990, he stated: “The torch has passed from one generation of runners to the next. But the race continues. I will use the collective talents of my colleagues, and the combined energies of all citizens, to help the Singapore team stay ahead. Singapore can do well only if her good sons and daughters are prepared to dedicate themselves to help others. I shall rally them to serve the country. For if they do not come forward, what future will we have? I therefore call on my fellow citizens to join me, to run the next lap together.” ⁴⁰⁵

Apart from maintaining the power of the ruling People’s Action Party, Goh Chok Tong formulated three goals: To get Singaporeans to feel a deeper bond with Singapore so that they do not emigrate, to practice a more constructive, participatory-style democracy and to enhance Singapore’s dynamism to face future “unsettling changes” in the world and in the region. In this context, he identified four priority areas: sustaining Singapore’s economic growth, seeking new challenges, being more creative and working together effectively. ⁴⁰⁶

One of the key terms in the “Open Order” was “Feedback”. Already in 1985, the authorities set up a so-called “Feedback Unit” whose aim was to “gather and receive feedback on existing or impending government policies and suggests from the public on national issues as well as to ensure swift and effective response by government departments on public suggestions and complaints.” ⁴⁰⁷

Another term which was created in this period is create.connect@sg, which is the title of a book published in 2000 by the Ministry for Information, Communication and the Arts. It analyzes the status quo and comes to the conclusion that “in the age of information, arts and culture must no longer be viewed as the exclusive preserve of the elite sectors of societies. It

⁴⁰⁴ See the documentation of the interviews.
must be brought into the mainstream and integrated into the workings of our economic and social ecosystem.”

Most interesting is the summary on the first few pages of the chapter on “Economics of the Arts”: “The results of our investments in the arts and culture may not be visible nor measurable in ways as cultural capital takes root and manifests itself across all facets of our economy and society.”

This was new because until then spending in the arts was seldom seen as an investment. But it did not really change anything. Meetings of the “Feedback Groups”, for instance, are still not made public and usually only “opinion-makers” with “good knowledge of the subject” are invited. Even those invited cannot expect that every proposal is accepted by the government, since it reserves the right to challenge any proposal. And the press was not included. Instead, Lee Hsien Loong asked “who gives the media the right to criticize the government?” He added: “Who is to vote and elect the media?”

The latest idea became popular under the abbreviation “OB Marker”. It is not clear when and by whom this concept was introduced. An active member in the Internet-based discussion forum of the youth wing of the People’s Action Party believes that the term originally refers to the sport golf: When the player strikes a ball out of bounds, he gets penalized two strokes or the hole. But it remains a mystery if this is true and how the term was transferred to the political sphere and the media.

According to Diane Mauzy, the People’s Action Party realized at some point that many educated Singaporeans who do not want to be involved in party politics still want to be able to voice their criticism as citizens and taxpayers. So instead of the “sledgehammer” (i.e. the “Defamation Act”) which is sometimes employed against members of the opposition (i.e. Jusua Jeyaretnam), “OB Markers” were introduced as public rebuttals in the form of letters by the press secretary of the prime minister in which the government’s position and the shortcomings in the points of the offenders are made clear.

More colorful are the explanations of the debaters in the “Young PAP” forum. According to them, “OB markers” are not a “set of guidelines and ethics but are pure blinkers”, which refer

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408 Ministry of Information: Create, Connect@Sg, Arts, Media and Infocomm in Singapore, Singapore, 2002, p. 11 and p. 212.
to the limits for a wide range of topics and comments one might discuss and make about the
government “without getting yourselves into troubles”. Those limits are considered highly
flexible and are “determined by a number of factors such as the minister’s moods and the
nature of one’s comments”. Practically speaking, “anything that the government feels
awkward or uneasy with becomes an OB marker”. 412 And this is exactly the problem: No one
knows for sure what is allowed and what is not.

The earliest case found by the author of this dissertation is from 1995, when author
Catherine Lim argued in two articles in the Straits Times that there was a “great affective
divide” between the People’s Action Party and the people, and that there were hardliner and
more liberal factions within the ruling party. Furthermore, she insinuated that Prime Minister
Goh Chok Tong was not really in charge. This was out of bounds, of course, and his
secretary replied with a stinging rebuttal.

A slightly different case was caused by a group of around 25 young professionals who had
registered a society under the name “The Roundtable” in order to discuss political issues. In
1997, they published an analysis of the general election in the Straits Times in which they
disagreed with the tactic of the People’s Action Party. The government had a minister
responded by pointing out where the People’s Action Party thought the analysis was
wrong. 413

And a third case occurred in 1999 when Cherian George and Melanie Chew offended the
authorities. 414 Interestingly, Cherian George fired back an answer to the press secretary’s
rebuttal, but it did not have much impact. 415

In an article published on 17 January 2000 in the weekly edition of the Straits Times, Lee
Hsien Loong tried to clarify the limits: “As long as the argument is over policies, the limits for
debates – or the out-of-bounds markers – are very wide. There is no policy too sensitive to
question, and no subject so taboo that you cannot even mention it […] But if it is an attack on
the government and on its fitness to rule, then that response has to go beyond the merits of
the particular issue and to address the broader question.”

2005.
415 The latest example happened just a few months ago when a Malaysian led a campaign at Singapore Airlines
to oust union leaders who accepted pay cuts and redundancies. He was singled out by senior minister Lee Kuan
Yew as an instigator of a revolt and expelled from entering the country. BBC: Singapore Expels Union Activist,
There is no doubt that taboos can be found in every society, but there are differences between judicial restrictions upheld in accordance with the constitution, inherent social norms generally accepted by at least a large portion of the public and flexible “OB markers” set by few leading ministers and issued by the prime minister’s press secretary. “OB markers” can hardly be justified.

In the opinion of the author of this dissertation, the biggest problem with “OB markers” is the fact that the one who issues the “OB markers” has no mandate. The press secretary in the prime minister’s office is neither employed as a judge nor elected by the people. One could argue that he has absolutely no right to restrict anyone. Still, he wields much power.

However, the “OB markers” serve the government’s purpose: to make people wary of criticizing the government or any of its major decisions. Only one participant in the forum of the youth wing of the People’s Action Party was so bold to argue that “OB markers in Singapore are devised by ruling party for monopoly”. Another one even “regrets to inform that my personal opinions tend to fall in the ‘out-of-bound’ range and hence they are not available for public discussion”. Self-explaining is the little joke of another debater: “See enemy hiding behind every tree – that’s how S[inga]poreans think and act.”

As a result of all this - the dominance of the ruling People’s Action Party, the strict laws and the concepts introduced - the freedom of speech in general and the freedom of the press in particular is very limited and self-censorship is very high. Whereas in other countries the media are the watchdog of the government, in Singapore the government is the watchdog of the media or it is as least “taking care” of it. That means that the news flows - in the sense of the MacBride Report - are not free and fair to all.

The journalists seem to accept this situation, as the following quote by the chairman of the Singapore Press Holdings shows: “One of our jobs is to support a good government, and we have been doing that, and helping to explain government policies.” When Patrick Daniel of the Straits Times newspaper was interviewed by the author of this dissertation, he added: “Does it matter to you? By most comparisons, this is a good government, honest government, clean government that comes up with fair policies.”

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That might be true, but no one knows for sure if it is really a “good government, honest government, clean government”, as long as it is not checked by independent institutions – and the press in Singapore is demonstrably not independent, neither politically nor economically.

5.2 Overall economic growth

Although Singapore does not have any natural resources - even half of its water, food and raw materials must be imported (from Malaysia and Indonesia) - there is no secret or miracle to its economic development. As Adam Smith (1723-1790) pointed out, cities situated on the coast are generally in a better situation because sea transport is much cheaper than terrestrial transport. Another advantage is that Singapore is a city state and as such much easier to govern than countries with large territory. The economic development, however, is largely based on the political stability and the continuity in wise economic decisions of which the general commitment to free trade is usually considered essential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(26) The Singapore economy in 1965 (at current market prices)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 886 900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1965, there was relatively little economic activity. According to the Singapore Year Book 1965, the value of trade imports stood at 3.8 billion and the value of exports at 3 billion Singapore dollars, so that the total external trade was around 7 billion Singapore dollars. More than 75 percent of the total cargo was handled by roads and only 8.2 percent was handled by seaport. The port cleared 25 074 vessels and handled a tonnage of 89.2 million tons. The most important trading partners were based in Malaysia, with Britain in second and Japan in third place. Among the commodities, rubber and petroleum were the most relevant, followed by textiles, rice, pepper, coffee and pineapples.


421 The table is based on the data provided in this chapter of the dissertation.

Due to the relatively little economic activity, the unemployment rate of around 12 percent was very high and earnings and savings were very low. On the average, employees earned about 178 Singapore dollars per month (for a 46-hour work week), which totaled about 2,100 Singapore dollars per annum. The total amount of the 247,082 bank accounts at the Singapore Post Office Savings Bank, including one million in interests, was 38.8 million Singapore dollars. And the total revenue of the government was 382.8 million Singapore dollars. Expenditures, however, exceeded the 400 million mark.  

The foundation for the growth was laid by then Minister for Finance Goh Keng Swee and the Dutch economist Albert Winsemius (1910-1996) who visited Singapore in 1960 on behalf of the United Nations to advise the decision makers on industrialization and job creation. Although Albert Winsemius had no contract with the government, he pushed the upgrading of the port so that it could handle containers. Furthermore, he recommended the establishment of a single coordinating agency. The purpose of this Economic Development Board (EDB) was to attract foreign investors by offering tax incentives, loans and equity participation, as well as technical advice and access to the workforce.

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**Table 27:** Singapore’s three most important trading partners in 1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Value of imports in million Singapore dollars</th>
<th>Value of exports in million Singapore dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malaya (Malaysia)</td>
<td>884.9</td>
<td>938.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>413.8</td>
<td>192.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>421.2</td>
<td>112.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2087.3</td>
<td>1760.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3807.2</td>
<td>3004.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 28:** Singapore’s three most important commodities in 1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Value of imports in million Singapore dollars</th>
<th>Value of exports in million Singapore dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rubber</td>
<td>553.8</td>
<td>668.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petroleum</td>
<td>508.3</td>
<td>431.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles</td>
<td>188.8</td>
<td>99.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2556.3</td>
<td>1804.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3807.2</td>
<td>3004.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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423 The tables are based on data provided in Government Printing Office: Singapore Year Book 1965, Singapore, 1966, p. 104 et sqq; and other sources.
425 Albert Winsemius was a Dutch economist. He led the "United Nations Survey Mission" to Singapore and played a major role in the formulation of Singapore’s national economic development strategy.
Meanwhile, Goh Keng Swee adopted the principle of Adam Smith and David Ricardo (1772-1823) that a system of free trade would be best for a port city like Singapore.\(^{428}\) He came to the conclusion that economic growth rather than high value of output would result in higher wages, which in return would lead to stronger domestic purchasing power and hence to higher trade and profits.\(^ {429}\) Furthermore, he saw the advantage of Singapore being a former crown colony primarily in the ability of its citizens to speak English, and often mentioned this fact in negotiations with foreign investors.

As a result, large investments were made, notably by companies from New York, Chicago and London, in this first economic phase after independence which lasted from 1966 until 1973. Gavin Peebles argues that the arrival of these companies could largely attributed to luck, since the ongoing chaos on the Chinese mainland made Singapore the more logical choice over Taiwan and Hong Kong.\(^ {430}\)

By the early 1970s, however, more than 50 multinational companies were operating in Singapore.\(^ {431}\) The economic activity increased the government revenue to more than four times its level of 1965 and was used by the government to play the role of an entrepreneur. It established and strengthened organizations considered essential for the economic growth.\(^ {432}\)

The most important player was the Development Bank of Singapore (DBS), which was incorporated in 1968 as a public company.\(^ {433}\) With an authorized capital of 200 million and a paid-up capital of another 100 million Singapore dollars, it was able to provide long-term finance at relatively low interest rates.\(^ {434}\) Another important institution was the Jurong Town Corporation (JTC), which was also set up in 1968 and took over all responsibilities for industrial land estates.\(^ {435}\)

In 1971, some experts decided to float the currency. Until the “Smithsonian Agreement”, it was fixed against the US dollar and formerly linked to pound sterling. Parity was then


adjusted. As a result of this de-facto devaluation of the US dollar, the Singapore dollar appreciated by several percent. Henceforth, it was much cheaper for the local people to buy foreign products. Surprisingly, it did not harm the exports. The main reason is that most products for export were based on imported materials. However, this situation prevailed until the US dollar became stronger again.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average rate</th>
<th>Year-end rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>2.3713</td>
<td>2.4895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2.1412</td>
<td>2.0935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>2.2002</td>
<td>2.1050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1.8125</td>
<td>1.7445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1.4174</td>
<td>1.7315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1.7239</td>
<td>1.7315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1.6646</td>
<td>1.6642</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Difficulties arose after the oil shock and energy crisis in the 1970s, when labor was getting short and productivity remained low. The decision makers thus came up with another plan that was also inspired by Albert Winsemius and marks the beginning of the second economic phase after independence which lasted from 1974 until 1990.

The plan aimed to move employment from labor-intensive sectors to higher value-added sectors by increasing wages and expanding the number of engineering and technical students at the university level. Within a few years, from 1979 until 1984, unit labor costs rose by 40 percent and the number of students enrolled in universities grew by 50 percent.

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436 On 18 December 1971, representatives of the “Group of Ten” met at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. and agreed to a realignment of currencies, including a new set of pegged exchange rates. The dollar was devalued in terms of gold, while other currencies were increased in value in terms of the dollar. Encyclopedia Britannica Online: International Payment and Exchange, http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-61797, Chicago, 2005, accessed 2005.


440 In 1973, oil was in short supply after members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) announced during the Yom Kippur War that they would no longer ship petroleum to nations that had supported Israel in the conflict with Syria and Egypt. And in 1978, oil and other fuel sources were in short supply in the wake of the Iranian Revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest qualification reached</th>
<th>Year 1970</th>
<th>Year 1980</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below secondary school</td>
<td>57,059</td>
<td>810,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary or upper secondary</td>
<td>9,450</td>
<td>265,906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University or other higher</td>
<td>1,527</td>
<td>39,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68,313</td>
<td>1,115,958</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What followed was what Garry Rodan later called the “Second Industrial Revolution”, because it turned the country into a “modern industrial economy based on science, technology, skills and knowledge”, as the Minister for Finance at the time, Goh Chok Tong, had anticipated it in a budget speech on 6 August 1981 in parliament.\textsuperscript{444}

During this period, several government companies such as Singapore Airlines were privatized.\textsuperscript{445} The government, however, continued to control those companies through investment holdings, of which Temasek is the largest.\textsuperscript{446} Today, they are known as “Government-linked Companies” (GLCs).\textsuperscript{447}

The banking and finance sectors were benefiting most from it. Between 1970 and 1990, the number of banks in Singapore rose from 37 to 141, merchant banks from two to 69 and insurance companies from zero to 124.\textsuperscript{448} Even more impressive than these numbers is the role the financial institutions started to play, as Van Oenen had anticipated it in a conversation with Albert Winsemius in 1968:

“Look here, the financial world begins in Zurich. Zurich banks open at 9 o’clock in the morning, later Frankfurt, later London. In the afternoon Zurich closes, then Frankfurt and London. In the meantime, New York is open. So London hands over financial money traffic to New York. In the afternoon New York closes; they had already handed over financial money traffic to San Francisco. When San Francisco closes in the afternoon, the world is covered with a veil. Nothing happens until next day, 9 a.m. Swiss time, then the Swiss banks open.

\textsuperscript{443}The table is based on data provided in Department of Statistics: Yearbook of Statistics Singapore 1981/82, Singapore, 1983, p. 51.
\textsuperscript{447}This was becoming visible in early 2000 when Richard Li, son of Hong Kong tycoon Li Ka-Shing, who had sold Star TV to Rupert Murdoch and bought “Hong Kong Telecom” (later renamed in “PCCW”), made a bid for Singapore Telecommunication (SingTel). The Singapore government intervened and prevented him from investing. Diane Mauzy: Singapore Politics Under the People’s Action Party, London, 2002, p. 72, 73; and other sources.
When we put Singapore in between, before San Francisco closes, Singapore would have taken over. And when Singapore closes, it would have handed over to Zurich. Then, for the first time since creation, we will have a 24-hour round-the-world service in money and banking.”

A third economic plan was passed in 1991 after a national recession, which was caused by the erosion of Singapore’s international competitiveness. From a historical point of view, this “Strategic Plan Towards a Developed Nation” was the most important or at least the most ambitious. It set out the long-term objective of building wage flexibility into the economy and promoting the service sectors.

Its eight objectives were “enhancing human resources, promoting national teamwork, becoming internationally orientated, creating a conducive climate for innovation, developing manufacturing and service clusters, spearheading economic redevelopment, maintaining international competitiveness and reducing vulnerability.”

As part of the government’s strategy, a dozen programs were launched, including a “Multi-Agency Taskforce on Economic Redevelopment” to spearhead uncompetitive or inefficient industries, a “Competitiveness Monitoring Group” to compile short- and long-term information about the markets, and an “International Manpower Program” for attracting foreign talents.

| (31) Gross domestic product (GDP total) at current market prices |
|---|---|---|
| Year | In million Singapore dollars | In million US dollars |
| 1965 | 2,956 | 966 |
| 1970 | 5,805 | 1,896 |
| 1975 | 13,443 | 5,669 |
| 1980 | 25,091 | 11,718 |
| 1985 | 38,924 | 17,691 |
| 1990 | 66,994 | 36,902 |
| 1995 | 118,963 | 83,930 |
| 2000 | 159,596 | 92,578 |
| 2005 | > 190,000 (est.) | > 117,100 (est.) |

453 The “gross domestic product” (GDP) is the total value of output of goods and services produced within the domestic territory before deducting capital consumption. The table is based on data provided in Department of Statistics: GDP at Current Market Prices, http://www.singstat.gov.sg/keystats/hist/gdp2.html, Singapore, date of publication unknown, accessed 2005.
In analyzing these statistics, it can be concluded that apart from smaller setbacks, of which some were corrected in modified economic plans such as “Industry 21” and Manpower 21”, most of the programs implemented yielded positive results. Between 1965 and 2000, the gross domestic product rose from around three billion to almost 160 billion Singapore dollars or from nearly 1 600 to almost 40 000 Singapore dollars per capita.

This is even more remarkable considering the rapid growth of the population which is not the result of a high birth rate, but rather of the continuing influx of foreign workers. Except for a few years in the late 1960s, unemployment was never a big problem. Within just four years during the 1970s, the unemployment rate fell below four percent and 1973 is generally remembered as being a year when Singapore had a labor shortage. Even the rapid population growth attests the remarkable economic growth: Two million immigrants would not have come to Singapore if there were no chances to make a living.

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456 “Industry 21” was developed in 1999 as a blue-print for Singapore’s economic success in the next century. The goal was to turn the city into a vibrant and robust global hub of knowledge driven by industries that rely on technology, innovation and capabilities. “Manpower 21” is a comparable vision but focuses on labor.


### (34) Growth of the population, women in the labor force and unemployment rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage of females in the labor force</th>
<th>Annual unemployment rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1,886,900</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>&gt; 12.0 (est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>2,084,500</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>2,262,500</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2,413,900</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>2,836,000</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3,047,100</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>3,525,600</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4,017,700</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>4,351,400 (est.)</td>
<td>&gt; 54.0 (est.)</td>
<td>4.3 (est.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1995, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) decided to stop classifying Singapore as a developing country. In 1997, the World Bank ranked Singapore as a “high income economy”, along with countries such as the United States and Japan. And in the same year, the International Monetary Fund made it clear that Singapore belongs to the “group traditionally known as industrial countries”.  

### (35) Self-evaluation of the quality of life in Singapore in 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Best country out of 100 countries</th>
<th>Singapore’s position out of the best ten countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Environment</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Environment</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Environment</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Transport</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Transport</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Media</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential services and utilities</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### (36) Quality of life in Singapore in 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Rank out of 100 countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public safety (murder rate)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Cost (% of income)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Space</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing standards (availability of utilities)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---


461 The tables are based on data provided in Ministry of Trade and Industry: The Strategic Economic Plan, Towards a Developed Nation, Singapore, 1991, p. 24, 25.
In 2000, economic activity was very high. According to the Department of Statistics, the value of trade imports exceeded 232 billion Singapore dollars and the value of exports 237 billion Singapore dollars, so the total foreign trade value was around 470 billion Singapore dollars. Singapore’s port had become number one in handling international cargo. It cleared 145,383 vessels and handled a total shipping tonnage of 910 million tons while the airport cleared 86,853 planes arriving with 13.5 million passengers and 848,269 tons of cargo. The most important trading partners were in Malaysia, the United States and Japan. Among the most relevant commodities were mineral fuels (petroleum), chemicals and manufactured goods.  

(37) Singapore’s three most important trading partners in 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Value of imports in million Singapore dollars</th>
<th>Value of exports in million Singapore dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malaya (Malaysia)</td>
<td>39,399</td>
<td>43,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>34,718</td>
<td>41,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>39,955</td>
<td>17,949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>118,103</td>
<td>135,498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>232,175</td>
<td>237,826</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(38) Singapore’s three most important commodities in 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Value of imports in million Singapore dollars</th>
<th>Value of exports in million Singapore dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mineral fuels (petroleum)</td>
<td>27,987</td>
<td>23,061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals</td>
<td>13,282</td>
<td>16,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufactured goods</td>
<td>16,359</td>
<td>9,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>174,547</td>
<td>189,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>232,175</td>
<td>237,826</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result of this economic success, unemployment fell to 3.5 percent; wages were high and savings remarkable. On the average, people earn 3,063 Singapore dollars per month (for a 47-hour work week), that makes about 36,000 Singapore dollars per annum. In 2004, the gross national savings totaled 73.9 billion Singapore dollars. And the total revenue of the government was 31.1 billion, of which only 18.9 billion were needed for expenditures.  

463 The tables are based on data provided in Department of Statistics: Yearbook of Statistics Singapore, Singapore, 2004, p. 145-147, 149-152.
Today, Singapore is one of the very few countries in the world where the total amount of foreign trade is greater than the entire annual gross domestic product. It has one of the busiest ports in the world and it is also a major airport hub and service center. In other words: The economic conditions for effective transmission of news are excellent. Singapore’s economy, however, depends more than ever on the rest of the world.

### 5.2.1 Investments in media-related industries

The economic development of Singapore can be divided into different phases. After a phase of heavy construction of housing and infrastructure such as expanded port facilities, industrial estates and roads, transport and communication were becoming the fastest growing sectors, including tourism.

#### (40) Number of visitors and turnover between 1970 and 2000 in Singapore

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of visitors</th>
<th>Tourism receipts in million US dollars</th>
<th>Percentage of the Gross Domestic Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>579 000</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2 562 000</td>
<td>3 068</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>5 323 000</td>
<td>8 428</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>7 691 000</td>
<td>9 950</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The strongest impetus came from the electronics industry. Originally, there were only two significant electronics companies. They were set up in 1965 and 1966 to manufacture radios and black-and-white television sets for the small domestic market. In the following year, the Economic Development Board (EDB) sent a mission to the United States to promote Singapore as a good offshore location. Already a few weeks later, the first delegates from American companies were visiting Singapore to study the prospects for investments.
Besides low-cost labor, the so-called “Pioneer Status” they found very attractive, which offered a complete exemption from the corporate tax for five to ten years and the “Export Enterprise Certificate”, which granted tax on export profits. As a result, three American electronics companies invested in Singapore in 1967. They were followed by companies from Japan and Europe in 1969. Among the first were Texas Instruments, Hewlett Packard and General Electrics from the United States, Hitachi, Toshiba and Sanyo from Japan, and Philips, Siemens and Thomson from Europe.

As in other sectors, the world recession of 1975 caused a fall in output and a drop in employment by around 14 000 workers. But economic recovery began in the following year. By 1980, there were already 185 electronics companies in Singapore. In total, they employed 71 727 workers which was more than a quarter of the total manufacturing workforce. Altogether, they represented 5.6 billion Singapore dollars or more than 16 percent of the total manufacturing output.

By 1975, there were already 91 electronic firms operating in Singapore. In total, they employed 46 247 workers, more than one-fifth of the total manufacturing workforce, representing 1.6 billion Singapore dollars or about twelve percent of the total manufacturing output.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Singapore</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other words: Within just ten years, electronics became the second most important group of exports after petroleum. Between 1970 and 1980, the industry created over 60,000 jobs plus at least 200,000 related jobs.\(^\text{478}\) It is remarkable that most of these new jobs were created for unskilled or semi-skilled female production operators, who accounted for 80 percent of the workforce in this industry, compared with the average of around 45 percent.\(^\text{479}\)

According to Chia Siow Yue, the electronics industry passed through four phases of development. The first phase, from the late 1960s until the late 1970s, was characterized by the arrival of multinational companies. In the second phase, from the late 1970s until the late 1980s, earlier investments in semiconductor plants by American companies were followed by investments in consumer electronics by Japanese companies. During the third phase, from the late 1980s until the mid-1990s, ever-shortening product cycles intensified global and regional competition. And in the fourth phase, from the late 1990s until today, digitalization, wireless technology, miniaturization, automation, human interface technology and product intelligence have become core issues.\(^\text{480}\)

Based on data from 1992, Chia Siow Yue identified three salient features: “First, the largest category of domestically produced exports was disk drives, computers and subassemblies, ICs, TV receivers, and subassemblies. Domestic exports were destined primarily for the US and EC markets (64.1 percent), with Japan accounting for only 5.1 percent. […] Second, entrepot exports (from other countries’ production) were concentrated in ICs, computers and

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\(^{477}\) The table is based on data provided in Linda Lim: Trade, Employment and Industrialization in Singapore, Geneva, 1986, p. 50.

\(^{478}\) In 2000, the electronic products and components industry employed more than 100,000 workers who produced an output value of 82 billion Singapore dollars.

\(^{479}\) The percentage of female employment in the electronics industry has remained fairly constant over the time.

subassemblies, disk drives, colour TV sets, radios and videocassette recorders, and telecommunication equipment. Third, East Asian countries, particularly Malaysia, provided large markets for Singapore’s domestic exports of electronics components, indicating the increasingly integrated production pattern in East Asia and Singapore’s role in the value chain.481

However, several conclusions can be drawn from the development of the electronic industry. First of all, it generated many jobs, particularly for female workers, and in doing so strengthened the purchasing power of the households.482 Secondly, mass production lowered the costs for technical devices (vehicles) which are essential for the production, distribution and reception of news: radio and television sets, computers, and so on.483 And, thirdly, the development of the electronics industry had great effects on the media industry, although this is not representative for the development of the media industry itself.

Besides, it should be noted, as Pang Eng Fong showed in an analysis for the Economic Research Center of the University of Singapore, that “the electronics industry in Singapore is heavily dominated by U.S. and semiconductor firms which are the largest in term of sales and employment size” which is another aspect criticized in the MacBride Report.484

5.2.2 Purchasing power and advertising

For traditional media companies in Singapore, the prospects were actually not so promising. The English-language press faced an uncertain commercial future. At the time of Singapore’s separation from Malaysia (1965), the leading newspaper Straits Times had a combined daily circulation of more than 150,000 copies and the group’s pre-tax profits reached a record of 12.6 million Singapore dollars for the fiscal year ending August 1972.

This was difficult to maintain when the company was split into the New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) serving the market in Malaysia and the Straits Times Press (Singapore) for the

market in Singapore. Henceforth, the latter’s horizon was narrowed to a small island with a population of only two million people.\textsuperscript{485}

Another danger to the commercial future was the withdrawal of the 30 000 British soldiers who spent around 450 million Singapore dollars a year and employed around 24 000 people in the naval base plus another 70 000 domestic helpers, many of whom were English-speaking.\textsuperscript{486} In addition, many British bureaucrats were told to return home, and so a large proportion of the traditional readership disappeared or was left behind without any income.\textsuperscript{487}

A third difficulty was caused by the 1974 legislation prohibiting any foreign investments and regulating local ownership, even though huge investments were necessary in order to move the newspaper companies back to Singapore and establish them as listed companies. For a new printing plant alone, at least 20 million Singapore dollars were needed.

However, all the forecasts of experts turned out to be wrong. Already two years later, the \textit{Straits Times} announced a record profit of 15.8 million Singapore dollars. Henceforth, the group went from strength to strength. Its circulation advanced steadily, its profits grew and its share prices spiraled. In 1976, the \textit{Straits Times} had a daily circulation of 163 000 copies and in 1980, it passed the 200 000-mark.\textsuperscript{488}

So it was no problem for the newspaper company to absorb the increasing wage and newsprint costs. It purchased new typing machines and incorporated a “Business Times” section of four pages in the paper. In 1976, the group even launched a new journal called \textit{Singapore Business}. And bonuses were issued nearly every year until the mid-1980s. Meanwhile, also the Chinese-language media companies were listed. When the \textit{Nanyang Siang Pau} offered 4.98 million ordinary shares in 1977, it was twelve times over-subscribed. And when \textit{Sin Chew Jit Poh} offered 5.32 million ordinary shares in the same year, it was even 22 times over-subscribed.\textsuperscript{489}

\textsuperscript{485} Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 294.
\textsuperscript{487} Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 301.
\textsuperscript{488} Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 302, 327.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of newspapers</th>
<th>Combined circulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>&gt; 300 000 (est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>389 900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>449 001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>615 512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>713 866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>813 484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1 005 307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 100 859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 197 301</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So apart from minor setbacks, the newspaper business flourished, primarily because of three reasons. First of all, due to political decisions, local competition was almost completely shut out and threats from foreign investors like tycoon Rupert Murdoch were very unlikely. Secondly, the English-language readership surprisingly did not decline, instead it continued to rise. And the third and most important reason for economic success was the steady growth in the purchasing power of the readers, since this was accompanied by a rapid increase in advertising.

In the late 1960s, there were around 90 advertising companies employing around 900 people. Already ten years later, the numbers had increased to around 300 advertising companies employing 2 350 people. It is not known how much these agencies spent for placing advertisements in the 1960s and 1970s, but the amount increased between 1980 and 1990 from around 177 million Singapore dollars to 582 million Singapore dollars. In 2000, 753 million Singapore dollars were spent on advertisement.

Traditionally, the lion’s share goes to newspapers. This is not attributed to the fact that advertising in radio and television broadcasting was only introduced in the mid-1960 but because newspapers appeal to more specific readerships. The Straits Times and Business Times, for instance, cater to established professionals while the New Paper mainly serves young readers.

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490 The table is based on data provided in Kokkeong Wong: Media and Culture in Singapore, A Theory of Controlled Commodification, Creskill, 2001, p. 130; Peter Chen: Mass Media and Communication Patterns in Singapore, Singapore, 1979, p. 53; and Anura Goonasekera (Ed.): Asian Communication Handbook, Singapore, 2003, p. 266.
In 1990, 51.5 percent of the total budget was spent on newspaper advertising and not much less in 2000, although television is catching up since the mid 1990s. The promotion of consumer (retail) products plays the most important role.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Expenditure in million Singapore dollars</th>
<th>Market share in percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>299.7</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>173.6</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buses / Taxis</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinema</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The remarkable thing about the development of advertising in Singapore is that not only the top advertising agencies are in the hands of foreigners, but also their clients. Among the largest advertisement agencies in Singapore are McCann Erickson, Saatchi & Saatchi and Leo Burnett. And among the biggest spenders are McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken and American Express whose regional offices are usually also run by foreigners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Expenditure in million Singapore dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Batey Ads</td>
<td>85.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCann Erickson</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saatchi &amp; Saatchi</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogilvy @ Mather</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentsu, Young &amp; Rubicam</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo Burnett</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Expenditure in million Singapore dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>McDonald's</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courts Furniture</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Stores</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky Fried Chicken</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaohan</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Express</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiger Beer</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore Airlines</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecom</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Communication &amp; Information</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So it can be summarized that, despite some difficulties, the media industry prospered during the past few decades. It benefited from the overall growth of both the economy and the population, which led to the higher purchasing power of an increasing number of people. This had two effects, namely higher circulations (“the miracle of selling newspapers below costs”) and higher advertising revenues (“the lifeblood of newspapers”), which together resulted in higher annual receipts. 501

Today, however, media is a big business. Nearly all newspapers and magazines are published by the Singapore Press Holdings, which achieved record receipts of more than one billion Singapore dollars each in 2000 and in 2005. 502 And the majority of radio and television channels are operated by the Media Corporation of Singapore, which had a turnover of approximately 430 million in 2000 and 460 million Singapore dollars in 2005.

In addition, several hundred local, small and medium-sized media enterprises are operating in Singapore. Most of them are serving the two dominating companies in one way or another. To a certain extent, this is even true for the local or regional offices of international media companies operating there. 503 Among the international publications printed at the plant of the

Singapore Press Holdings are the International *Herald Tribune*, *USA Today*, *Asian Wall Street Journal*, *Asahi Shimbun* and the Egyptian paper *Al-Ahram.*

5.3 Expansion of the existing systems

According to the MacBride report, technology is not only considered an outcome of economic growth but also a prerequisite for it. In this sense, the government in Singapore established the Ministry of Science and Technology as well as several statutory boards. One of these was the Science Council of Singapore which was formed in 1967 and aims to promote the development of national scientific and technological capabilities. Its scope was limited, because in a city state with less than two million inhabitants, fundamental research hardly makes sense. Instead, all research and development (R&D) and science and technology (S&T) should be in support of the overall programs.

One of the most important challenges was the expansion of the school system. In 1965, there were 16 986 teachers and 477 408 pupils at 594 schools as well as around 700 academic staff members and 8 315 students at four institutions of higher education: Ngee Ann Polytechnic, founded in 1963 as a private college, had 80 members of academic staff and 893 students. At Singapore Polytechnic, established in 1954, there were 204 professionals and 2 426 students. At Nanyang University, also established in 1954 as a Chinese-language institution, there were 147 professionals and 2 126 students. And at the University of Singapore, which was established following a proposal by Stamford Raffles in 1823, the number of academic staff was 272 and the number of students totaled 2 870.

In other words: When Singapore became an independent and separate country, every forth citizen was in one way or another involved in education or research. Although this can be explained by citing the low average age, the numbers are bluffing. Reports show, however, that only half of the teachers at the time had any formal training and that many students did not attend classes because they had to support their parents to make a living.

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Another major problem was that several buildings were damaged and only few had adequate supplies. Therefore, the government launched several programs to properly equip the institutions.\footnote{Ministry of Education: Mission and Vision Statement, http://www.moe.gov.sg/corporate/mission_statement.htm, Singapore, date of publication unknown, accessed 2005.} In 1979, the Ministry of Education restructured the primary education system. And in the following year, the secondary education system was made more flexible.

The reforms on the higher education level were even more comprehensive.\footnote{Amnuay Tapingkae: Higher Education and Economic Growth in Southeast Asia, Singapore, 1976, p. 13 et sqq.} In 1980, the English-language University of Singapore and the Chinese-language Nanyang University were merged to become the National University of Singapore. Chinese citizens, however, were angry that preference was given to the English language.\footnote{National University of Singapore: Timeline, http://www.nus.edu.sg/corporate/timeline/, Singapore, 2001, accessed 2005.}

Thus, the Chinese-language Nanyang Technological Institute was established in 1981.\footnote{Ministry of Education: Education Statistics Digest 2004, Singapore, 2005, p. 68, 69.} About ten years later, it was upgraded to Nanyang Technological University.\footnote{Today, the Nanyang Technological University has a high reputation what is largely attributed to the School of Communication and Information which was established in 1992 by Eddie Kuo. Nanyang Technological University: School of Communication and Information, History, http://www.ntu.edu.sg/sci/about/history.html, Singapore, date of publication unknown, accessed 2006.} Therewith, it became a counterpart to the National University of Singapore and Singapore Management University (incorporated in 2000), which both teach in English.\footnote{The Singapore Management University is modeled after American institutions, in particular the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. Singapore Management University: About SMU, http://www.smu.edu.sg/aboutsmu/index.asp, Singapore, 2000, accessed 2006.}

The per capita government expenditure on education grew steadily, from around 90 Singapore dollars in 1970 to 284 Singapore dollars ten years later. In 2000, around 4 500 Singapore dollars were spent per primary school pupil and more than double that figure per student enrolled at institutions of higher education.\footnote{Today, 3.5 percent of the gross domestic product or 5.5 billion Singapore dollars are spent by the government for education.}

At the same time, the ratio of primary pupils per teacher declined from around 30 to 26 between 1970 and 1980 and continued to fall to 25 in 2000. As a result, the literacy rate increased from 73 to 84 percent between 1970 and 1980 and continued to rise to more than 92 percent in 2000. Another indicator is the ratio of pupils passing the orientation level; it increased from 53 to 69 percent between 1970 and 1980 and continued to rise to 78 percent in 2000. Similar effects can be observed at the universities.\footnote{Alone at the Singapore Polytechnic, around 140 000 persons were educated over the years. Singapore Polytechnic: Our History, http://www.sp.edu.sg/abt_history.htm, Singapore, 2005, accessed 2005.}
In 2000, there were 22,950 teachers and 505,914 pupils at 369 schools plus an unknown number of academic staff, but at least 400 professors, teaching 107,200 students at all the institutions previously mentioned plus the Temasek University, Nanyang Polytechnic and the Institute of Technical Education – today’s numbers are slightly higher.\footnote{Ministry of Education: Factsheet 2005, http://www.moe.gov.sg/esd/Factsheet%202005.pdf, Singapore, 2001, accessed 2006, p. 1-2.}

Not all problems regarding education have been solved, of course. Generally, children from wealthier families receive a higher level of education than those from poorer families. As a result, Chinese are more represented at Singapore’s universities than other ethnic groups because Chinese are generally in a better economic situation than the Malays and Tamils. And males are often educated for longer than females because boys are traditionally more coddled than girls. But in comparison with other countries, these gaps are gradually becoming negligible, partially due to an increasing number of scholarships.\footnote{Compare with Organization of Economic Cooperation and Security: First Results From Pisa 2003, Executive Summary, http://www.pisa.oecd.org/dataoecd/1/63/34002454.pdf, Paris, date of publication unknown, accessed 2005.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Life expectancy</th>
<th>Literacy rate</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Meanwhile, other institutions were also expanded. In 1968, an expert in archives administration from UNESCO, whose family name is said to be “Verhoeven” was assigned to the National Library to survey the archives and records in the government departments. He forced the establishment of the National Archives and Record Center, which was later renamed the National Archives and Oral History Department (after the addition of the Oral History Department).\footnote{Victoria School: National Archives of Singapore, http://itclub.vs.moe.edu.sg/cyberfair2003/landmarks/nationalarchives.html, Singapore, 2003, accessed 2005; and National Archives of Singapore: About NAS, http://www.nhb.gov.sg/NAS/AboutNAS/AboutNAS.htm, Singapore, date of publication unknown, accessed 2005.}

Henceforth, the National Library was discharged from the duty of collecting all kinds of materials and was able to focus on public services.\footnote{The table is based on data provided in Gavin Peebles: Economic Growth and Development in Singapore, Cheltenham, 2002, p. 137.}

As a result, the number of members as well as the number of books in the National Library more than doubled between 1970 and 1980, from 177,513 members and 460,552 books,
and continued to increase in the following years.\textsuperscript{524} Since 2000, three regional, 18 community libraries and 18 community children's libraries are part of the National Library. Altogether, they store approximately ten million items and handle 34 810 566 loans by 1 732 860 library members and 31 238 654 visitors per year.\textsuperscript{525} In the same period, the National Archive acquired the paper equivalent of 7 650 linear meters, as well as 270 000 microfilm reels, 3.2 million images, 14 099 hours of oral history recordings and 100 415 audio-visual records.\textsuperscript{526}

The expansion of the National Museum of Singapore is even more demonstrative of this trend. During colonial times, the leading museum was the Raffles Library and Museum which was founded in 1887 by Governor Frederick Weld (1823-1891).\textsuperscript{527} Although it had an impressive national history collection of Southeast Asia, the British staff was primarily concerned with providing materials and services for the British. During and after the Japanese occupation, the museum was renamed several times; today it is known as Singapore History Museum (SHM).\textsuperscript{528}

In 1969, at the advice of the Science Council of Singapore, the authorities decided to convert the institution into an art and history museum focusing on Singapore. Seven years later, it was expanded by the opening of the National Museum Art Gallery. Today, the following institutions belong to the Singapore History Museum and to the National Heritage Board (NHB): the Asian Civilizations Museums, the Singapore Art Museum, The Heritage Conservation Center, Singapore Philatelic Museum and Reflections at Bukit Chandu, which is a World War II documentation center. In total, they have 108 000 collections and were visited by 1 204 379 people in 2004 – these are the latest available numbers.\textsuperscript{529}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{527} Frederick Weld was a New Zealand politician and a governor of various British colonies including New Zealand, Western Australia and Tasmania. From 1880 until 1887, he was governor of the Straits Settlements consisting of Malacca, Penang and Singapore.
\end{footnotesize}
(49) Exhibitions and visitors of the four largest museums in Singapore in 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Museum</th>
<th>Number of exhibitions</th>
<th>Number of visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singapore History Museum</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>308 683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore Art Museum</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>133 843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Civilization Museum</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>71 347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore Philatelic Museum</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37 810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>551 683</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More important for the news flow, however, was the expansion of the communication infrastructure. In the MacBride Report, the postal service is seen as the backbone of this infrastructure. In Singapore, it dates back to the early days of Stamford Raffles and was gradually expanded. By 1965, there were 39 post offices and 28 postal agencies; they dealt with nearly 158 million items per year.

Over the years, the general office was moved from one location to another. For example, in 1971, it was moved from Fullerton Building, which had earlier been used by journalists, to Nelson Road, near the port. Three years later, a facer-canceller table capable of processing up to 30 000 letter mail items per hour was put into operation. Soon after, the first generation of optical character reader technology was introduced so that 40 percent of all mail was processed mechanically.

By the year 1977, there were a total of 62 post offices supplemented by two mobile post offices, 49 postal agencies, 190 licensed stamp vendors and 488 posting boxes. On the average, 520 000 postal articles were handled daily or 350 million postal articles annually. Those numbers continued to increase by more than five percent per year, particularly after the introduction of a “Local Urgent Mail Service” which covers both the collection and delivery of urgent mail.

(50) Development of the postal service in Singapore

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>A postal office is opened in the former Parliament House and run by three persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>The Post Office becomes a separate department in the Marine Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>The general office is moved to Fullerton Building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tables are based on data provided in Ministry of Information: Create, Connect@Sg, Arts, Media and Infocomm in Singapore, Singapore, 2002, p. 40, 41, 223, 224.
Usually, urgent mail items are delivered within two and a half hours of its collection at specially scheduled times. Eddie Kuo: Communication Policy and Planning in Singapore, Honolulu, 1983, p. 22.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>The Singapore Postal Department is linked with the Postal Department of the Federation of Malaya and introduces standardized rules, procedures and postage rates in both territories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>After Singapore’s separation from Malaysia, the Postal Service Department becomes a fully autonomous body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>The general office is moved to a Port of Singapore Authority warehouse near Nelson Road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>A facer-canceller table capable of processing up to 30,000 mail items per hours is put into operation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>The 2-digit postal code system is changed to a 4-digit system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>The Postal Service Department is merged with the then Telecommunication Authority of Singapore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>The mail and parcel center is moved to a larger location at the Chai Chee Complex where the first generation of optical character reader technology is implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>After the split of the Telecommunication Authority of Singapore into three entities, the Singapore Post becomes incorporated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>The mail-sorting operations at the Chai Chee Center are moved to the Singapore Post Center located along Eunos Road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>The Singapore Post is listed on the main board of the Singapore Stock Exchange.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Today, the Singapore Post operates more than 60 offices, around 80 authorized postal agencies, nearly 200 self-service automated machines, more than 660 stamp vendors and over 800 postboxes throughout town. It is processing 2.4 million local and overseas items per day, or about 830 million items a year.536

Telecommunication services, another backbone according to the MacBride Report, are still closely related to the postal service because the two were part of one entity in Singapore’s early years and also between 1982 and 1992, when the Postal Services Department was merged with the Telecommunication Authority of Singapore (TAS).537 They were later split into three entities: Singapore Post, the Telecommunication Authority of Singapore and the Singapore Telecommunications Private Limited.

What is remarkable about the development of telecommunication is not only the fast expansion of the distribution system but also its international orientation. Already seven years after the installation of a fully automatic switching system (1930), overseas phone calls were made possible between Singapore and London (1937).538 The reason is that all telecommunication services were managed by the British until the mid-1950s. Singapore even joined the Commonwealth Telephone Cable System, which crosses Southeast Asia to

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537 Frank Yung: Telecommunication, the Singapore Experience, p. 3-6, published in Media Asia, volume 8, number 1, Singapore, 1981, p. 3-6.
Australia (SEACOM), the Pacific from Australia to Canada (COMPAC) and the Atlantic Ocean to Britain (CANTAT).  

In 1955, the exclusive right to operate local telecommunication services was handed over to the Singapore Telephone Board, and international services were run by the Telecommunication Authority of Singapore. When they merged in 1974, fully automatic "International Direct Dialing" (IDD, 1976) was introduced and international telephone service to and from Singapore, either person-to-person or station-to-station, became available to and from 184 different countries.

In addition, international telex service became available to 165 countries with direct keying to around 100 countries, by 1977. And in the following year, another service, then known as "Datel" was introduced for the transmission of data to Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Britain and to the United States.

| (51) Development of telecommunications in Singapore |
|---|---|
| 1879 | Singapore becomes the first country in Asia to introduce a telephone system, just three years after Alexander Graham Bell patented his invention |
| 1907 | The Central Telephone Exchange is opened at Hill Street |
| 1930 | A switching system is installed so that the telephone systems becomes fully automatic |
| 1937 | The first overseas call is made between Singapore and London |
| 1955 | The exclusive right to operate local telecommunication services is handed over to the Singapore Telephone Board, and international services to the Telecommunication Authority of Singapore |
| 1976 | Full international direct dialing becomes available |
| 1977 | The first mobile telephone system is designed to support the use of car-phones |
| 1983 | Push-button service and automatic paging is introduced |
| 1985 | Public card-phones are made available |
| 1988 | The first cellular mobile radio system is introduced |
| 1989 | Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) becomes available |
| 1990 | The one millionth fixed telephone line is installed |


Singapore Telecommunication, now better known as SingTel, is incorporated as a wholly government owned company and listed on the Singapore Stock Exchange

A digital cellular system, called “Global System for Mobile Communications” (GSM900), is introduced

The Telecommunication Authority of Singapore announces the advanced expiry of the exclusive rights to provide telecommunication services

While Singapore Telecommunication launches its first own communication satellite, Star Hub and Mobile One are established in order to provide mobile communication services

After the liberalization of the telecommunications market, Star Hub and Mobile One began to offer fixed and mobile communication services

Star Hub and Mobile One roll out their 3G-networks

Voice-over-IP becomes increasingly popular

As a result of this rapid technological expansion, prices fell and the local demand increased. Between 1960 and 1974, the number of phones soared by 350 percent while international calls grew ten-fold and telex calls fifteen-fold.\(^\text{542}\) In the year 1974 alone, around 6 000 people per month applied for a residential line. As a result, operators were not able to provide immediate service upon request. These numbers continued to increase, particularly after further drops in prices due to the liberalization of the telecommunication market in 2000.\(^\text{543}\)

(52) Telecommunications in Singapore between 1965 and 2000\(^\text{544}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Phones per 1000 people</th>
<th>International calls per 1000 people per year</th>
<th>Telex connections per 1000 people</th>
<th>Telex calls per 1000 people per year</th>
<th>Telegrams per 1000 people per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>&lt;55.0</td>
<td>&lt;65.0</td>
<td>&lt;0.1</td>
<td>&lt;38.0</td>
<td>&lt;550.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>122.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>523.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>143.4</td>
<td>395.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>802.4</td>
<td>420.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>294.6</td>
<td>1 576.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3 208.5</td>
<td>278.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>419.3</td>
<td>6 503.1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6 283.8</td>
<td>119.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>&gt;450.0</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>&gt;490.0</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>569.0</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Everybody benefited from this development but to journalists in particular, this fast and easy person-to-person, person-to-office and office-to-office communication became essential. One might even argue that the whole media industry depends on the expansion of the communication systems because it is the “linchpin” and “backbone” of modern media, as Ang Peng Hwa and Soh Yew Peng describe it.\(^\text{545}\)

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\(^{542}\) Nilyardi Kahar: Technology Policies and Planning Singapore, Bangalore, 1989, p. 84.


Soh Yew Peng even compares the importance of telecommunications to the media industry with the importance of the railway, road and seaport system to agriculture, and with energy supply to heavy industry: “In the information era, accurate and timely transfer/transmission of information, whether the information originates from a local or international source, is often the key to success in the business world in terms of precise calculative decision making. […] To be able to know the latest news […] is not only of utmost importance, but it is the only link and channel that can deliver these services to its respective subscribers.”

Radio and television were the media most affected by these trends. Both had started off as experimental projects and were later officially introduced with the establishment of the British Malaya Broadcasting Corporation in 1936 and the launch of Channel 5 in 1963 respectively. Broadcasting, just like the postal and telecommunication services, was also dominated by the British for a long time, but it was handed over following the independence of the country and Singapore’s separation from Malaysia.

One of the first decisions of the newly established Radio Television Singapore (RTS) was to introduce “Frequency Modulation” (FM radio), as invented by Edwin Armstrong (1890-1954) in 1933, to its four radio channels in 1967. As a result, all radio stations in Singapore use this kind of modulation for broadcasting. Accordingly, a “Phase Alternating Lines” system using 626 lines was introduced for color television in 1967. Today, all television stations use this technology for color transmission.

Further progress was made when the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation was set up as a statutory agency and took over all functions of the Radio Television Singapore (RTS). It upgraded the production facilities with the completion of a large television studio and the introduction of an “Electronic News Gathering System” which allows the broadcasting of videotapes without processing them in the dark room – the system is still in use and has the advantage that news captured on videotapes can be edited for inclusion even while the news show is on air.

In the meantime, several radio channels were launched, including Class 95 (English), Radio V (English, Chinese), Radio X (Chinese), 93.3 FM (Chinese), Radio Ria (Malay, English) and Radio Singapore International (to cater to people outside Singapore). In addition, a third free-

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to-air television channel named *Channel 12* was started.\(^{551}\) Since 1992, they all broadcast in stereo and dual sound respectively so that the listeners and viewers simultaneously receive two sound lines.\(^{552}\)

Cable broadcasting was not introduced for a long time, although Singapore had a relatively high cable density. There were at least 16 000 fiber-optic cable lines with a total length of around 21 kilometers linking 26 (telephone) exchange booths.\(^{553}\) The reason for the delay in cable broadcasting is that the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation was split into three entities in 1994: While the Radio Corporation of Singapore inherited the radio broadcasting arm, the Television Corporation of Singapore (TCS) took over the television channels except *Channel 12*, which was given to TV 12 (later renamed in STV 12); this channel was later split into *Prime 12* (today known as *Suria*) and *Premiere 12* (today known as *Central*).

As a result of this “privatization”, radio and television were, for the first time, not operated by the same institution and also two television companies operating four channels were competing with each other. It did not take long, however, until the Television Corporation of Singapore was renamed Media Corporation of Singapore (MediaCorp) and merged with STV 12.

In the short period from 2001 to 2004, when SPH Media Works (belonging to the Singapore Press Holdings) shook the market with the launch of two free-to-air television channels, *Channel U* (Chinese) and *TV Works* (English, later renamed in *Channel 1*), there was relatively little progress towards competition but the launch caused an immense staff turnover. These four years socked Singapore Press Holdings with such heavy losses that it ended up following the recommendation of the Singapore Broadcasting Authority to merge SPH Media Works with the Media Corporation of Singapore.

As a result, there was once again only one broadcasting institution left in Singapore, since all radio and television channels (except for four radio channels of marginal importance) were all owned by the Media Corporation of Singapore.

\(^{551}\) In addition, the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation forced the production of the first local drama series and introduced voice dubbing of dialogue of acquired drama programs, mainly from Cantonese to Mandarin in accordance with the “Speak Mandarin Campaign”.


\(^{553}\) Today, at least 400 000 households are connected to the cable network. Soh Yew Peng: The Development of Singapore’s Modern Media Industry, Singapore, 1994, p. 120.
The development of broadcasting in Singapore

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>The Amateur Wireless Society experiments with radio transmission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>The British Malaya Broadcasting Corporation is established and Radio Singapura is launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942-1945</td>
<td>The Japanese Military Administration occupies the radio station and runs it under the new name Syonan Hoso Kyoku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Rediffusion established two radio channels: Gold is broadcasted in Chinese and Silver in English. Another channel is launched by British and Australian forces for their soldiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-1963</td>
<td>Radio Malaya is split into two entities, the Singapore entity becomes known as Radio Singapore, but the two services are later amalgamated again following the merger with Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-1980</td>
<td>After Singapore’s separation from Malaysia, Radio Television Singapore (RTS) restructures the market and launches four FM radio channels in different languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Television broadcasting is started as a pilot project. Later, the first channel is launched. Its name is Channel 5. The second channel launched is Channel 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963/1967</td>
<td>Another channel is launched by British and Australian forces for their soldiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Color television is introduced and becomes a regular service two years later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) sets up a relay station in order to broadcast BBC World in English and 13 other languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1994</td>
<td>The Singapore Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) takes over all functions from “RTS”, introduces stereo for radio and dual sound for television, and launches several radio and television channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>The National Trade Union Congress (NTUC) starts two radio channels, FM91.3 in English and FM100.3 in Chinese language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>The construction of the island-wide cable network Singapore Cable Vision begins; it is completed seven years later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>The Singapore Armed Forces Reservist Association launches two radio channels, Power 98 in English and Dong Li in Chinese language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>The “SBC” is split into entities: While the Radio Corporation of Singapore (RCS) inherits the radio arm, the Television Corporation of Singapore (TCS) launches several television channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-2001</td>
<td>After the merger of the broadcasting services into the Media Corporation of Singapore, the Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) challenges it with two free-to-air television channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>After half a century of renaming the same institution (RTS, SBC, TCS), “MediaCorp” has practically a monopoly in broadcasting, while “SPH” dominates print journalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the media has benefited in several aspects from the expansion of the existing systems. Radio stations, for example, started accepting telephone requests. This may seem marginal but its effects are remarkable, since “phone-ins” allow the people to participate in the programs. During a radio call-in talk show in April 2001, so many people (250 000 calls per hour) tried to get through that the exchange system (capable of 100 000 calls per hour) was getting overheated, which in turn increased the number of incoming calls.555

Also, the development and introduction of new media demonstrate the high impact of the expansion of the telecommunications system, as the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems recommended it.556 “Audiotex”, which was started by Singapore Press Holdings in 1991, is based on both telecommunication and news in order to handle consumer requests. Similarly, “Teletex” functions (not to be confused with Telex or Teletext), became essential for journalists who need to receive and send words over long distances,

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from one newsroom to another for instance. Another example is “Interactive Teletext”, which was introduced by the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation in 1993 as “SBCText” and later its more sophisticated successor; “INtv”. Although it uses broadcasting technology and requires a decoder, viewers need a telephone to interact with it.\textsuperscript{557}

Even the expansion of the postal system, as discussed in the MacBride Report, has had some relevance for the media. Not only does the Singapore Post distribute a large number of newspapers and magazines from the printing presses to the subscribers, it also issues and renews radio and television licenses which are required to receive broadcasting services legally. Thus, the more post offices are opened, the better for the media.\textsuperscript{558}

The expansion of the media industry itself, however, was the most important of all. On the production side, capacities were increased.\textsuperscript{559} Already by 1970, the \textit{Nanyang Siang Pau} had commenced using an offset printing machine and later bought a second “Goss Urbanite” offset printing machine in 1979 for six million Singapore dollars from a company in the United States, a machine capable of printing 50 000 copies of a forty-page broadsheet newspaper per hour.\textsuperscript{560}

Another example is the construction of the headquarters of the Singapore Press Holdings,\textsuperscript{561} which cost 45 million Singapore dollars and was completed in 1985. In addition to several newsrooms, the building has an auditorium, a resource center, a cafeteria, a clinic and sports facilities. It is equipped with high capacity fiber-optic cables, an electronic network and color facsimile transmission link-ups with the other two offices of the company.\textsuperscript{562}

Consumer purchases, especially those of radio and television sets, are an equally important development. The total number of sets has never been calculated, but the number of licenses (one license permits its holder to use an unlimited number of sets within his premises) are revealing: Between 1965 and 1985, the number of radio licenses increased from 140 589 or 75.4 per 1 000 people to 590 543 or 230.9 per 1 000 people. In the same


\textsuperscript{558} Eddie Kuo: Communication Policy and Planning in Singapore, Honolulu, 1983, p. 22.

\textsuperscript{559} Compare with Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of The Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 131.


period, the number of television licenses increased from 62,921 or 33.7 per 1,000 people to 481,908 or 188.4 per 1,000 people. Today, those numbers are almost twice as high.

(54) Radio and television licenses in Singapore between 1965 until 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Radio licenses</th>
<th>Radio licenses per 1,000 people</th>
<th>Television licenses</th>
<th>Television licenses per 1,000 people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>140,589</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>62,921</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>236,856</td>
<td>114.2</td>
<td>156,848</td>
<td>75.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>344,690</td>
<td>152.3</td>
<td>280,479</td>
<td>124.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>459,004</td>
<td>190.3</td>
<td>397,155</td>
<td>164.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>590,643</td>
<td>230.9</td>
<td>481,908</td>
<td>188.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>582,540</td>
<td>191.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>652,970</td>
<td>196.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>761,000</td>
<td>233.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All this, however, was not only a prerequisite of the economic growth; it was also an outcome of it. Today, Singapore has one of the most effective infrastructures for the transmission, dissemination and reception of news.

5.3.1 Introduction of new technologies

Many new technologies have been introduced in the past decades, but some are outstanding. One innovation that “changed history”, according to the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, was the successful launch of Sputnik I on 4 October 1957 by the Soviet Union. Although it took only 98 minutes to bring the world’s first artificial satellite, which was the size of a basketball and weighed only 44.5 kilograms, into orbit, this event marks the beginning of the "era of space communication".

The short-term effect of Sputnik was an intensification of the Cold War, because the United States feared that the Soviet’s ability to launch satellites proved its capability to launch intercontinental ballistic missiles carrying nuclear weapons. In response, the U.S. Defense Department approved funding for two satellite projects which finally led to the creation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).564

563 The actual number of radios and television is probably much higher because the licenses permits its holders to use more than one radio or television set within their premises. The table is based on data provided in Eddie Kuo: Communication Policy and Planning in Singapore, Honolulu, 1983, p. 36.
However, communication satellites completely changed how news are transmitted. It is not known how many are currently in space, but since the first satellite was launched ("Telstar", 1962), several hundred have been put into orbit.""565 Apart from a few exceptions, all are geostationary, which means that they stay in a fixed position to an earth-based observer. The advantage is that ground-based antennas, which must be directed towards the satellite, can operate effectively without any equipment tracking the satellite’s motions.

Surprisingly, most authors writing about communication and media in Singapore fully ignore this subject.""566 The reason is probably that at first glance, satellite communication has never played a role in the city state. But it does exist and it is important. In fact, one of the first decisions after the withdrawal of the British military forces was to establish an earth station.

The Sentosa Island Earth Station began operation in August 1972. It was fixed on an Intelsat IV satellite positioned 35 800 kilometers above the Indian Ocean and enabled direct communication with Britain, Bangladesh, Greece, Germany, Hong Kong, Israel, Italy, Indonesia, India, Japan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Taiwan. A second antenna, commissioned two year later, was locating another geostationary Intelsat IV satellite, this one above the Pacific Ocean. It enabled direct exchange with Australia, Canada, South Korea, New Zealand, Mainland China, and the United States.""567

This is interesting in several ways. First of all, it was a clear decision in favor of the "International Telecommunications Satellite Consortium" which was founded in 1964 by eleven “Western” countries in order to establish the Intelsat system, and against the "International Organization of Space Communications" which was founded in 1961 by nine communist countries in order to expand the Intersputnik satellite system.""568

Thus, in the 1970s, it was decided to connect Singapore directly with several “Western” countries instead of those of the “Soviet Bloc”. As a result, for the next twenty years, the media in Singapore received news streams via satellite from “Western” news agencies such as the American Associated Press and the British Reuters rather than from "Soviet-influenced” agencies such as the Russian Itar-Tass.

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It is not surprising that the former colony stuck with Britain and its partners. In fact, all countries in Southeast Asia except Vietnam preferred Intelsat over Intersputnik. But the way that Singapore dealt with this issue is noteworthy because it did not actively participate in the so-called “Pacific Satellite War” which began in the early 1970s, when Indonesia started operating its own satellite network named “Palapa”.  

Instead, Singapore made use of already existing technologies. It leased transponders to connect to Palapa I and Palapa II. In addition, Singapore connected to the Maritime Satellite System (Marisat) in 1971 and joined the International Maritime Satellite Organization in order to benefit from the “INMARSAT” system, which provides data transmission to another 50 countries.

One of the reasons why Singapore did not actively participate in the “Pacific Satellite War” is that Lee Kuan Yew and his comrades were and still are skeptical about the use of satellites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Satellite</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Dong Fang Hong I</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Palapa I</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Sakura</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Yuri</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Insat 1A</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Palapa II</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>STW-1</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Aussat 1</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Asiasat 1</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Thaicom 1</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Koreasat-1</td>
<td>Korea (South)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Measat 1</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Agila II</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Kwang Myong Song 1</td>
<td>Korea (North)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


for broadcasting. The official explanation was and interestingly still is that satellite broadcasting would have no advantage over cable broadcasting for the end consumer.\textsuperscript{572} But this is wrong, because “Direct Satellite Broadcasting” (DSB) would offer many more programming choices. Obviously, the authorities simply want to maintain the control over the inflow of news.

As a result, the situation of satellite communication in Singapore is quite different to that of its neighbors. While Indonesia, for example, introduced a so-called “Open Sky Policy” that practically allows everyone to send out and receive signals from space, satellite dishes are generally prohibited in Singapore.\textsuperscript{573}

\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
\textbf{(56) The development of satellite communication in Singapore} & \\
\hline
1971 & Singapore makes use of the Maritime Satellite System (Marisat) \\
1972 & The country’s first satellite earth station is installed; it is locating an Intelsat IV over the Indian Ocean \\
1973 & Singapore is leasing transponders to connect to the Indonesian Palapa I and Palapa II satellite systems \\
1974 & A second antenna is installed; it is fixed on another Intelsat IV satellite above the Pacific Ocean \\
1976 & Singapore joins the International Maritime Satellite Organization in order to participate in the INMARSAT system \\
1991 & The Singapore Broadcasting Corporation feeds incoming CNN live streams into its regular program \\
1993 & A second earth station is opened, named Tampines Telepark \\
1994 & A third earth station is opened, named Seletar Satellite Earth Station \\
1995 & The Chinese-language satellite television channel Xin Shi begins broadcasting \\
1997 & The forth earth station is opened, named Bukit Timah Satellite Earth Station and becomes the second most important \\
1998 & Together with Taiwan’s Chungwa Telecom, Singapore Telecommunication launches its first satellite “ST-1” \\
1999 & The Nanyang Technological University launches a mini-satellite for academic purposes \\
2000 & Singapore Telecommunication forms a joint venture with the Hong Kong-based APT Satellite Company which operates three Apstar satellites \\
2001 & Singapore Telecommunication buys the second largest telecommunications operator in Australia, which has a fleet of at least four satellites \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

Nevertheless, satellite communication has had a great impact on Singapore because it made the transmission of news approximately 50 million times faster than a century ago. Satellite

\textsuperscript{572} Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union: Technical Development of Broadcasting in the Asia Pacific Region 1964-1984, Sydney, 1984, p. 44.

communication has even expanded the variety of incoming news items and recently became a way to export own news streams.\footnote{Sonia-Kay Kierstead: Satellite Television Broadcasting in Asia-Pacific Countries, p. 223-226, published in \textit{Media Asia}, volume 12, number 4, Singapore, 1985, p. 223-226.}

How important satellite communication is became obvious in the Gulf War in 1991, when \textit{CNN} was the only television channel broadcasting live from Baghdad. The interest of the public was so immense that the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation aired the \textit{CNN} stream live for two hours daily. The Ministry of Information even granted temporary licenses to some banks and other financial institutions to operate satellite dishes in order to obtain the latest news directly.\footnote{Soh Yew Peng: The Development of Singapore’s Modern Media Industry, Singapore, 1994, p. 122-125.}

Since then, however, foreign news and reports are increasingly often fed into the regular program. Actually, the whole coverage of the attacks of 11 September 2001 on the World Trade Center in New York City was taken from \textit{CNN} and other channels, which all resided on the 110\textsuperscript{th} floor of the north tower.\footnote{CNN: List of World Trade Center Tenants, http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2001/trade.center/tenants1.html, Atlanta, 2001, accessed 2006.}

Even full entertainment programs from abroad are fed into the local cable system. An example is \textit{Star TV}, which was launched in 1991 by a partnership of Li Kashing’s Hutchison Wampoa group and run by his son Richard Li. Later, it was sold to Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation, which bought a four percent stake of Singapore Telecommunication in 2000, probably to ensure the transmission.\footnote{Star TV has 300 million viewers in 53 countries. Star TV: Transforming Asia’s media landscape, http://startv.com/eng/frame_aboutus.cfm, Hong Kong, date of publication unknown, accessed 2006; Drew McDaniel: Electronic Tigers of Southeast Asia, The Politics of Media, Technology and National Development, Ames, 2002, p. 71, 72; and William Atkins: The Politics of Southeast Asia’s New Media, London, 2002, p. 48-50.}

Meanwhile, satellites have also been increasingly used to distribute information from Singapore. One example is \textit{Singapore International Television}. Another example is \textit{Xin Shi}, a satellite channel which started broadcasting 18 hours of Mandarin programs daily to cable households in Taiwan in 1995.\footnote{John Keshishoglou: Electronic Broadcast Media in Singapore and the Region, Singapore, 2005, p. 92.} In addition, foreign operators increasingly use Singapore’s uplink facilities to broadcast their programs throughout the region. The most well-known examples are the \textit{ESPN}, \textit{HBO} and \textit{Disney} channels.\footnote{Ministry of Information: Create, Connect@Sg, Arts, Media and Infocomm in Singapore, Singapore, 2002, p. 11 and p. 141.}

Today, the country operates an unknown number of satellites but there are at least five. The first satellite, “ST-1”, was launched as a joint project between Singapore Telecommunication
and Taiwan’s Chungwa Telecom in August 1998 from French Guiana. It covers South and Southeast Asia from India to the Philippines, and it is designed for both telecommunication and broadcasting.

Three other satellites bought by Singapore Telecommunication cover the rest of the world except North and South America. And the fifth known satellite, for academic purposes, passes every 90 minutes over Singapore and carries components by the Nanyang Technological University, which is researching on real-time mobile communication. In 2000, there were even rumors that Singapore and Israel would sign an agreement worth over one billion US dollars for the joint development of five surveillance satellites gathering intelligence information, but this has not yet been confirmed.

In addition, Singapore Telecommunication operates four earth stations (teleports) with more than 30 antennas interacting with at least ten other satellites in the region – and this does not even include the ground facilities of SingTel Optus in Australia which operates another fleet of at least four satellites. Further teleports are probably operated by Media Corporation of Singapore and Singapore Press Holdings but information about this is scarce. Ordinary citizens, however, are still not allowed to install satellite dishes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(57) Satellite access in Singapore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ST-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelsat I–60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelsat I–62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelsat I–64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelsat I–66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelsat P–474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelsat P–180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Skies I–57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APT 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APT 2R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another innovation with an even greater impact are “information processing machines”, which later became known as “computers”. A forerunner was the “Antikythera” mechanism which was a device for calculating the movements of planets, which dates back to 80 B.C.

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Further historical milestones are the “Difference Machines” and the “Analytical Engine” of Charles Babbage (1791-1871), which was planned but never constructed. Both were programmable, but the “Analytical Engine” would have been more complex and would have used punch cards.\textsuperscript{584}

The world’s first computer is considered to be the “Z3” by Konrad Zuse (1910-1995).\textsuperscript{585} Its attributes - being freely programmable, fully automatic and using binary code - are often used as criteria for defining a computer. The mass production and use of computers is largely attributed to companies such as IBM, Apple and Microsoft, notably after the introduction of 8 to 64-bit home and small enterprise “micro-computers” operating on the basis of “DOS” or “Windows” (which is based on “DOS”). The “Apple II” and the “Commodore 64” became the most popular among them.\textsuperscript{586}

It is not clear when the first computer was installed in Singapore. A senior teaching fellow of the Department of Information Systems and Computer Science at the National University of Singapore believes that it was in 1964, but he does not give any details.\textsuperscript{587} However, in contrast to the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, the government in Singapore realized the advantages of computers quite early. Already by 1975, several ministries were equipped with them.

Five years later, a National Computerization Board was established under the Ministry of Finance. It developed a “National Computerization Plan” and supervised its implementation. Among other things, the plan included the installation of 1 000 computers at secondary schools and zero tax on computer products.\textsuperscript{588} In addition, several trade fairs were organized. The “Computa 83”, for example, attracted 85 000 visitors. Another example is the “National Informatics Week”, during which 200 computer companies presented their products.\textsuperscript{589}

While the “Small Enterprise Computerization Program” encouraged the use of computers among small and medium-sized business companies, the “Pioneer Status” attracted several

\textsuperscript{584} Charles Babbage was an English mathematician. His machines are among the most celebrated icons in the prehistory of computing. Charles Babbage Institute: Who was Charles Babbage, http://www.cbi.umn.edu/exhibits/cb.html, Minneapolis, date of publication unknown, accessed 2006.


\textsuperscript{589} Nilyardi Kahar: Technology Policies and Planning Singapore, Bangalore, 1989, p. 41.
multinational companies. The German company Nixdorf (now owned by Siemens) invested 15 million US dollars in manufacturing in Singapore. Another example is the American company Victor Technology, which shifted all its manufacturing to the island. Many components of the “Apple IIe” computer were also produced in Singapore.

As a result, the prices fell and the demand increased. During the five years from 1982 to 1987 alone, the number of organizations (with ten or more employees) using computers increased from around 13 to 59 percent. In the finance and banking sectors, this percentage even increased from 24 to 85 percent.\(^{590}\)

Authors such as Toh Mun Heng, Chia Siow Yue and Jamus Jerome Lim usually divide the development of the computer in Singapore into four phases: During the first phase (1980-1985), the computer was primarily used as a tool for management and business. In the second phase (1986-1991), the computer infrastructure was expanded, particularly in the civil service and business sectors. When the third phase begins and ends is subject of discussion, but it is generally agreed that it is marked by the establishment of the “Singapore One” system which links offices, schools and homes to the broadband network. It was completed in late 1999. And the forth phase from that time to the present is characterized by the popularity of the Internet and the introduction of “electronic commerce” (eCommerce).\(^{591}\)

From a historical point of view, all these phases have something in common. Each began with the outline of a strategy which was executed in “cluster” areas. Examples of such plans are the “National Computerization Plan” (1980), the “National IT Plan” (1986) and “IT 2000” (1992). The largest cluster is the Singapore Science Park which was established in 1984 as a focal point for research and development-oriented activities.\(^{592}\)

The media, however, benefited from computers almost from the beginning. Already in the late 1970s, the first computers were installed in the newsrooms of the *Straits Times*. A communication computer, which enabled the collection of news from wire service agencies, was the most important addition. In 1978, a number of “Talstar” computers (not to be confused with the “Telstar” satellite) were introduced and equipped with video display terminals. In addition, several portable computers were bought so that by 1985, even


journalists on assignment overseas were able to fill their texts into the article management “System 55”.  

A milestone was the introduction of an automatic pagination system in 1991 because it allows full page layout on-screen. Again, it was the English-language press that ran ahead but the Chinese-language newspapers Lianhe Zaobao and the Shin Min Daily News followed suit with the installation of the “Chinese Newspaper Publishing System” (CNPS). By 1992, it consisted of 486 terminals of different types and 17 printers.

The final breakthrough came with the interconnection of computer networks on the basis of universal standards and packet switching for the transmission of data. According to a widely accepted myth, this technology goes back to the “Sputnik Shock” and was designed to ensure communication in the case of a nuclear war, but the factual reason was that the switching nodes and network links were not reliable, even without any disaster.

What is today known as the Internet started with the “Advanced Research Projects Agency Network” (APRANET), which was developed by computer scientists researching at different universities, notably Lawrence Roberts at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Leonard Kleinrock at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) and Vinton Cerf at the same institution and later at the Stanford University.

The APRANET did not attract much attention, however, until the early 1990s, when Tim Berners-Lee invented the “WorldWideWeb” (WWW) at the “Organisation Européenne pour la Recherche Nucléaire” (CERN) near Geneva. Today, this term is often mistakenly used as a synonym for the Internet itself but it is actually a service that operates over the Internet, comparable to “Electronic Mail” (eMail), another “killer application” of the Internet.

The World Wide Web is based on three general standards: HyperText Markup Language (HTML) for documents, Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) for referencing resources, and HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP) for specifying how computers can communicate.
Waipeng Lee writes that the Internet did not become available in Singapore before 1994 but this is inaccurate. In fact, Singapore’s network experiences date back to the early 1980s when several “Bulletin Board Systems” (BBS) were set up. Already by 1987, the National University of Singapore joined the “BITNET” network which connected to several universities in the United States and overseas. Thus, the first “eMail” was received in Singapore from the City University of New York in January 1987. Four years later, the first regular Internet connection was established.

In 1992, TechNet began providing Internet access to selected institutions. It was later renamed Pacific Internet and became Singapore’s second Internet service provider next to the Singapore Telecommunication subsidiary SingNet, which started public service in July of 1994. These two were later joined by Cyberway, known today as Star Hub Internet.

Although all continue to provide dial-up connections by using regular telephone lines, the “Singapore One” initiative (“One network for everyone”) has become more and more important. It was started in 1996 and makes use of Singapore Cable Vision’s hybrid fiber-coaxial broadband network, which cost 500 million Singapore dollars.

Although originally designed for radio and television broadcasting, the cables are capable of high-speed Internet and even allow interactive multimedia services such as Internet-telephony and video-conferencing. This is why Drew McDaniel compares this system to Malaysia’s “Multimedia Super Corridor”, but Singapore’s is actually much more sophisticated. Since the year 2000, 99 percent of all households in Singapore are able to connect to the cable system.

599 Waipeng Lee also states that the country’s first homepage “www.sg” was the world’s first homepage but this is also inaccurate. At this time, there were already hundreds of websites available. Most popular were the homepages of the World Bank and the White House, which had both been started in 1993. Waipeng Lee: Singapore, p. 149, published in Sankaran Ramanathan (Ed.): Internet in Asia, Singapore, 2001, p. 149-161.
The development of computer and the Internet in Singapore

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>The first computer is installed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Several ministries are equipped with computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>A computer network is installed at the Straits Times newspapers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>The “Committee on National Computerization” develops the “National Computerization Plan”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1985</td>
<td>The first phase of computerization is characterized by the introduction of computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>During the first “National Informatics Week”, around 200 computer companies present their products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>The Straits Times introduces an article management system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Another “National IT Plan” is passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-1991</td>
<td>The second phase of computerization is characterized by the expansion of the infrastructure in the civil service and business sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>After the National University of Singapore joins “BITNET”, it receives the first “E-Mail” from the City University of New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>TechNet provides Internet access to selected institutions. Meanwhile, an automatic pagination system for full-page layout and the Chinese Newspaper Publishing System is installed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>The “IT 2000” development plan is passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-1999</td>
<td>In the third phase of computerization, “Singapore One” is set up to link offices and homes with the cable broadband network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>The Singapore Telecommunication subsidiary SingNet offers Internet access to its customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>TechNet is incorporated as Pacific Internet and becomes the second “ISP”. Meanwhile, Singapore Press Holdings launches the internet portal Asia One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>The Singapore Broadcasting Authority passes the “Internet Code of Practice”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>The top level domain “.sg” is introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>A mass training event is held at the Singapore Indoor Stadium with 3 750 participants. Meanwhile, the “Singapore Internet Project” analyzes the Internet usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>The Singapore Cable Vision completes the wiring up of 99 percent of Singapore’s households (Singapore One)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2006</td>
<td>The fourth phase of computerization is characterized by the increasing popularity of the Internet and the introduction of “electronic commerce”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>The Media Development Authority (MDA) is formed and absorbs all duties of the Singapore Broadcasting Authority, including regulation of the Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Based on the 3G-networks of Singapore Telecommunication, Star Hub and Mobile One wireless internet access is becoming increasingly popular</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But access is only one side of the story - usage is the other. In the beginning, interest in the Internet must have been relatively modest. Therefore, a five-day mass training event was organized in 1998 at the Singapore Indoor Stadium at which 3 750 people participated. In addition, permanent training centers were opened, providing courses on computers and the Internet at the four national libraries.\(^6\) Singapore Telecommunication’s offer providing free Internet access and free email accounts to all telephone subscribers starting in 1999 proved to be the most successful.


As a result, both the number of computers and the number of Internet users increased rapidly. Statistics vary because computers do not have to be registered. Also, it is discussed how often someone has to access the Internet in order to be considered a "regular user".

In 2000 alone, however, 427 000 personal computers were sold in Singapore and it is estimated that there were already 1.7 million in use. This means that every second inhabitant owns a computer.\(^{607}\)

Nearly every computer has a modem or network card required to establish an Internet connection. In total, there were around 1.8 million dial-up subscribers plus around 250 000 broadband subscribers in 2000 and 404 000 users who frequently use the Internet plus approximately another 1.5 million who use it once in a while.\(^{608}\)

According to a report by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), this represents a market penetration rate of around 54 percent.\(^{609}\) Yet another survey - released in 2000 - states that the penetration rate is only around 46 percent.\(^{610}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(59) Dial-Up Internet subscribers in Singapore per 1 000 residents(^{611})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To date, there is only one comprehensive field study available, the “Study on Usage and Impact of the Internet in Singapore”. Its results are comparable to the results of studies completed in other countries. Generally, there are more males than females using the Internet. The average age is relatively low and the educational level high.\(^{612}\)


\(^{608}\) Singapore is one of the few countries where the number of subscribers is higher than the numbers of users and computers. Both is a result of free access campaigns.


If one breaks down these statistics to include language skills and ethnicity, the results are striking: Almost half of the people with English-language skills are online compared to only one third of those without English-language skills. And Chinese are more often connected than Malays and Tamils.

### Computer ownership and Internet access by ethnicity in 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Computer ownership</th>
<th>Internet access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>58.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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613 The tables are based on data provided in Chia Siow Yue (Ed.): Growth and Development of the IT Industry in Bangalore and Singapore, A Comparative Study, Singapore, 2001, p. 72, 74.

614 Around 55 percent of the people who understand both English and Chinese are online compared to 38 percent of those who are literate in either but not both languages. And there are hardly any Internet users among those who speak Chinese or Malay only. Eddie Kuo: Internet in Singapore, A Study on Usage and Impact, Singapore, 2002, p. 100-112.

615 Ministry of Information: Create, Connect@Sg, Arts, Media and Infocomm in Singapore, Singapore, 2002, p. 187.
However, the main reasons for accessing the Internet are communicating ("eMail", "Chat") and searching for information.

| **(63) Time spent on various Internet activities**<sup>616</sup> |
|------------------|------------------|
| **Type**          | **Average hours per week** |
| Email             | 3.2               |
| Chat / Online discussions | 1.6               |
| Entertainment (watching short movies, etc.) | 1.7               |
| Seeking information (for work/school use)  | 2.3               |
| Seeking information (for personal use)     | 1.8               |
| Transactions (financial, shopping, etc.)  | 0.4               |
| **Total**         | **11.0**          |

Because of this, the role of the government and the situation of the market are interesting. On the one hand, the government promotes the use of computers and the Internet. Over the years, it passed several development plans and set up statutory boards to encourage investors to expand the infrastructure on the island.<sup>617</sup>

The government itself even invested in the new technology by upgrading the infrastructure of the civil service. Between 1994 and 1999, government expenditures on information technology services grew from 45 million Singapore dollars or 0.5 percent of the total budget to 458 million Singapore dollars or 3.3 percent of the total budget.<sup>618</sup> On the other hand, the government tries to regulate and control the access and usage of the Internet.<sup>619</sup> Already in 1996, it introduced a so-called “Internet Code of Practice” which identifies what the government regards to be offensive, which includes pornography, violence, racism and religious slurs. Discussion groups organized around political or religious matters are particularly undesired. Also, astrology, palmistry and other fortune-telling services are not allowed unless they are registered.

| **(64) “Internet Code of Practice” of the Singapore Broadcasting Authority (Excerpt)**<sup>620</sup> |
|------------------|------------------|
| 4.1 | Prohibited material is material that is objectionable on the grounds of public interest, public morality, public order, public security, national harmony, or is otherwise prohibited by applicable Singapore laws. |
| 4.2 | In considering what is prohibited material, the following factors should be taken into account: |

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<sup>616</sup> The table is based on data provided in Eddie Kuo: Internet in Singapore, A Study on Usage and Impact, Singapore, 2002, p. 31.


(a) whether the material depicts nudity or genitalia in a manner calculated to titillate;
(b) whether the material promotes sexual violence or sexual activity involving coercion or non-consent of any kind;
(c) whether the material depicts a person or persons clearly engaged in explicit sexual activity;
(d) whether the material depicts a person who is, or appears to be, under 16 years of age in sexual activity, in a sexually provocative manner or in any other offensive manner;
(e) whether the material advocates homosexuality or lesbianism, or depicts or promotes incest, pedophilia, bestiality and necrophilia;
(f) whether the material depicts detailed or relished acts of extreme violence or cruelty;
(g) whether the material glorifies, incites or endorses ethnic, racial or religious hatred, strife or intolerance.

4.3 A further consideration is whether the material has intrinsic medical, scientific, artistic or educational value.

4.4 A licensee who is in doubt as to whether any content would be considered prohibited may refer such content to the Authority for its decision.

To foreigners, these rules often lead to the assumption that Internet use in Singapore is very restricted, but the reality is quite different. In fact, the Singapore Broadcasting Authority, or the Media Development Authority (MDA) as it is known today, is passive most of the time. It mostly responds to complaints rather than taking up its own initiatives.\footnote{International Telecommunication Union: The E-City, Singapore Internet Case Study, http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/cs/singapore/material/Singapore.pdf, Geneva, 2001, accessed 2004, p. 25.}

Nevertheless, the government indirectly wields power over the Internet, since all kinds of providers must be licensed annually. In order to apply for such a license, they must be incorporated in Singapore and at least 51 percent must be in the hands of a national. According to Ang Peng Hwa, each license costs a one-time fee of 450 000 Singapore dollars and an annual fee equivalent to one percent of the audited annual gross receipts.\footnote{Ang Peng Hwa: Information Highways, Policy and Regulation, The Singapore Experience, p. 107, published in Venkat Iyer (Ed.): Media Regulations for the New Times, Singapore, 1999, p. 97-114.}

Practically, only a few companies in Singapore are able to fulfill all these requirements and most of them have ties to the government in one way or another.

Until 1998, there were only three Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in Singapore. SingNet is a subsidiary of the government-linked Singapore Telecommunication. Pacific Internet is the former university network. And Cyberway was bought by Star Hub. The government has a stake in all of these companies (i.e. through the investment company Temasek). In the meantime, the number of Internet Service Providers has increased to around twenty, but the three mentioned above still corner the bulk of the market.\footnote{International Telecommunication Union: The E-City, Singapore Internet Case Study, http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/cs/singapore/material/Singapore.pdf, Geneva, 2001, accessed 2005, p. 12.}

Through Temasek, the government even has a say in several Internet Content Providers (ICPs). The largest and most frequented local portal, \textit{Asia One}, belongs to the print monopolist Singapore Press Holdings and more than twenty web radios belong to the radio
and television monopolist Media Corporation of Singapore. The latter must be especially
careful to toe the line, because according to the Broadcasting Security Act, all broadcasts
must meet local censorship standards before streaming over the Internet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Unique audience</th>
<th>Reach in percentage</th>
<th>Time per person in minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSN</td>
<td>238 014</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>42.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AsiaOne</td>
<td>80 652</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>28.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahoo</td>
<td>278 629</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>26.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Internet</td>
<td>158 823</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>12.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore Telecom</td>
<td>217 377</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>11.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lycos</td>
<td>131 304</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>09.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excite</td>
<td>66 351</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>08.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOL</td>
<td>146 486</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>07.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altavista</td>
<td>81 404</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>06.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft</td>
<td>107 175</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>04.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To summarize, it can be said that the news flow in Singapore today is much more efficient
but not less restricted. What Lee Kuan Yew predicted in 1998 at the “Asian Media
Conference” in Los Angeles became true in a way: “[…] the new technology is a force for
both good and evil […] Although it may take some time, morality and wisdom, we must find a
way to control and tame the new technology to preserve the fundamental values of society
by which parents bring up their children to be good citizens. In responding to this challenge
of new technology, Asian societies will seek solutions different from those of the West.”

5.3.2 Standardization and cooperation

A major condition for the successful expansion of the infrastructure and introduction of new
technologies has been the formulation and adoption of specific standards, because basic
rules are essential for any kind of interaction. Principally, all sustainable commitments are
standards: Money is a standard for payment, the inch is a standard for measurement and

624 AsiaOne was launched in 1995 and sees itself as a “one-stop information mall for everyone”. According its
own data, it has more than 250 million page views and around 4.5 million unique visitors per month. Lee Chu
626 The table is based on data provided by Nielsen in International Telecommunication Union: The E-City,
accessed 2005, p. 15.
627 After Drew McDaniel: Electronic Tigers of Southeast Asia, The Politics of Media, Technology and National
octane is a standard for gasoline. Historically, the cylindrical stones which were used for height in Egypt around 7 000 B.C. are considered as being the world’s first standard.\textsuperscript{628}

For modern Singapore, the introduction of standards for shipping containers was of particular importance. As mentioned earlier, this small country depends heavily on regional and international trade (the total external trade is even greater than the entire gross domestic product).\textsuperscript{629}

Although it has never been verified, the American truck operator Malcolm McLain (1914-2001) claimed to have invented shipping containers in the 1930s when he realized that it would be much more efficient to transfer the truck itself on the ship than its cargo only. In 1956, he rebuilt his standard ship “Ideal X” into the world’s first container ship capable of 58 boxes. Meanwhile, shipping companies such as “Hapag” and “Lloyd” experimented with bins of different sizes.\textsuperscript{630} But large single-sized containers turned out to be more convenient, so a universal standard (ISO/TC-104) was agreed upon by the “Technical Committee” (TC) of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in 1961.\textsuperscript{631}

Five years later, the first container terminal was built in Singapore at the advice of the Dutch economist Albert Winsemius. The first container berth was put into operation in 1972. Its first job was handling the 300 containers which had been carried by the “M.V. Nihon” from Japan.\textsuperscript{632} Since Singapore’s national Neptune Orient Lines (NOL) formed an alliance with the Japanese K-Line and the Belgium Compagnie Maritime Belge, container reloading services (“intermodal transportation”) are provided on a regular basis. Singapore was placed along the world’s longest and most important shipping route connecting the Atlantic coast of the United States and the southern coast of Europe with Japan and the Pacific coast of the United States.\textsuperscript{633}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{629} Gavin Peebles: The Singapore Economy, Glos, 1996, p. 159.
\bibitem{630} Hapag (1847) and Lloyd (1856) merged in 1970.
\end{thebibliography}
Today, the leading container operator, PSA, operates 46 berths which handle 23.3 million “TEUs” for 200 shipping lines connecting 600 ports in 123 countries - “Twenty-Foot Equivalent Unit” is the standard for measuring container sizes; a regular container is 20 feet or one “TEU” long, 8 feet wide and 8.5 feet high.634

Similarly, standards have been introduced for the transmission of information. A very basic standard is the “Morse Code”, a more complex one is the “Integrated Services Digital Network” (ISDN). The first one was introduced in Singapore in the second half of the 19th century for telegraphy, the second in 1988 for simultaneous telephone services.635

The classic example for a computer standard is the “American Standard Code for the Information Interchange” (ASCII) which enables character encoding. The “Hyper Text Transfer Protocol” (HTTP) fulfils a similar function, regulating how computers can communicate over the Internet.636

Even the term “container” is known in this context. It is used for computer files that can hold various types of compressed data using standardized codices. Simple containers are audio files in “WAV”-format, more advanced containers are video files in “MPEG”-format. The latter was defined as standard “ISO/IEC-JTC1/SC29/WG11” by the International Organization for Standardization in 2000.637

In order to develop and introduce standards, a research institute was opened in order to collect materials on standards and patents. Furthermore, a statutory board was established, known today as the Standards Council; it belongs to the Standards, Productivity and Innovation Board (SPRING). The statutory board launched several programs over the past years, of which the “Singapore Standardization Program” of 2001 is the most comprehensive.638

Because the number of standards for information technology was rapidly increasing, the Singapore Standards Council established an “Information Technology Standards Committee” in 1990. The industry-led group consists of more than 250 members from the public and

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private sectors who voluntarily analyze and develop new standards, last but not least to the
benefit of the media.

In addition, Singapore joined several international organizations. In 1966, it became a
member of the International Organization for Standardization that has its roots in the
International Electrotechnical Commission (1905) and began operation officially in 1947, after
delegates from 25 countries had realized the need for an organization to “facilitate the
international coordination and unification of industrial standards”.

Already one year earlier, Singapore had joined the International Telecommunication Union
(ITU), which was a later incarnation of the International Telegraph Union (1865) and became
a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1947. Together, they have issued around 20
000 standards until today.

| (66) Selection of organizations Singapore joined |
|---|---|
| 1965 | Commonwealth of Nations, United Nations Organization (UNO), Group of 77 at the United Nations, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) |
| 1966 | International Monetary Fund (IMF), Asian Development Bank (AsDB), International Maritime Organization (IMO), United Postal Union (UPU), International Organization for Standardization (ISO) |
| 1968 | International Finance Corporation (IFC, World Bank Group), International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), Interpol |
| 1972 | International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (INTELSAT) |
| 1973 | International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (ICRM) |
| 1989 | Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) |
| 1994 | ASEAN Regional Forum (AFR) |
| 1995 | World Trade Organization (WTO) |
| 2002 | International Development Association (IDA, World Bank Group) |

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In some cases, even the negotiations worked wonders for Singapore. While negotiating with the World Trade Organization (WTO), Singapore made several offers, including the privatization of the Singapore Broadcasting Authority (today known as Media Corporation of Singapore), the establishment of two additional telecommunication operators and the introduction of value-added network services such as electronic mail, database retrieval and electronic data interchange.  

The classic example of cooperation is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which was established in 1967 in Bangkok by officials representing Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand (later, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia joined). It aims to promote peace and stability and to accelerate the economic growth in the region.

Under its broad auspices, a number of associations were established. One is the “Meeting of ASEAN News Agencies” and another one is the “Consultations on Press Systems in ASEAN”. A third example is the “Confederation of ASEAN Journalists”. Since 1975, it holds general assemblies every second year. In 1989, Ivan Lim, representing the “Singapore National Union of Journalists”, as well as five other officials issued the following standards for journalists:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(67) Preamble of the “Code of Ethics for ASEAN Journalists”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Confederation of ASEAN journalists, aware of the responsibility of journalists to the public in each country of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, with a view to achieving peace and progress in the region, hereby promulgates this Code of Ethics for ASEAN Journalists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 The ASEAN journalist shall resort only to fair, open and honest means or efforts to obtain news, photographs or documents necessary to enable him/her to carry out his/her professional work, properly identifying him/herself in the process as being a representative from media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The ASEAN journalist shall not allow personal motives or interests to influence him/her or to color his/her views in a manner that would reflect on his/her professional integrity or would undermine the dignity of his/her profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 The ASEAN journalism shall not demand or accept any payment, gift or other consideration by way of recompense for reporting what is not true, or withholding or suppressing the truth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The ASEAN journalist shall honestly report and interpret the news, making sure to the best of his/her knowledge and ability, not to suppress essential facts or distort the truth through exaggeration or through wrong or improper emphasis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 The ASEAN journalist shall give any person aggrieved by his/her report or interpretation of the news the right of reply.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Another and much better example is the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (APU), which has its roots in the “International Radio Telegraph Conference” held in 1903 in Berlin. The non-profit organization was established in 1964 to facilitate the development of broadcasting in the region and is comparable to the European Broadcasting Union (1950, Eurovision) to a certain extent.

One of its main projects is “Asiavision.” The platform was launched in 1984 for the daily exchange of news by satellite. Twice a day, from 8.30 until 9.00 GMT and from 12.15 to 12.30, it sets up a connection to the “AsiaSat 2” satellite. In addition, news flashes are arranged for breaking stories. In total, 9,000 news items are exchanged every year.

“It has covered the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the continuing repercussions of the 11 September attacks. It was there when the tsunami struck, when earthquakes devastated Iran and Pakistan, when Hong Kong returned to Chinese sovereignty, when the Sri Lankan government and separatist rebels agreed to hold historic peace talks.”

In total, the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union has more than 150 members in 55 countries today, although only some media companies in 14 Asian countries regularly make use of “Asiavision”. Two of its active members are China Central Television (CCTV), which operates 16 channels in Mainland China, and Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB), which is the

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650 For further information about international cooperation in broadcasting and telecommunication, see Frank Shepherd: Technical Development of Broadcasting in the Asia Pacific Region, 1964-1984, place of publication unknown, 1984, p. 7, 8.

largest producer of Chinese-language programs worldwide and operates two television channels in Hong Kong.652

The Media Corporation of Singapore joined the organization relatively early but did not make use of the system effectively until 1999, when Channel News Asia was started. Today, Channel News Asia is viewed in more than 15 million homes and hotels in around 20 countries across Asia and aims to be the “Voice of Asia”.653

All this shows how standardization and cooperation among media companies from different countries can increase the regional and international flow of news. Nevertheless, there are still many provisos.

An organization that Singapore’s media companies have not joined is the Organization of Asia-Pacific News Agencies (OANA). It was established on the initiative of UNESCO at a conference in December 1961 in Bangkok.654 Its aim is to “secure direct and free exchange of news between the news agencies of a region inhabited by more than one half of the world’s population”.655 In the beginning, the organization did not have enough financial means to realize its declared objectives. Its members paid an annual fee of only 20 US dollars. In 1967, it started publishing a newsletter. Two years later, it appeared weekly and each edition carried around 4 000 words of regional news.656

Meanwhile, two of its members, the Malaysian Bernama and the Indonesian Antara news agencies, signed an agreement for direct cooperation.657 In 1977, this resulted in a proposal

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Singapore does not participate in this network. One explanation is that Singapore has no news agency and, thus, cannot join the organization. But that is merely a technicality, because both leading media companies in Singapore (Singapore Press Holdings and Media Corporation of Singapore) operate internal news gathering systems comparable to the infrastructure of modern news agencies.


None of them, however, can compete with professional services such as “Factiva”, which is run by the Dow Jones & Reuters Company and provides an unrivalled collection of more than 9 000 authoritative sources, including all of the news agencies in Asia.\footnote{Factiva: About Factiva, http://www.factiva.com/about/index.asp?node=menuElem1098, London, 2006, accessed 2006; compare with Ahmad Hassan: New World Information Order, The Role of the News Agencies of Asean, p. 11-14, published in Media Asia, volume 10, number 1, Singapore, 1983, p. 11-14.} This is another reason why the international flow of news into (and out) Singapore has not become more just.
### (68) News agencies in Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Clients</th>
<th>Languages</th>
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<td>n.a.</td>
<td>&lt; 10</td>
<td>Khmer</td>
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<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>&gt; 50</td>
<td>Bahasa, English</td>
<td>antara.co.id</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1978</td>
<td>&gt; 50</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Hindi, English</td>
<td>aniin.com</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1972</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>English, Bengali</td>
<td>bbsnews.net</td>
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<td>1968</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>&gt; 5 (est.)</td>
<td>&gt; 50</td>
<td>Malay, English</td>
<td>bernama.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central News Agency (CNA)</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>100 (est.)</td>
<td>&gt; 20</td>
<td>&gt; 100</td>
<td>Chinese, English</td>
<td>cna.com.tw</td>
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<td>&lt; 10 (est.)</td>
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<td>&gt; 1000</td>
<td>&gt; 70</td>
<td>&gt; 400</td>
<td>Japanese, English</td>
<td>kyodo.co.jp</td>
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<td>Lao News Agency (KLP)</td>
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<td>1968</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
<td>&lt; 10 (est.)</td>
<td>Lao, English, French</td>
<td>kplnet.net</td>
</tr>
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<td>Lankapuvath</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
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<td>120</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50 (est.)</td>
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<td>Press Trust of India (PTI)</td>
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<td>1949</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>&gt; 2</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>Hindi, English</td>
<td>ptinews.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>mcot.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United News of Bangladesh (UNB)</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>English, Bengali</td>
<td>unbnews.com</td>
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<td>1945</td>
<td>&gt; 100</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>&gt; 30</td>
<td>Vietnames e, English, French</td>
<td>vnagency.com.vn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xinhua</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>&gt; 10000 (est.)</td>
<td>&gt; 10 (est.)</td>
<td>&gt; 3000 (est.)</td>
<td>Chinese, English</td>
<td>xinhua.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yonhap News Agency (Yonhap)</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Korean, Chinese, Japanese</td>
<td>yonhapnews.co.kr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Cases

5.1 Pressure on the local press: The Nanyang Siang Pau case

Some events in the development of the media in Singapore are so extraordinary – and in contrast to the MacBride Report - that they are worth investigating. The three cases about to be described have two things in common: They all happened in quick succession in May 1971. From a historical point of view, it even seems like a single sequence of events. And in all three cases, similar accusations were used, namely being involved in “black operations” which is a term used by a special branch of the police for activities directed against Singapore’s (media) institutions from outside the country.

The first incident began on 2 May 1971 at around 3 a.m., when police officers broke down the doors of the home of Lee Mau Seng, the former general manager of the Chinese-language Nanyang Siang Pau newspaper. At about the same time, Tung Tao Chang, the editor-in-chief, and Ly Singko, the senior editorial writer were picked up at their residences. The next day, Quek Loong Seng, the newspaper’s public relations officer, was also arrested. All four were detained under the “Internal Security Act” (1960) which empowers the government - among other things – to preventively detain subversive persons.

The authorities accused Lee Mau Seng of bringing Tung Tao Chang to the newspaper, under whose editorship the reporting allegedly had changed to one of “glamorizing communism and stirring up communal and chauvinistic sentiments over language and culture”. In a statement published the next day, the authorities conceded that “Tung has for many years […] written strongly anti-Communist articles” but argued that the political opinion of the Chinese Muslim son-in-law of a former Kuomintang consul must have changed.

According to the authorities, the propaganda began during the last quarter of 1970, just before an American ping-pong team visited China. “By April 28, the Nanyang had reached

667 The Nanyang Siang Pau newspaper was founded in 1923 by a multimillionaire rubber magnate. During the Japanese occupation, it was closed down. It resumed publication on 8 September 1945. Soh Yew Peng: The Development of Singapore’s Modern Media Industry, Singapore, 1994, p. 13.
the stage in the campaign when it was prepared to use conscious falsehoods to whip up communal fears. In its editorial of that day, the paper, under the pretext of criticism, openly incited communal hatred against the government."

Later, it branded the government as “pseudo-foreigners who forget their ancestors” which was understood as a “battle-cry that was once used by Malay chauvinists in Singapore against their multi-racial compatriots” and “by Boxers for Chinese Christian converts before they beheaded them during the Boxer Rebellion”.671

On 3 May 1971, the chairman Lee Eu Seng issued a personal statement regarding the arrest of his brother and the three other detained executives, in which he categorically denied the accusations against the newspaper: “I have never allowed it to be influenced by any group or organization from either here or abroad […] It is necessary to state very clearly that in Singapore, the newspaper have a clear and definite duty to bring to the attention of the government (since there is no opposition in parliament to do so) the wishes, criticism and legitimate grievances of the general public.”672

Meanwhile, the Nanyang Siang Pau emphasized in an editorial published on 4 May 1971 that it was “an independent newspaper, entirely non-partisan and non-sectarian, unbiased, having never taken part in any political party’s activity, and never to get swept into the whirlpool of any political struggle between different sects.”673

That afternoon, three ministers assured in a press conference that the “government was not against any newspaper which was critical of the government” and that there was “no change in [its] liberal attitude towards newspapers.”674 According to Foreign Minister Sinnathamby Rajaratnam, the authorities just wanted to stop the journalists stirring up racial sentiments and offered two unconvincing examples to prove their accusations. Nevertheless, the English-language Straits Times newspaper loyally stood alongside the authorities in an editorial published the next morning.

The relationship between the government and the *Nanyang Siang Pau* became increasingly tense. Over the next few days, several statements were issued on both sides. On 23 May 1971, the newspaper even ran a blank editorial column to protest against the arrests. Two days later, the government issued an internal directive giving news reports about China priority in the paper, regardless of their length or importance, which proved nothing but spread further rumors.

Meanwhile, several international organizations such as the executive committee of the International Press Institute called “on the Singapore government to release the detainees from the *Nanyang Siang Pau* or to bring them to trial in open court” and concluded that “freedom of the press has ceased to exist in Singapore” if the government fails to do so.

According to Francis Seow, the authorities offered to release the detainees if the newspaper company agrees to change its editorial policy, but the remaining editors refused by arguing that they were “fighting for a principle.” Thus, the chairman Lee Eu Seng was also arrested on 28 January 1973 for allegedly “using his newspaper to incite the people against the government over [Chinese] culture”. His printing license was revoked and he was detained for five years.

After two and a half years in prison, Lee Mau Seng publicly admitted his mistakes and was then released from prison. He immediately left the country. In Hong Kong, on the way to his destination Canada, he said that he had signed a “Russian Confession” to obtain his release: “I never understood the meaning of raw power and the nuances politics in Singapore until I was hit. This has been an education.”

What is remarkable about these detentions is that none of the five detainees were ever charged in court. This is particularly interesting in the case of Lee Mau Seng, because already on 3 May 1971 the authorities had divulged that he was not able to read or write in English. That brings up the question if he was really aware of what was being published - after he had already left the newspaper. In contrast to the following two cases which also

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took place in May 1971, the Nanyang Siang Pau survived the crisis, because the authorities issued a printing license to another journalist.\(^{681}\)

### 5.1.1 The Eastern Sun and Singapore Herald cases

Following the arrests of top executives at the Nanyang Siang Pau, Lee Kuan Yew held a speech at a community center on 9 May 1971. He did not name the Eastern Sun newspaper but indicated that he “received information that Chinese communist agents in Hong Kong had given a certain Singapore newspaper proprietor nearly eight million Hong Kong dollars”.\(^{682}\)

Five days later, the editor-in-chief and six other senior editorial staff of the Eastern Sun newspaper announced that they had resigned.\(^{683}\) In a joint statement, they declared that they had discussed the sources of their income with the directors and were “completely satisfied that these sources do not influence the editorial policy” for which they were responsible. In the same statement, they indicated that management was worried that the newspaper would have to close down because of staff shortage if they leave. Nevertheless, they quit and hoped the government would understand that they “cannot work under this pall of distrust”.\(^{684}\)

The same day, Lee Kuan Yew issued a statement accusing managing director Aw Kow of accepting a loan of three million Hong Kong dollars at a “ridiculously low interest rate of 0.1 percent per annum” in early 1964 and a second loan on the same terms and conditions in September 1965. In return, Aw Kow allegedly agreed not to oppose the communist intelligence service on major issues, to take a neutral stand in minor issues and to be fair in editorial comments and the treatment of news.\(^{685}\)

There is no doubt that Aw Kow accepted money, because the Eastern Sun ran heavy operating losses. The “contributor”, however, is still not clear. Francis Seow argues that the loans were provided by the Bank of China in Hong Kong, which had a registered branch in Singapore at that time.\(^{686}\) But Soh Yew Peng agrees with Lee Kuan Yew that the Eastern

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Sun was funded by a “communist intelligence service through its front organization in Hong Kong”.\textsuperscript{687} Lee Kuan Yew even writes in his memoirs that “Aw Kow admitted it was true”.\textsuperscript{688}

Maybe all of them are right. As a son of one of the famous “Tiger Balm” brothers, Aw Kow probably never had any difficulties obtaining loans in Hong Kong.\textsuperscript{689} And the Bank of China had often been accused of having too close relations with the government on Mainland China.\textsuperscript{690}

However, Aw Kow resigned and the Eastern Sun newspaper closed down on 16 May 1971. Interestingly, only Aw Kow’s personal secretary, Julius Yeh Sai Fuh, was arrested and detained under the “Internal Security Act”.

The case of the Singapore Herald newspaper is similar, but much more controversial. It started publishing in the summer of 1970 with support of the former journalist Donald Stevens who was the Malaysian chief minister of Sabah province at that time (formerly known as British North Borneo).\textsuperscript{691}

From the beginning, it was had financial problems, but it had good prospects because its editor-in-chief, Francis Wong, provided a fresh and critical view in the reports.\textsuperscript{692} It was pro-Singapore but not necessarily pro-People’s Action Party. That is probably why the Singapore Herald got in trouble with the authorities.\textsuperscript{693}

For example, in August 1970, the Singapore Herald reported that “long hair is a fashion – like bell-bottomed trousers, wide ties and boots. The streets of London are full of people whose looks conceal their collars. They include stockbrokers, electronics engineers and editors – all as straight as straight could be [...] Singaporeans are notorious fashion-followers. It is an unfortunate trait. But there seems no reason why those who surrender to foreign style in the matter of hair should be singled out for displeasure.”\textsuperscript{694} In the same month, the Singapore Police cut three teenagers’ hair.\textsuperscript{695}

\textsuperscript{689} Aw Kow was “known more as a playboy than a serious newspaper baron”. Lee Kuan Yew: Form Third World to First, The Singapore Story, 1965-2000, Singapore, 2000, p. 215.
\textsuperscript{690} The Bank’s tower in Hong Kong is one of the symbols of the handover of Hong Kong from Britain to China in 1997. Jan Morris: Hongkong, Geschichte und Zukunft der letzten britischen Kolonie, Bergisch Gladbach, 1991, p. 463 et sqq.
\textsuperscript{694} Singapore Herald: Hair and the Hippy, Singapore, 5 August 1970.
\textsuperscript{695} Even the journalist Tan Cheng Guan criticized that the “editorial decision to publish so many letters critical of national service in the Singapore Herald was wrong”. Tan Cheng Guan: A Responsible Press, Singapore, 1971, p. 22.
As a result of such controversies, the *Singapore Herald* was cut off from official news. Later, the authorities also stopped placing advertisements in the newspaper and instructed government departments to cancel their subscriptions. According to Francis Seow, some headmasters even told their teachers and students not to bring the paper into school.

Within a few months, the newspaper company was running out of money. The Chase Manhattan Bank extended its loans to the newspaper to 1.8 million Singapore dollars. On top of that, Sally Aw Sian, the Hong Kong-based newspaper publisher, invested 500,000 Singapore dollars in the company. Soon after, Francis Wong had to go, probably as a gesture of good will to the prime minister.

However, relations between the government and the newspaper became increasingly tense. When Lee Kuan Yew held his “black operations” speech at the community center on 9 May 1971, he doubted that the investments by Donald Stevens and Sally Aw Sian were free of political motives. He even gave the impression that the money was not theirs but came from some other unknown source.

The *Singapore Herald* replied to this speech in an editorial on 12 May 1971, in which it assured that “there are no mysteries about this newspaper and there never have been.” Meanwhile, Donald Stephens wrote in a letter to Lee Kuan Yew: “I feel I should tell you that my only motive in putting money into the Herald is because I have been in the newspaper business before and because I believe Singapore to be a country where my investments would be safe.” But all this did not stop spreading the rumor that the *Singapore Herald* could be involved in a “black operation”.

On 17 May 1971, Sally Aw Sian went from Hong Kong to Singapore for a meeting with the prime minister. She presented receipts for the money she remitted and confirmed that her interest was purely financial. Meanwhile, the *Singapore Herald* foreign editor Bob Reece

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698 Lee Kuan Yew held his “black operations” speech at the community center on 9 May 1971, he doubted that the investments by Donald Stevens and Sally Aw Sian were free of political motives.
703 On her way back to Hong Kong, Sally Aw Sian indicated that she does not know what will be the fate of the *Singapore Herald* now. “[…] Lee Kuan Yew seems however to have adopted an attitude of inexplicable hostility towards the Herald.” International Press Institute: The Singapore Government and the Press, The Singapore Herald, Zurich, 1971, p. 19-21, 25-28.
and his wife, the features editor Adele Koh, were ordered to leave the country within 48 hours because their working permissions had not been extended.\textsuperscript{704}

Two days later, the manager of the Chase Manhattan Bank in Singapore, Hendrik Kwant, was summoned to the prime minister’s office. Without any notice, he was taken to a room where press representatives were waiting.\textsuperscript{705} There, the prime minister explained the financial situation of the newspaper. He argued that the \textit{Singapore Herald} would have exhausted 2.3 million Singapore dollars before the end of 1970 and sought an overdraft from the Chase Manhattan Bank: “By now, of course, the Herald is 830 000 dollars overdrawn with the bank”, Lee Kuan Yew said.

Of course, this statement harmed the credit standing of the newspaper company. On 20 May 1971, the bank’s solicitors obliged the \textit{Singapore Herald} to repay loans totaling 1.03 million Singapore dollars within 48 hours. The staff offered to work without pay. A few days later, the Singapore National Union of Journalists launched a “Save the Herald” campaign. On one day alone, it received around 40 000 Singapore dollars in donations, advance subscriptions and payments by casual advertisers.\textsuperscript{706}

However, the newspaper company failed to find another (local) investor and the authorities cancelled the printing license.\textsuperscript{707} As a result, the newspaper ceased publication on 28 May 1971.\textsuperscript{708} Both investors later repeated that it had been their money and it was invested without any political motive.

What is remarkable about these two cases is that foreign funding of newspapers was not forbidden at that time; the “Newspaper and Printing Presses Act” was passed three years later (1974).\textsuperscript{709} In fact, there was foreign investment in all English-language newspapers. Only in the cases of the \textit{Eastern Sun} and \textit{Singapore Herald}, however, was this a problem.

5.1.2 Effects of the arrests and closedowns of the two newspapers

In the arrests of four top executives of the Nanyang Siang Pau on 2 May 1971, the resignation of six senior editors of the Eastern Sun on 14 May 1971, the deportation of two editors of the Singapore Herald on 17 May 1971 and finally the end of publication of the latter two newspapers, two points were becoming very clear which are both in contrast to the MacBride Report.\textsuperscript{710}

First of all, foreign publishers should only invest in Singapore if they can prove they have no political motives, although to prove something like this is almost impossible: “The Singapore government has a very keen interest to know what foreign capital comes in, for what purpose, and if it goes into newspapers, it’s very anxious to know whether it is coming in to make money, sell news, sell advertisements or for other purposes.”\textsuperscript{711}

Secondly, local journalists should be very careful not to criticize the government, because they could be detained without trial under the “Internal Security Act” for stirring up sentiments or for being a communist: “Anyone who tries to work up communal feelings, on spurious and specious grounds, over fictitious dangers to Chinese language and culture, must be firmly dealt with.”\textsuperscript{712}

When the issue was discussed with the experts interviewed for this dissertation, the opinions differed. Many, however, agreed that freedom of the press in the sense of the International Press Institute has ceased to exist in Singapore.\textsuperscript{713}

Henceforth, the mass media, was limited “to present Singapore’s problems simply and clearly and then explain, how, if they support certain programs and policies, these problems can be solved”, as Lee Kuan formulated it in a speech at the “International Press Institute Conference” on 9 June 1971 in Helsinki.\textsuperscript{714}


\textsuperscript{713} See the documentation of the interviews.

5.2 Control over the local press: Merger of the Chinese-language press

On 20 April 1982, the newspaper industry was restructured by merging Singapore’s two leading Chinese-language newspapers into a single holding company which was later named “Singapore News & Publications Ltd.”. According to an official press release, the aim of this move was to ensure the long-term viability of the newspapers in Singapore, “to pool their financial and manpower resources to achieve economies of scale essential for viability which will also help to raise journalistic standards”.

In fact, there was strong competition. From the very beginning, the *Nanyang Siang Pau* and the *Sin Chew Jit Poh* were keen rivals. When the communists came to power in China in 1949, the *Nanyang Siang Pau* was critical of Chiang Kai Shek (1887-1975), who had fled to Taiwan, while the *Sin Chew Jit Poh* supported the Kuomingtang. However, they basically had the same target group, namely Chinese-educated citizens.

In the 1970s, both offered travel and shopping discounts, organized forums on topical issues, and sponsored community projects. The rivalry intensified in 1977, when the *Nanyang Siang Pau* asserted that it had 1.9 million in cash while *Sin Chew Jit Poh* was said to have only 90,000 Singapore dollars in its reserves. This was the beginning of a “war with words”, as Soh Yew Peng describes it. But there is no indication, however, that this rivalry was harmful or that the Chinese-language press in general was in danger at the time.

Having said that, an increasing number of parents had decided to send their children to English-language schools and having them taught in Chinese only as a second language. As a result, the market share of the Chinese-language press dropped from 59 to 49 percent between 1973 and 1976, while the market share of English-language press increased from 35 to 43 percent during the same period. In other words: While the proportion of the Chinese-language press declined by about ten percent, the proportion of the English-language press increased by around eight percent within a period of four years.

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717 After Chiang Kia-Shek failed to succeed over the communists in the Chinese Civil War between 1926 and 1949, he fled to Taiwan where he served as president of the Republic of China and director-general of the Kuomingtang.
720 Peter Chen: Mass Media and Communication Patterns in Singapore, Singapore, 1979, p. 17.
During this period, however, the total daily circulation increased, from 389 900 in 1970 to 615 512 copies in 1980, and so did the circulation of the Chinese-language press. The *Nanyang Siang Pau* and the *Sin Chew Jit Poh* saw their circulation more than double from 43 000 and 70 000 copies to 97 000 and 112 000 copies respectively between 1970 and 1980.\(^{721}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nanyang Siang Pau</th>
<th>Sin Chew Jit Poh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>43 000</td>
<td>70 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>60 000</td>
<td>72 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>69 000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>97 000</td>
<td>112 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In view of these numbers, there must have been another reason for the merger of the Chinese-language newspapers. One official explanation is that the government intended to set up two competitive publishing houses that publish both English- and Chinese-language newspapers.\(^{723}\)

Therefore, the authorities asked the Straits Times Press (STP) to stop publishing the profitable *New Nation* newspaper and “giving a helping hand” to its rival, the “Singapore News and Publishing Ltd.” (SNP), launching the English-language *Singapore Monitor*. In return, the *Straits Times* was guaranteed no competition from a morning newspaper for the next three years.\(^{724}\)

As a result, there were only two large publishing houses: The Straits Times Press concentrated on the publication of the English-language *Straits Times* morning newspaper and the “Singapore News and Publishing Ltd.” started publishing the two Chinese-language *Lianhe Zaobao* and *Lianhe Wanbao* newspapers, and the English-language *Singapore Monitor* afternoon newspaper.\(^{725}\)

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\(^{722}\) The table is based on data provided in Soh Yew Peng: The Development of Singapore’s Modern Media Industry, Singapore, 1994, p. 25.


\(^{724}\) Francis Seow: The Media Enthralled, Singapore Revisited, Boulder, 1998, p. 120.

What is interesting about the merger is that in the year before, the People’s Action Party had lost the Anson by-election.\textsuperscript{726} As a result, the first opposition politician returned to parliament after a decade of one-party parliament. Many members of the People’s Action Party including Lee Kuan Yew blamed inaccurate news reports for the narrow loss.

Thus, one could argue that the merger of the two leading Chinese-language newspapers in 1982 was an attempt to put the local media under more control.\textsuperscript{727} This hypothesis is backed by the fact that three local banks became the main shareholders of the newly created “Singapore News and Publications Ltd.”: the Overseas Union Bank (OUB), the United Overseas Bank (UOB) and the Development of Bank of Singapore (DBS). They were either indirectly (OUB, UOB) or directly (DBS) controlled by the government.\textsuperscript{728}

However, things did not work out as planned. The \textit{Singapore Monitor}, launched on “Lee’s initiative” in July 1982, failed to compete with the \textit{Straits Times} newspaper.\textsuperscript{729} Three years later, in summer 1985, it was still only selling about 47 000 copies and had exhausted its base capital of 20 million Singapore dollars, plus another six million in loans from its parent company.\textsuperscript{730} One of the reasons for the paper’s failure was the lack of locally available English-language editors. And foreign editors, though less familiar with events in Singapore, were much more expensive.

5.2.1 Merger of the Chinese-language press with the English-language press

At this point, it required little more to establish a monopoly. As early as November 1984, the Straits Times Press and the “Singapore News and Publications Ltd.” were merged.\textsuperscript{731} This means that all newspapers except the small, family-run \textit{Tamil Murasu} were put under one roof, the Singapore Press Holdings (SPH).

This “mega” or “shotgun merger”, as the tiny opposition denounced it, was heavily criticized.\textsuperscript{732} Even Toh Chin Chye, the former deputy prime minister, warned that Singapore

\begin{footnotes}
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was forcing its press into the role of an obeisant official mouthpiece, comparable to the Soviet Union’s *Pravda* or China’s *People’s Daily*. The authorities, however, were able to convince the public.

“What is competition?” asked Sinnathamby Rajaratnam rhetorically: “It means one paper tries [to] kill the other. It will cost 40 million to 50 million dollars, some tell me it’s 80 million, for the *Straits Times* to kill the *Monitor* and vice-versa. So you spend the money and, at the end of it, you have two corpses. What for? So why not use the money saved the train and pay journalists better, get the best men possible, raise standards as well as new publications. Because of competition, many newspapers have died, and that is bad.”

According to press releases, the principal reason for the merger was to pool resources in order to cut costs. But not all of the experts interviewed for this dissertation were able to confirm that this was the only reason. It might be possible that the actual reason was to get full control over the local print media.

Earlier that year, the general election had shown that the Anson by-election was not a fluke, confirming the return of the opposition. The People’s Action Party lost two of the 79 seats, although it was unopposed in 30 districts, and in seven districts the margin was very slim. The party was stunned that a minister was nearly defeated by a “poorly educated” candidate with “questionable attributes”. What really shocked them, however, was that the People’s Action Party lost 12.9 percent of the votes compared with the previous general election.

Another indicator that the government wanted to tighten its control over the press is the composition of shareholders of the newly established Singapore Press Holdings, which had a capitalization of 660 million Singapore dollars. The major shareholders are local banks and statutory boards, notably the Overseas Union Bank (OUB), the United Overseas Bank, Development Bank of Singapore, Great Eastern Life Assurance and the Telecommunication Authority of Singapore - the latter being fully owned by the government at that time.

At least the managers and editors realized that the merger of all newspapers except one into one holding company might result in the loss of benefits arising from competition. To prevent this, the operations were split into four sections of which the “English-Malay Newspaper

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Division” and the “Chinese Newspaper Division” have become the two dominant. Each has retained a certain level of autonomy and every newspaper has still its own editorial style.737

5.2.2 Effects of the mega-mergers into the Singapore Press Holdings

In merging two leading Chinese-language newspapers (Nanyang Siang Pau, Sin Chew Jit Poh) in 1982, and then the Chinese-language press with the English-language press in 1984, three points were made very clear which all contrast to the MacBride Report.

First of all, journalists should avoid getting in trouble with their employer, because there is only one left in the entire newspaper business (and only one in the radio and television section). In 1995, even the small family-run Tamil Murasu newspaper was bought by Singapore Press Holdings.738

Second, since the government investment company Temasek has stakes in Singapore Press Holdings and all publishing houses are bound by the “Newspaper and Printing Presses Act” (1974) anyway, journalists should avoid getting into trouble with the government (“Internal Security Act”). And third, not only does the government have the power to restructure the media industry; it obviously also does not hesitate to enforce it.739

5.3 Trouble with the foreign press: The Time and Asian Wall Street Journal cases

In 1986 and 1987, the Singaporean government took a hard line with the foreign press. The problems started with the Time magazine, an American publication based in New York and regionally distributed from Hong Kong. On 2 September 1986, the Time magazine reported in its 8 September 1986 issue in an article entitled “Silencing the Dissenters” about the legal actions taken against the first opposition in the Singapore parliament after a decade of one-party parliament: Jusua Jeyaretnam had been found guilty by the courts on charges of

disposing assets to defraud creditors and giving false evidence – as a result, he was disqualified from running in the next election.740

From the government’s point of view, the article contained the following three errors: First, the judge Michael Khoo did not “dismiss all the charges except for a minor technicality”; instead he convicted Jusua Jeyaretnam for disposing assets to defraud creditors. Second, the chief justice did not “overturn judge Khoo’s ruling and sentenced Mr. Jeyaretnam to three months in jail”; instead he reversed the judge’s acquittals on two charges of defrauding creditors and ordered a retrial by another judge on the charge of giving false evidence in which Jusua Jeyaretman was sentenced to three months in prison (later reduced to a fine). And third, the government had not “unexpectedly introduced” a constitutional amendment that, if passed, would deny the right for counsel for an M[ember of] P[arliament] cited for contempt”; because the British parliamentary practice in Singapore follows does not allow that anyway.741

On 3 September 1986, the press secretary in the prime minister’s office James Fu sent a letter to the editor of the Time magazine in which he asked for correcting these details.742 It is not known whether the editor responded but on 24 September James Fu sent a follow-up letter. The same day, Time magazine’s bureau chief in Hong Kong, William Steward, called James Fu to discuss the matter. Soon after, James Fu sent a telex to him repeating his requests.743

Six days later, Joan Walsh explained to James Fu in a letter why the editors of the Time magazine did not want to publish the corrections. This document is not available to the author of this dissertation, but it is known that the editors tried to negotiate the issue by contacting Singapore’s permanent representative at the United Nations Organization in New York.

However, James Fu insisted on the publication of his letter. The editors finally agreed to it on the condition that they could edit it before publication because it was a “standard practice to

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edit all letters published for reasons of space”, as the chairman explained in a telex to Singapore’s prime minister about two weeks later.

For Lee Kuan Yew and his secretary, this was not an option. On 15 October 1986, the *Time* magazine was declared to be a “gazetted publication” and its circulation was restricted from 18 000 copies per issue to 9 000 copies starting 19 October 1986 and to 2 000 copies per issue starting 1 January 1987. This was possible because just a few months earlier, on 31 July 1986, the “Newspaper and Printing Presses Act” had been amended.

On 27 October 1986, the *Time* magazine gave in and printed James Fu’s letter in full length, adding that it did “not agree with all the corrections cited”. About half a year later, the magazine’s circulation was restored starting with its 13 July 1987 issue.

The Hong Kong-based *Asian Wall Street Journal* was involved in a similar but much more controversial case. In its 12 December 1986 issue, Stephen Duthie criticized in an article entitled “Singapore Exchange Puzzles Financiers” the formation of the second securities market in Singapore, known as the “Stock Exchange of Singapore Dealing and Automated Quotation System” (SESDAQ).

But the “tone of Mr. Duthie’s remarks and his choice of words” were unacceptable to the government, especially whenever the government’s role in the establishment of the market was mentioned. On 12 December 1986, Koh Beng Seng, the director of the Monetary Authority of Singapore, wrote a letter to the editor-in-chief in which he repudiated the “prejudice” of the author and accused him of publishing a “list of errors and submissions”.

According to the letter, one of the errors was that Stephen Duthie wrote that a “company controlled by Temasek Holdings was ordered to prepare for an immediate listing, even though the concern’s merchant banker had recommended delaying listing by as much as a year” because, according to Koh Beng Seng, such a company did not exist.

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The editor-publisher Fred Zimmerman replied on 2 January 1987: “In view of the seriousness of your allegations, we have conducted a thorough investigation of the matter. […] Our conclusion is that the article is fair and accurate. You give no evidence to support your contention that the article contains ‘errors of fact’, and we have not been able to uncover any such evidence, either. Your one specific allegation of error comes in paragraph 3, where you claim that no such company controlled by Temasek Holdings exists. We are satisfied that it does exist.” But Fred Zimmerman did not give any details. Instead, he argued that Koh Beng Seng’s letter itself contained several errors of fact.\footnote{Fred Zimmerman concluded that “we therefore cannot publish a letter attacking our staff members for unprofessional conduct, of which he is not guilty, and alleging errors that do not exist. We are willing to publish a letter from you, if you care to write it, stating your point of view on the subjects dealt with in the article.” Fred Zimmerman: Letter to Koh Beng Seng, published in Ministry of Information: Singapore and the Foreign Press, Singapore, 1988, p. 35-37.}

A hasty exchange of lengthy letters followed. On 17 January 1987, Koh Beng Seng rejected the allegations against him and repeated his own accusations of the\textit{ Asian Wall Street Journal}.\footnote{Koh Beng Seng: Letter to Fred Zimmerman, dated 17 January 1987, published in Ministry of Information: Singapore and the Foreign Press, Singapore, 1988, p. 38-39.} Six days later, Fred Zimmermann offered a meeting with the group’s vice president Peter Kann for further discussion, but that was obviously not wanted by Koh Beng Seng.\footnote{Fred Zimmermann: Letter to Koh Beng Seng, dated 23 January 1987, published in Ministry of Information: Singapore and the Foreign Press, Singapore, 1988, p. 40.}

On 9 February 1987, the government declared the\textit{ Asian Wall Street Journal} to be a newspaper engaged in domestic politics and restricted its circulation from 5 100 to 400 copies per issue starting 16 January 1987. In addition, it issued a list of 143 libraries which should have priority in receiving the journal.\footnote{Ministry of Information: Restriction of Asian Wall Street Journal Circulation, dated 9 February 1987, published in Ministry of Information: Singapore and the Foreign Press, Singapore, 1988, p. 41-44.}

It is the consequence of this case which is interesting: While all letters of correction were published in the Singapore newspapers and an advertisement was placed in the\textit{ Asian Wall Street Journal} stating that the Stock Exchange of Singapore does not share the views reported in Stephen Duthie’s article, numerous organizations criticized the “gazetting” of the newspaper. One of them was the American Business Council in Singapore. On 10 February 1987, it issued a statement that executives in the United States of America “carefully consider the disadvantages of limited coverage of news affecting their operations.”\footnote{Francis Seow: The Media Enthralled, Singapore Revisited, Boulder, 1998, p. 150.}

The next day, even a spokesmen of the U.S. State Department expressed regret over the restriction. In an article published in the\textit{ Asian Wall Street Journal}, he was quoted as saying: “Our support for free press is well known. We regret this action by the government of
Singapore and hope that a way can be found to resolve the circulation restrictions on the *Asian Wall Street Journal* and the earlier restrictions levied on the *Time* magazine."

The Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded to this “unprecedented interference in Singapore’s internal affairs” in at least three “Aide Memoirs”. On 12 February 1987, it argued that “no foreign newspaper has an automatic, let alone and inalienable right to circulate in Singapore. Circulation is a privilege extended by the Singapore government. Foreign newspapers are sold here on terms and conditions by the government. They must publish government letters correcting grave errors of reporting.”

And on 13 March 1987, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed that “Singapore is not America, and we have no ‘free and unrestricted press’ in American usage, meaning that the press is free to publish or not publish what it chooses, however irresponsible or biased it may seem to be.”

Meanwhile, on 20 February 1987, the *Asian Wall Street Journal* offered to distribute the newspaper free of charge to all paying subscribers. The authorities agreed, providing that all advertisement spaces are left blank to prove that the newspaper’s motive was altruistic. But the *Asian Wall Street Journal* denied this offer on the ground that advertisements would be an integral part and there would be additional mechanical costs and scheduling problems. After confirming the technical infeasibility, the government offered to defray half of the additional costs, but this was also rejected by the publisher.

Thus, the authorities stated on 28 February 1987: “We do not want to leave any of your supporters befuddled with the idea that you are defending the freedom of information. You are not interested in the business community getting information. You want the freedom to make money selling advertisements. If your offer helps to dispel this myth, it has served its purpose” – the *Asian Wall Street Journal* did not reply.

How tense the situation was is also shown by the fact that three years later the Singapore authorities refused entry to reporters from the *Asian Wall Street Journal* who wanted to attend the “Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference” being held there. Deputy Prime

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758 Far Eastern Economic Review: Rally to the Cause, Hong Kong, volume 135, number 12, 19 March 1987, p. 44.
Minister Goh Chok Tong explained the reason to Dow Jones Vice-President Karen Elliot House on 23 July 1990: “[…] foreign correspondents do not have the right to be stationed in Singapore. This, like circulation of foreign newspapers here, is a privilege. The government sees no reason to grant it to foreign publications which have repeatedly tried to engage in domestic politics […]”.  

In fact, it took several years until the restrictions were fully lifted. In the autumn of 1990, the circulation of the *Asian Wall Street Journal* was allowed to be increased to 2 500 copies per issue. In the summer of 1992, it was partially restored to 3 500 copies per issue. And in spring 1993, the circulation was fully restored to its pre-restriction level of 5 000 copies per issue; and a correspondent was allowed to be stationed in Singapore.  

5.3.1 The *Asiaweek* and *Far Eastern Economic Review* cases

The *Asiaweek* and *Far Eastern Economic Review* cases, also in 1987, are less controversial. In both cases, the trouble arose over the reporting about 22 people who were arrested under the “Internal Security Act” for being involved in a Marxist conspiracy.  

In the article published on 13 September 1987 in the Hong Kong-based *Asiaweek* magazine, the author defended the alleged conspirators as “socially-orientated liberals committed to creating a more democratic and equitably society.” It is no surprise that this caught the attention of the authorities. Errors were easy to find, because the article had been badly researched. The author even argued that Singapore’s first crackdown against communists had occurred in 1963, which is not the case. In fact, detention without trial was introduced in 1948 and a larger crackdown of communists happened in October 1956.  

On the following day, the press secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Chin Fook Leong, sent a letter to the editor correcting some points. The magazine published the letter under the headline “A Distortion of Facts, You Say?” on 23 September 1987 in its 27 September 1987 issue and attributed it to Chin Fook Leong. Not only did the magazine delete a few

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763 *Asiaweek*: *Battle Against Leftism*, Hong Kong, volume 13, number 37, 13 March 1987, p. 16-21.  
sentences from the letter, it also added more than 470 words to it, lengthening it by more than half, without seeking any consent or at least disclosing this fact to the readers.\footnote{766 Ministry of Information: Singapore and the Foreign Press, Singapore, 1988, p. 9.}

Understandably, Chin Fook Leong protested and asked to publish a correction and his earlier letter in its original: “If you do not do so, the Singapore government will have no alternative but to draw its own conclusions.”\footnote{767 Chin Fook Leong: Telex to the Editor-in-Chief of the Asiaweek Magazine, dated 24 September 1987, published in Ministry of Information: Singapore and the Foreign Press, Singapore, 1988, p. 63, 64.} The editor did not oblige. As a result, on 7 October 1987, \textit{Asiaweek} was declared to be engaging in domestic affairs and its circulation was restricted from 10 000 to 500 per issue starting 11 October 1987.\footnote{768 Ministry of Information: Restriction on the Circulation of Asiaweek in Singapore, dated 7 October 1987, published in Ministry of Information: Singapore and the Foreign Press, Singapore, 1988, p. 65, 66.}

Four weeks later, on 6 November 1987, \textit{Asiaweek} published both letters in their original form. Its circulation was partially restored to 5 000 copies per issue and further relaxed in 1990 to up to 7 500 copies per issue.\footnote{769 Francis Seow: The Media Enthralled, Singapore Revisited, Boulder, 1998, p. 164, 165.} In 2001, however, the magazine ceased publication due to falling advertising revenues in Hong Kong and the region.\footnote{770 Asiaweek: From the Editors, http://www.pathfinder.com/asiaweek/closenotice.html, Hong Kong, 2001, accessed 2004.}

Meanwhile, the Hong Kong-based \textit{Far Eastern Economic Review} magazine reported about a meeting between the prime minister and the archbishop of Singapore regarding the arrest of the 22 conspirators.\footnote{771 Far Eastern Economic Review: New Light on Detentions, Catholic Priest Answers Jayakumar’s Allegations, Hong Kong, volume 138, number 51, 17 December 1987, p. 28.} The main problem was that the whole article was based on statements made by Father Edgar D’Souza, who was not personally present at the described meeting. The writer made this fact clear but this was not enough for the authorities. It was unhappy that the writer did not check Edgar D’Souza’s statements and also did not try to get an official statement from the authorities.\footnote{772 Ministry of Information: Singapore and the Foreign Press, Singapore, 1988, p. 10, 11.}

On 12 December 1987, press secretary James Fu wrote a letter to the editor on behalf of the prime minister in which he expressed his discontent. It was published in the next issue of the \textit{Far Eastern Economic Review} on 24 December 1987; the editor, however, added a comment in which he repeated that Edgar D’Souza was the main source of the article.\footnote{773 Far Eastern Economic Review: Credible Witness?, Hong Kong, volume 138, number 52, 24 December 1987, p. 3.}

In the meantime, James Fu had sent another letter to the editor which was also published in the following issue, on 31 December 1987. In this lengthy article of more than two pages, James Fu furthered his line of questioning: “Did you check D’Souza allegations with
Archbishop Yong? Why did you not check them with me? Can you get D’Souza to swear on oath an affidavit that his statements are true, and that he has proof that they are true?”

Below, the editor confirmed that “at no point in the 17 December report was there any suggestion of the Review making allegations or accepting D’Souza’s version as fact”.\(^{774}\)

So the key question was whether “a newspaper can legitimately print anything it wishes, whether true, false or even defamatory, so long as it is able to quote a source who actually made the statement.”\(^{775}\) The position of the authorities, however, is clear: “No newspaper or journal can disclaim responsibility for untruths which it has published. It is the editor’s responsibility to check the facts and verify the story before publication.”

James Fu wrote basically the same thing in another letter which was published under the title “Duty to be Responsible” on 7 January 1988 in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*.\(^{776}\) On the same page, the editor placed a comment entitled “A Ban by Another Name”, stating the opposite point of view: “[…] if the Singapore government detains 22 people and describes them as involved in a Marxist plot to overthrow the Singapore government, we would probably reckon that was newsworthy and print it (as indeed we did), but that would in no way imply that we believed the allegations or were presenting the alleged plot as a fact. The same principle applies to Edgar D’Souza’s claims”.\(^{777}\)

Already on 26 December 1987, however, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* had been declared to be engaged in domestic politics and its circulation was restricted from 9 000 copies to 500 copies per issue starting 29 December 1987.\(^{778}\) The two main reasons, as announced, were that it had “insinuated that the prime minister used his influence to prevent the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation and *Straits Times* from reporting some of the Archbishop’s words at the press conference” and that it had “suggested that the prime minister had cheated and tricked the Archbishop into a press conference.”\(^{779}\)

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\(^{776}\) *Far Eastern Economic Review: Duty to be Responsible*, Hong Kong, volume 139, number 1, 7 January 1988, p. 11.

\(^{777}\) *Far Eastern Economic Review: A Ban by any other Name*, Hong Kong, volume 139, number 1, 7 January 1988, p. 11.


Regarding the latter, Lee Kuan Yew even filed a libel suit against chief editor Derek Davies and staff writer Michael Malik. On 30 November 1989, the court awarded him 230,000 Singapore dollars. On top of that, several reporters of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* were either refused the extension of their working permission or denied entry to the country. For example, Nigel Holloway, a resident correspondent who had lived in Singapore for four years, was refused extension of his employment permit in 1987. Also, Rodney Tasker, their chief reporter, was turned away at Changi Airport in 1988.

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<th>(70) Selection of ten foreign journalists expelled from Singapore</th>
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### 5.3.2 Effects of the circulation restrictions and charges against journalists

In restricting the local circulations of international magazines, filing libel charges against foreign journalists and refusing to extend the working permits of reporters, four points were made very clear of which only the “Right to Reply” is compatible to the MacBride Report.

First of all, foreign journalists should avoid writing about delicate issues in Singapore in international publications: “Singapore’s domestic debate is a matter for Singaporeans. We allow American journalists in Singapore in order to report Singapore to their fellow countrymen. We allow their papers to sell in Singapore so that we can know what foreigners are reading about us. But we cannot allow them to assume a role in Singapore that the American media plays in America, that of invigilator, adversary, and inquisitor of the administration.” Or even more blunt: “If you are foreign newspaper, you should not employ

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783 According the report, the media should grant government the right of correction. Seán MacBride: *Many Voices, One World, Communication and Society, Today and Tomorrow, Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information Order*, Paris, 1980, p. XVIII.
a Singaporean as your chief correspondent because we don’t want foreign newspapers to interfere in our domestic politics."

Secondly, local journalists working for international publications should also better be careful when reporting about delicate issues in Singapore: “[…] if you are a Singaporean writing for a foreign newspaper which circulates in Singapore, this may then become a way by which you use a foreign newspaper to meddle in Singaporean politics, please start a Singaporean newspaper. They are regulated differently. We give different access and we expect different responsibilities from local newspapers.”

Thirdly, in case a local or foreign journalist reports in an international publication about domestic affairs, the authorities reserves the right to reply: “All that the Singapore government is asking is that where it disputes the facts, it should have the right to have its views published and published in the way it chooses to present them.”

Fourthly, the authorities decide whose foreign correspondents may stay and work in Singapore: “[…] foreign correspondents do not have the right to be stationed in Singapore. This, like circulation of foreign newspapers here, is a privilege.”

Interestingly, the authorities explain all this with the “free flow of information”. From its point of view, publications are impeding the free flow of news when they refuse publishing correction letters. But the restrictions on circulation are not considered hindering the flow of news, since the publications are not entirely banned.

The photocopying of articles, for instance, is explicitly allowed. Since the amendment of the “Newspaper and Printing Presses Act” on 27 January 1988, the information minister can approve the reproduction of a gazetted foreign publication by any person for sale and distribution, subject to the condition that all advertisements are blanked out. In the same year, 17 persons applied for and were granted such a “Reproduction License”, even though any such reproduction without explicit consent of the publisher interferes with the “Copyright Act” (1987) as well as other internationally accepted laws.

When the experts interviewed for this dissertation were asked whether sales restrictions are a proper way to deal with single articles in international magazines, they all agreed that the government acted within its legal bounds. Tan Ern Ser, for instance, even fully

787 See the documentation of the interviews.
understands that the authorities restrict magazines if the editor refuses to publish the “view of the government”. Only two respondents had the opposite opinion. One was even disappointed that the international media did not boycott Singapore.

There is no doubt, however, that the authorities wanted to “send out a message”, as Ang Peng Hwa put it. For Soh Yew Peng, it was an “international PR-statement” not to mess with local policies. And for PN Balji, it even showed the world how the media can be controlled, namely by circulation restrictions. But Cherian George doubts that it was “really a smart thing to do” because Singapore’s reputation suffered.  

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Impact

7.1 The local print media

As a result of the political, economical and technological developments, the press has greatly improved in Singapore. Since the establishment of its first two newspapers, the Prince of Wales Island Gazette, which appeared in 1805 on the Malay island Penang, and the Singapore Chronicle, which was founded in 1823, more than 60 newspapers have been started. A large number was launched during the “Golden Age” of newspaper publishing from the mid-19th century onwards.\(^{789}\)

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser</td>
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<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Sun Pao</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Neracha</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Malay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Malaya Tribune</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Zhen Nan Ri Bao</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Lembaga Melayu</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Malay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Nanyang Siang Pau</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Sin Chew Jit Poh</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Warta Malaya</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Malay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Tamil Murasu</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Sin Chung Jit Poh</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Utusan Malaya</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Malay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{789}\) Charles Moses: Mass Communication in Asia, A Brief History, Singapore, 1978, p. 3 et sqq.
\(^{790}\) During World War II, many newspapers were closed down or renamed. In total, the Japanese Syonan Newspaper Association distributed 15 publications in Singapore.
The leading English-language newspapers were the Singapore Free Press (1835-1933), Straits Times (1845-), Eastern Sun (1966-1971), Singapore Herald (1970-1971), Business Times (1976-), Singapore Monitor (1982-1985) and the New Paper (1988-); three of them survived. The most important Chinese-language newspapers were the Lat Pau (1881-1932), Nanyang Siang Pau (1923-1982), Sin Chew Jit Poh (1929-1982), Shin Min Daily News (1976-), Lianhe Zaobao (1983-) and Lianhe Wanbao (1983-); three of these also survived. Among the leading Malay-language newspapers were the Jawi Peranakan (1876-1895), Utusan Melayu (1907-1921) and Berita Harian (1957-); of these only the latter survived. And among the Tamil-language press, only the Tamil Murasu (1935-) ever reached a daily circulation of a few thousand; it still exists today.

Not only has the number of newspapers increased but also their circulation, frequency of publication and number of pages published per issue. Some reasons for this are the overall population growth (from 1 886 900 in 1865 to 4 017 700 people in 2000), a rapidly increasing literacy rate (from less than 40 to more than 90 percent) as well as increases in purchasing power (the GDP per capita rose from 1 567 Singapore dollars in 1965 to 39 723 in 2000) and
advertising revenues (from around 177 million Singapore dollars in 1980 to 753 million Singapore dollars in 2000).\(^791\)

To illustrate this: In the early days of print media in the region, newspapers such as the English-language *Singapore Free Press* had four to six pages and appeared weekly or bi-monthly with a daily circulation of a few hundred copies only. Today, newspapers such as the English-language *Straits Times* usually feature more than sixty (on weekdays) or even one hundred pages (on weekends) and have a daily circulation of several hundred thousand copies.\(^792\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of newspapers</th>
<th>Frequency of Publication</th>
<th>Average number of pages</th>
<th>Combined circulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Weekly, daily</td>
<td>&gt; 10</td>
<td>&gt; 300 000 (est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>&gt; 20</td>
<td>389 900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>&gt; 20</td>
<td>449 001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>&gt; 30</td>
<td>615 512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>&gt; 30</td>
<td>713 866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>&gt; 40</td>
<td>813 484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>&gt; 50</td>
<td>1 005 307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>&gt; 60</td>
<td>1 100 859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>&gt; 60</td>
<td>1 197 301</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four aspects are remarkable in the development of the press in Singapore: First of all, the owners, editors and readerships changed over the time. During colonial times, all important newspapers in Singapore were founded, owned, run and read by the British. Today, all newspapers in Singapore are owned, run and primarily read by Singaporeans.

Secondly, despite all these changes, the newspapers can still be grouped in the same way as before – by language. There has never been a seriously attempt to establish a bilingual or a trilingual newspaper. Instead, newspapers still target one language group only. The reason is that most people prefer or are used to newspapers written in their native language.

As a result, there is still an English-language press for the English-educated who are generally better situated. There is a Chinese-language press for the large number of

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792 Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 6, 7.

793 The table is based on different sources, including Kokkeong Wong: Media and Culture in Singapore, A Theory of Controlled Commodification, Creskill, 2001, p. 130; Peter Chen: Mass Media and Communication Patterns in Singapore, Singapore, 1979, p. 53; and Anura Goonasekera (Ed.): Asian Communication Handbook, Singapore, 2003, p. 266.
Chinese-educated. There is a Malay-language press for the fewer Malay-educated who are generally not so well situated. And there is a tiny Tamil-language press for the very few Tamil-educated.\(^{794}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number of newspapers</th>
<th>Combined circulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>551,463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>570,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>65,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1,197,301</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thirdly, there was a shift in the production and distribution of newspapers. In the early days, all newspapers in the region appeared either in the late afternoon or evening. The first to make this change was the *Singapore Free Press* in 1905.\(^{796}\) Today, the majority of the newspapers are published in the morning and they differ from the newspapers published in the afternoon.

The newspapers published in the morning are generally more serious and have a higher number of total pages. Newspapers published in the afternoon are the English-language *New Paper* and the Chinese-language *Lianhe Wanbao* and *Shin Minh Daily News*. Only for the Malay- and Tamil-speaking, there is no afternoon or evening paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of publication</th>
<th>Number of newspapers</th>
<th>Combined circulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>780,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>363,688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1,143,852</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And fourthly, the market obviously suffers not only from lack of competition but also innovation, especially since 1984 when all newspapers in Singapore were merged into Singapore Press Holdings (SPH). During the past 25 years, only one afternoon paper (*New Paper*, 1988), one weekly paper (*Friday Weekly*, 1991) and one monthly paper (*Thumbs Up*, 2001) were launched by Singapore Press Holdings as well as a free advertising sheet (*Today*, 2001) and its Sunday edition (*Weekend Today*, 2001) started by the Media


\(^{795}\) The table is based on data provided in Ministry of Information: Create, Connect@Sg, Arts, Media and Infocomm in Singapore, Singapore, 2002, p. 167.

\(^{796}\) Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 65.

\(^{797}\) The table is based on data provided in Ministry of Information: Create, Connect@Sg, Arts, Media and Infocomm in Singapore, Singapore, 2002, p. 167.
Corporation of Singapore (MediaCorp). From a historical point of view, this is relatively scarce. In comparison: Until the mid-1980s, a new paper was launched on average every three years by a different publisher.

Today, the dominant newspapers are the English-language newspapers Straits Times (circulation: 380 197 copies) and New Paper (115 915), the Chinese-language newspapers Lianhe Zaobao (184 445), Lianhe Wanbao (124 134) and Shin Minh Daily News (12 639), the Malay-language Berita Harian (58 503) and the Tamil-language Tamil Murasu (8 504).

Apart from the less important free advertising sheet Today (55 000), published by Media Corporation of Singapore, all newspapers in Singapore are published by Singapore Press Holdings. In both companies, the government has a say (i.e. through the investment company Temasek).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Straits Times</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Mon-Sat</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>380 197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Times</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>388 796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Times</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Mon-Fri</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>27 515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Paper</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Mon-Sat</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>115 915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Paper*</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>154 004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lianhe Zaobao</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Mon-Sat</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>184 445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lianhe Zaobao*</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>194 640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lianhe Wanbao</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Mon-Sat</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>124 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lianhe Wanbao*</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>123 634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shin Minh Daily</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Mon-Sat</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>123 639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shin Minh Daily*</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>121 234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday Weekly</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>62 532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thumbs Up</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>29 944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berita Harian</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>Mon-Sat</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>58 503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berita Minggu</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>66 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Murasu</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Mon-Sat</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>8 504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Murasu*</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>15 232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today</td>
<td>MediaCorp</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Mon-Sat</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>55 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend Today</td>
<td>MediaCorp</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>55 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Singapore. Some of these include *UW* (circulation: 80,000 copies), *Her World* (70,000), *Female* (60,000) and *Elle* (< 55,000), *Lime* (< 40,000) and *Manya* (< 89,000) respectively.\(^{802}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 Days</td>
<td>MediaCorp</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>&lt; 139,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Diver</td>
<td>MediaCorp</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Diving</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>&lt; 120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citta Bella</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club Pets</td>
<td>Citrus Media</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Pets</td>
<td>Bi-Monthly</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat!</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elle Singapore</td>
<td>MediaCorp</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>&lt; 55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>MediaCorp</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>&lt; 90,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Brides</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Brides</td>
<td>Bi-annually</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Business</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Businesswomen</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FHM</td>
<td>MediaCorp</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>&lt; 56,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>Sterne Lears</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her World</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Concepts</td>
<td>Sun Business</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Interior</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her World Brides</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Brides</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home &amp; Décor</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Living</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>27,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icon</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Luxury</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-Weekly</td>
<td>MediaCorp</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>&lt; 229,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kids Company</td>
<td>MediaCorp</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>&lt; 40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lime</td>
<td>MediaCorp</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>&lt; 37,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manya</td>
<td>MediaCorp</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>&lt; 89,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxim</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Health</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers &amp; Baby</td>
<td>MediaCorp</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>&lt; 30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Man</td>
<td>Sun Business</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NuYou</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Beauty</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NuYou Times</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Watches</td>
<td>Annually</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port O’Call</td>
<td>Sun Business</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>Bi-Annually</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventeen</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Teens</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se Xiang W</td>
<td>Sun Business</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simply Her</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart Investor</td>
<td>Sun Business</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space</td>
<td>Sun Business</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>MediaCorp</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>&lt; 56,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style Weddings</td>
<td>MediaCorp</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Weddings</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>&lt; 48,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Peak</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Showbiz</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today’s Parents</td>
<td>Sun Business</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torque</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Autosport</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UW</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Parents</td>
<td>SPH</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{802}\) Circulation numbers of the magazine Elle, Lime and Manya are estimated because only the numbers of readers are available. They were provided by Rachel Yeo: Frequencies and Circulations of MediaCorp Magazines, Email to Alexander Haentzschel, Singapore, 7 March 2006, accessed 2006.

7.2  Local electronic media

Radio, television and other electronic media have improved similar, even though they were introduced much later and require the purchase of equipment on the consumer side. Since the establishment of the British Malaya Broadcasting Corporation in 1936, more than thirty radio and television channels have started broadcasting.\footnote{Drew McDaniel: Broadcasting in the Malay World, Radio, Television and Video in Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, Norwood, 1994, p. 22 et sqq.}

Quite a number was launched in the period from 1980 until 1994, when the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) restructured the industry.\footnote{Anura Goonasekera (Ed.): Asian Communication Handbook, Singapore, 2003, p. 267.} Some of these include the English-language channel Class 95 FM (1990), the Chinese-language channel Yes 93.3 FM (1993) and the Malay-language channel Ria 89.7 FM (1990). All of them are still in operation and belong to the successor of the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation, known as MediaCorp Radio since 2004.\footnote{Media Corporation of Singapore: MediaCorp Radio, http://www.corporate.mediacorp.sg/radio/index.htm, Singapore, 2006, accessed 2006.}


Not only has the total number of radio and television channels increased, but also their accessibility and airtime. Some reasons for this are Singapore’s rising purchasing power (the GDP per capita rose from 1 567 Singapore dollars in 1965 to 39 723 in 2000), falling costs for equipment (to around 30 Singapore dollars for a basic radio and around 180 Singapore dollars for a small television set), increasing advertising revenues (from around 177 million Singapore dollars in 1980 to 753 million Singapore dollars in 2000), the expansion of existing networks (e.g. “Singapore One”), the introduction of new technologies (e.g. stereo) to standardization (“Frequency Modulation”, FM) and cooperation (“Asiavision”).\footnote{Singapore Department of Statistics: Per Capita GDP at Current Market Prices, http://www.singstat.gov.sg/keystats/hist/gdp.html, Singapore, date of publication unknown, accessed 2005; Soh Yew Peng: The Development of Singapore’s Modern Media Industry, Singapore, 1994, p. 166; and AC Nielsen Singapore: Nielsen Media Research Records Sluggish Ad Spend in Singapore in 2001, http://www.acnielsen.com.sg/news.asp?newsID=85, Singapore, date of publication unknown, accessed 2005.}
To illustrate this: In the early days of broadcasting, only around eight percent of the total population owned a radio and only three percent had a television set. Back then, the radio and television stations broadcasted until 10 p.m. only. Today, the radio channels broadcast around the clock and the television interrupt their programs only for two or three hours late at night; both can be received by almost everyone.\(^{809}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Radio licenses</th>
<th>Radio licenses per 1 000 people</th>
<th>Radio transmission hours per week</th>
<th>Television licenses</th>
<th>Television licenses per 1 000 people</th>
<th>Television transmission hours per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>140 589</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>62 921</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>236 856</td>
<td>114.2</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>156 848</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>344 690</td>
<td>152.3</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>280 479</td>
<td>124.0</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>459 004</td>
<td>190.3</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>397 155</td>
<td>164.5</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>590 643</td>
<td>230.9</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>481 908</td>
<td>188.4</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>1 218</td>
<td>582 540</td>
<td>191.2</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>1 878</td>
<td>652 970</td>
<td>196.5</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>2 499</td>
<td>761 000</td>
<td>233.0</td>
<td>710</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three aspects are remarkable in the development of broadcasting in Singapore: First of all, although control over broadcasting had been handed over from Britain to Singapore, most channels still target on one language group only. As mentioned before, the reason for this is that most people prefer or are accustomed to programs in their native language.

As a result, there are English-language radio and television channels for the English-educated who are generally better situated. There are Chinese-language radio and television channels for the large number of Chinese-educated. There are Malay-language radio and television channels for the much fewer Malay-educated who are generally not so well situated. And there are only few Tamil-language radio channels and not even a full television channel for the very few Tamil-educated.

Secondly, since radio is generally preferred over television in the morning and television over radio in the evening, radio is the dominant electronic media during the daytime and television in the evening. As far as information about current events is concerned, there is only one television news channel which is in English (Channel News Asia, 1999).\(^{811}\) This means that


\(^{810}\) The actual number of radio and television sets is higher because the licenses permit its holders to use one or more radio or television sets on their premises. The table is based on data provided in Eddie Kuo: Communication Policy and Planning in Singapore, Honolulu, 1983, p. 36.

only those educated in English are regularly served with news by television during the day. All others must rely on radio (or newspapers).

Thirdly, apart from a very short period of time between 2001 and 2004, when Singapore Press Holdings challenged the well-established Media Corporation of Singapore, there was never competition in television broadcasting.\textsuperscript{812} Even in radio broadcasting there is only very little competition because the English-language channel \textit{Power 98 FM} and the Chinese-language channels \textit{Dongli 88.3 FM} (both aired by “SAFRA”) and \textit{UFM 1003} (aired by Union Works) target the same relatively small group of national and professional servicemen.\textsuperscript{813}

Whether this lack of competition has an impact on the variety and quality of electronic media is hard to say, because there is no such specific data available and comparisons with other countries might not be valid. One could argue that the deregulation of other sectors generally led to increasing variety, falling prices and better services.

An example is the telecommunication sector that was opened up in the 1990s. As a result of the competition between the dominant Singapore Telecommunication and its competitor Star Hub, prices for mobile communication and Internet dial-up access fell to almost zero, while availability and speed of transmission increased.\textsuperscript{814}

However, Star Hub (mobile communication, Internet access) is substantially owned (at least to 63 percent) by the government investment company Temasek, which also has a stake (56 percent) in Singapore Telecommunication (fixed and mobile communication, Internet access).\textsuperscript{815} As well, Temasek owns 100 percent of the Media Corporation of Singapore (radio, television) and at least one percent of Singapore Press Holdings (newspapers, magazines), which operates at least twenty web radio channels and the most frequented

\textsuperscript{812} In 2001, the Singapore Press Holdings challenged the Media Corporation of Singapore by launching two free-to-air television channels, \textit{Channel U} (Chinese) and \textit{TV Works} (English, later renamed in \textit{Channel I}). The venture did not last long. Singapore Press Holdings had to endure such heavy losses that it ended up following the recommendation of the Singapore Broadcasting Authority to merge SPH Media Works with the Media Corporation of Singapore. As a result, there is only one large television operator left.


Internet portal (Asia One) respectively.\textsuperscript{816} So even in the telecommunication and Internet market, competition is more imaginary than real.

| (78) Selection of three popular local websites in Singapore\textsuperscript{817} |
|---|---|---|
| Name | Operator | Language |
| AsiaOne | Singapore Press Holdings | English |
| Pacific Internet | Pacific Internet | English |
| SingTel | Singapore Telecommunication | English |

Today, the leading radio channels are the English-language channels \textit{Class 95 FM} (weekly reach: 588 000 listeners), \textit{938 Live!} (364 000) and \textit{Perfect Ten 98.7 FM} (346 000), the Chinese-language channels \textit{Yes 93.3 FM} (897 000), \textit{Capital 95.8 FM} (743 000) and \textit{Love 97.2 FM} (648 000), the Malay-language channels \textit{Warna 94.2 FM} (350 000) and \textit{Ria 89.7 FM} (193 000) and the Tamil-language channel \textit{Oli 96.8 FM} (206 000) – all of them are operated by MediaCorp Radio.\textsuperscript{818}

| (79) Free-to-air radio channels in Singapore\textsuperscript{819} |
|---|---|---|
| Name | Operator | Language |
| 938 LIVE! | MediaCorp Radio | English |
| Capital Radio 95.8 FM | MediaCorp Radio | Chinese |
| Class 95 FM | MediaCorp Radio | English |
| Dongli 88.3 | SAFRA Radio | Chinese |
| Gold 90.5 FM | MediaCorp Radio | English |
| International Channel 96.3 | MediaCorp Radio | French, German, Japanese |
| Love 97.2 FM | MediaCorp Radio | Chinese |
| Lush 99.5 FM | MediaCorp | English |
| Oli 96.8 FM | MediaCorp Radio | Tamil |
| Perfect Ten 98.7 FM | MediaCorp Radio | English |
| Radio Singapore International | MediaCorp Radio | English / Chinese / Malay / Bahasa |
| Ria 89.7 FM | MediaCorp Radio | Malay / Bahasa / English |
| Power 98 FM | SAFRA Radio | English |
| Symphony 92.4 FM | MediaCorp Radio | English |
| UFM 1003 | UnionWorks | Chinese |
| Warna 94.2 FM | MediaCorp Radio | Malay |
| WKRZ 91.3 FM | UnionWorks | English |
| Yes 93.3 FM | MediaCorp Radio | Chinese |

And the leading free-to-air television channels are the English-language \textit{Channel 5} (market share in the third quarter of 2005: 12 percent) and the Chinese-language \textit{Channel 8} (50.6)


and Channel U (18.1), the Malay-language channel Suria (5.6) and the “channel of choice for the kids, Indian and arts communities” named Central (10.4). They have a combined market share (except CNA, 3.4) of 100 percent. All are broadcasted by MediaCorp TV and MediaCorp TV12 respectively – there is only little difference.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>MediaCorp TV12</td>
<td>Tamil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channel 5</td>
<td>MediaCorp TV</td>
<td>English / Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channel 8</td>
<td>MediaCorp TV</td>
<td>Chinese / English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channel U</td>
<td>MediaCorp TV</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suria</td>
<td>MediaCorp TV12</td>
<td>Malay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Channel News Asia</td>
<td>MediaCorp TV</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SmartRadio DAB-Block 7B</td>
<td>MediaCorp Radio</td>
<td>English / Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVMobile</td>
<td>MediaCorp TV</td>
<td>English / Chinese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.3 Foreign print and electronic media

Over the years, an increasing number of foreign media have become available in Singapore. During colonial times, relatively few foreign publications were imported on an irregular basis for the British living in the city. The majority of foreign publications came from London. Today, more than fifty foreign publications are regularly available, a large number of which comes from Hong Kong.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abante</td>
<td>Tagalog</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple Daily</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Hong Kong SAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asahi Evening News</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asahi Shimbun</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangkok Post</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bild Zeitung</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

823 Ministry of Information: Create, Connect@Sg, Arts, Media and Infocomm in Singapore, Singapore, 2002, p. 171-173.
824 The table is based on different sources, including Ministry of Information: Create, Connect@Sg, Arts, Media and Infocomm in Singapore, Singapore, 2002, p. 171-173.
The leading foreign publication in Singapore is the English-language *Asian Wall Street Journal* (regional circulation: 80 000 copies).\(^{825}\) The Asia-Pacific edition of the *Wall Street Journal* (with headquarters in New York) is edited in Hong Kong and had a bad experience regarding distribution to Singapore: From 1987 until 1993, the *Asian Wall Street Journal* was prohibited from circulating more than 400 copies per issue in Singapore because it had run a critical article about the “Stock Exchange of Singapore Dealing Automated Quotation System” and refused to publish a “correction letter” by the authorities in Singapore.\(^{826}\)

Other important foreign newspapers in Singapore are the English-language *South China Morning Post* (regional circulation: 120 000 copies) and the *Financial Times* (13 000). Among

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the leading journals are the *Time* magazine (290 000), *Newsweek* (210 000) and *The Economist* (90 000). All of them are edited in Hong Kong (or at have a regional office there) and also had there distribution curtailed in Singapore because each of the journals was “gazetted” for a while.

Interestingly, many of these publications are printed in Singapore. Some examples of foreign publications printed by Singapore Press Holdings are the *Asian Wall Street Journal*, *International Herald Tribune*, *Sunday Express*, *USA Today* and the Egyptian newspaper *Al Ahram*. Others use Singapore as a regional distribution hub, such as *Time* magazine and the journal *The European*.

Nevertheless, foreign newspapers and magazines in Singapore are generally more expensive than they are at their main place of publication. This is not due to additional transport costs or outsourcing but rather due to the low demand for such publications. Non-English language publications in particular are read by foreigners only, because relatively few “locals” are able to read publications in languages such as German, French or Swedish.

Completely free (presumed that the license fee is paid), easier to receive (provided that a receiver is available) and much more in demand is listening to foreign radio channels. In total, more than thirty foreign free-to-air radio channels can be received with an ordinary radio set. Most of those channels originate from Malaysia and Indonesia, what is related to the small size and location of Singapore between Malaysia and Indonesia. Some are even located directly behind the border and direct their signal towards the city state, although this is sometimes denied. Some examples are the Malay-language channel *FMJB 107.5*, which is based in the Malaysia border town Johor Bahru, and the Bahasa-language channel *Batam FM*, which is based in the city of Nagoya on the Indonesian island of Batam offshore of Singapore.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Batam FM</td>
<td>Bahasa Indonesia</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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827 Storymaker: Medienführer China, Tuebingen, 2006, p. 5 et sqq.
828 In 1987, the circulation of the *Time* magazine was restricted from 18 000 to 2 000 copies per issue, and the *Asian Wall Street Journal* from 5 000 to 400. In the following year, the circulation of *Asiaweek* was restricted from 10 000 to 500 copies per issue, and the *Far Eastern Economic Review* from 9 000 to 500.
830 The preferred foreign language in Singapore is Spanish.
Even a number of foreign television channels can be received with ordinary sets. Most of these also originate either from Malaysia or Indonesia, due to the same reasons. Some examples are the three channels operated by Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM, also known as TV1, TV2, and TV3 or TV Tiga) and Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI).\textsuperscript{833}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8TV</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batam TV</td>
<td>Bahasa Indonesia</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTV7</td>
<td>Malay / English / Chinese / Tamil</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCTI</td>
<td>Bahasa Indonesia</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCTV</td>
<td>Bahasa Indonesia</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPI</td>
<td>Bahasa Indonesia</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV 1</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV 2</td>
<td>English / Malay / Chinese</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV 3 (&quot;TV Tiga&quot;)</td>
<td>Chinese (Cantonese)</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVRI</td>
<td>Bahasa Indonesia</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More challenging and costly is receiving television channels from overseas, because ordinary citizens are not allowed to make use of satellite dishes. Since the establishment of


the “Singapore One” network in the late 1990s (“Singapore Cable Vision”), however, more than thirty overseas channels can be received.\textsuperscript{835}

The leading ones are the English-language channels \textit{CNN}, \textit{CNBC} and \textit{BBC World}. They originate from the United States and the United Kingdom respectively. Besides a television set, a cable connection is required. Some programs, such as the English-language channels \textit{HBO}, \textit{Star Movies} and \textit{ESPN}, must even be ordered separately. They also all originate from the United States.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|}
\hline
\textbf{Name} & \textbf{Language} & \textbf{Country of origin} \\
\hline
Asia Plus & Chinese & Hong Kong SAR \\
AXN & English & United States / Japan \\
BBC World & English & United Kingdom \\
Bloomberg Television & English & United States \\
Cartoon Network & English / Chinese / Hindi / Malay & United States \\
CCTV-4 & Chinese & China \\
CCTV 9 & Chinese & China \\
Celestial Movies & Chinese / English subtitles & Hong Kong SAR \\
CNN & English & United States \\
CNN & English & United States \\
CTI TV & Chinese & Taiwan \\
Disney Channel & English & United States \\
ESPN & English & United States \\
Hallmark & English & United States \\
HBO & English & United States \\
MTV Mandarin & Chinese & United States / China \\
MTV SEA & English & United States / Singapore \\
NHK World Premium & Japanese & Japan \\
Nickelodeon & English & United States \\
Phoenix & Chinese & Hong Kong SAR \\
Star Chinese Movies & Chinese & United States / Hong Kong SAR \\
Star Movies & English / Chinese subtitles & United States \\
Star Plus & Hindi & United States / India \\
Star Sports & English & United States \\
Star World & English & Hong Kong \\
Sun TV & Tamil & India \\
TV5 Monde & French & France \\
TVB 8 & Chinese & Hong Kong SAR \\
TVBS-Asia & Mandarin & Taiwan \\
TVRI & Bahasa Indonesia & Indonesia \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

The same generally applies to the Internet. Among the most popular foreign websites accessed from Singapore are the search engine Google (unique visitors per month from Singapore: unknown) and the portals Yahoo (278 629), MSN (238 014), AOL (146 486),


\textsuperscript{836} The table is based on different sources, including Starhub: Channel Tiers, http://cabletv2.starhub.com/portal/site/CableTV/menuitem.68fd6b4cf1ef60cc5c180e109c108a0c/?vgnextoid=e3f7553eb8e74010VgnVCM100000c901a8c0RCRD&vgnextfmt=ItemCMId%3Ac5e0f57d90dc4010VgnVCM100000c901a8c0RCRD, Singapore, date of publication unknown, accessed 2006.
Lycos (131 304), Altavista (81 404) and Excite (66 351). All of them originate from the United States and are almost entirely in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altavista</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOL</td>
<td>English / Japanese</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excite</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google</td>
<td>English / Chinese / Malay / Tamil</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lycos</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSN</td>
<td>English / Chinese</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahoo</td>
<td>English / Chinese</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(86) Selection of foreign websites frequently accessed from Singapore

7.4 The local sources

Because there is no national news agency in Singapore, despite the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems explicitly recommended establishing one, the journalists must obtain all information themselves. The most important local sources are the authorities. The police departments, for instance, regularly inform the press about crimes in the city, and the parliament issues new or amended bills. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs alone issues at least 25 press releases per month.

In this context, the press secretary in the prime minister’s office plays a dominant role. It is not exactly known to the author of this dissertation how many press releases he issues but he is the only one who sends out comments on all kinds of subjects. Having to report to the prime minister, the secretary traditionally also keeps in touch with the press officers of the other ministries and statutory boards. This means that nothing important is issued without the approval of the prime minister’s office.

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Unlike journalists in other countries, the journalists in Singapore seldom question the information provided by the authorities. That has several reasons. One is the specific role

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and behavior of journalists in Singapore. Another reason is the involvement of the government in the media. Both aspects contrast to the MacBride Report and are discussed in the following chapters of this dissertation.

In addition, businesses regularly issue press releases. The information provided by the 50 largest companies listed in the “Straits Times Index” (STI) is highly regarded, because these companies are to a certain extend representative of the economy.\(^{843}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Press releases per month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capitaland</td>
<td>Property</td>
<td>&gt; 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBS Group</td>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>&gt; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keppel Corporation</td>
<td>Offshore and marine, property</td>
<td>&gt; 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile One</td>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>&gt; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neptune Orient Line</td>
<td>Logistics</td>
<td>&gt; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oversea Chinese Banking</td>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>&gt; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkway Holdings</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>&gt; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sembcorp</td>
<td>Marine, engineering and IT</td>
<td>&gt; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore Airlines</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>&gt; 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore Petroleum</td>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>&gt; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore Post</td>
<td>Logistics</td>
<td>&gt; 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore Press Holdings</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>&gt; 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore Telecommunication</td>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>&gt; 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starhub</td>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>&gt; 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Overseas Bank</td>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>&gt; 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, a significant number of these companies were state-owned for a long time and are now at least partly owned by the government’s investment companies. Temasek, for example, has stakes in companies such as Capitaland (43 percent), Keppel Corporation (> 17) and Singapore Telecommunication (56).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Shares</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Media Corporation of Singapore</td>
<td>Radio, television, web radios</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singapore Press Holdings</td>
<td>Newspaper, magazines, websites</td>
<td>&gt; 1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunication</td>
<td>Singapore Telecommunication</td>
<td>Fixed and mobile communication</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{843}\) Established in 1988, the “Straits Times Index” is a market value-weighted stock market index based on the stocks of 50 representative companies listed on the Singapore Stock Exchange.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SingTel Optus</th>
<th>Access to own and other satellites</th>
<th>56.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Star Hub</td>
<td>Mobile communication, internet access</td>
<td>63.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>Development Bank of Singapore</td>
<td>Loans and guarantees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td>Capitaland Buildings</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keppel Land</td>
<td>Land</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Neptune Orient Lines</td>
<td>Shipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSA International</td>
<td>Handling of the port</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Singapore Power</td>
<td>Electricity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>SembCorp Industries</td>
<td>Planning and construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keppel Industries</td>
<td>Planning and construction</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information provided by social groups tends to be less interesting to journalists in Singapore. The main reason for this is the marginal importance of most registered societies. There is a house rabbit society, a hamster society and several societies for different breeds of dogs. Others have been inspired by passions for certain activities such as singing, dancing or riding. One such group is the Singapore branch of the “Harley Davidson” fan club which was established in 1995 and currently has around 250 members.\(^{846}\)

Another reason is that only few societies have the financial means to send out press releases on a regular basis. The only way to get media attention is by doing something extraordinary. A good example of this is “The Roundtable” group, founded in the early 1990s by 25 young professionals to discuss political issues. In 1998, they compiled an analysis of the general election in which they disagreed with the campaign tactics of the ruling People’s Action Party. The report was published in the *Straits Times* newspaper and even a minister responded by pointing out where he thought the analysis was wrong.\(^{847}\)

Three aspects with regard to registered societies in Singapore are worth mentioning. First of all, the total number of societies increased steadily from 2,900 in 1980 to 5,400 in 2000. Since then, around 200 societies have been registered every year. This fact is cited by some as evidence that civil society in Singapore is getting stronger.\(^{848}\)

Another aspect is that a large number of societies are only open to people from specific ethnic groups. One such example is the “Singapore Ceylon-Tamils Association” which was founded in 1909 and manages a temple in the heart of the city. Another example is the “Chinese Swimming Club” which was founded in 1905 and has become a favorite for the annual crown of the Singapore Swimming Club. Both are among the largest societies in Singapore, with more than 1,000 members each, and exclusively accept Tamils and Chinese respectively as ordinary members.

(91) Selection of non-ethnic and ethnic registered societies in Singapore

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-ethnic societies</th>
<th>Ethnic societies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basketball Association of Singapore</td>
<td>Chinese Sports Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist Union</td>
<td>Chinese Swimming Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Aid Society</td>
<td>Filipino Association of Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Singapore Flying Club</td>
<td>Malay Sports Association, Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotary Club of Singapore</td>
<td>All Malaya Muslim Missionary Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore Badminton Association</td>
<td>Singapore Ceylon-Tamils Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore Chess Club</td>
<td>Singapore Chinese Football Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore Recreation Club</td>
<td>Singapore Indian Association, The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore Swimming Club</td>
<td>Singapore Malay Football Club, The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youths Improvement Association, The</td>
<td>Singapore Malayalee Hindu Samajam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Needless to say, the “Registrar of Society” can reject proposals without any reason. As a result, neither Amnesty International nor Greenpeace are active in Singapore. Even the gay movement People Like Us was refused registration in 1999. Since the 1988 amendment of the “Societies Act”, societies can even be de-registered if they make statements beyond the scope of the constituency. So not even people assembled in registered groups can express their thoughts freely, although this one of the central points of the MacBride Report.

Apart from these registered groups, there is no real “civil society” in Singapore, because the 1967 “Societies Act” requires all groups of more than ten people to be registered. As a result, the government, government-linked companies and government-registered societies are the only local sources regularly available to the media and journalists.

7.5 Foreign news wires

Since several foreign publications (Time, Asian Wall Street Journal, Asiaweek, Far Eastern Economic Review) have been “gazetted” in 1986 and 1987, foreign journalists generally avoid critical reporting of Singapore’s “domestic affairs”. This means that there is practically no outside view of what is happening in Singapore.

At the same time, there is virtually no independent reporting on world events, because Singapore’s journalists depend almost entirely on foreign sources and international wires.

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services when they report on events in other countries. This was so during colonial times and is still true today.

Until the early 20th century, a significant number of news items were taken from newspapers in London or Calcutta (where the British East India Company was based). In 1919, the media and journalists started using the wire service of the British news agency Reuters. In 1946, the *Straits Times* (followed by the other newspapers in Singapore) also subscribed to the wire services of the American agencies Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI). Together, they possessed more than 4,000 correspondents or stringers in over 110 countries during the 1980s and each issued a daily average of between 1.5 to 17 million words. Today’s numbers are even higher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(92) Editorial strength of Associated Press outside the United States in the 1970s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam (South)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea (South)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is reflected in Singapore’s newspapers. Already by 1978, Wilbur Schramm showed that nearly 85 percent of all articles published in the English-language *Straits Times* were taken

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or based on information provided by international wire services. The situation was similar in the other newspapers in Singapore. Around 90 percent of all articles published in the Chinese-language newspaper *Nanyang Siang Pau* was taken from wire services. Compared to other newspapers in the region such as the *Philippine Daily Express*, this is an extremely high percentage. The same can generally be said for the electronic media, as the 1983 results of Rolf Scheller show.856

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>News from international wire services</th>
<th>News from national wire services</th>
<th>News from own correspondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangkok Post</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea Times</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nanyang Siang Pau</em></td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippine Daily Express</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South China Morning P.</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straits Times</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### (94) Percentage of imported and domestic television hours858

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Imported</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>Total output in hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4 550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>12 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two of the reasons for the high use of wire services are the interest of the readers in foreign affairs and the general assumption that Western wire services and publications are "very useful".859 As mentioned before, the Hong Kong-based *Asian Wall Street Journal* and the *International Herald Tribune* are the most regarded.

### (95) Interest in newspapers (based on a study on one daily in Manila)860

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Foreign</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of content</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of reading</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### (96) Wire services rated by experts as “very useful”861

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agence France–Presse</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated Press</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernama News Agency</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

857 The table is based on data provided in Wilbur Schramm: International News Wires and Third World News in Asia, Hong Kong, 1978, p. 48.
858 The table is based on data provided in Rolf Scheller: News Flow in Asia, A Study of 10 Countries, Singapore, 1983, p. 67.
860 The table is based on data provided in Rolf Scheller: News Flow in Asia, A Study of 10 Countries, Singapore, 1983, p. 62
861 The tables are based on data provided in Andre Szende: Perception of News Flows in ASEAN, Singapore, 1983, p. 27.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far Eastern Economic Review</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Herald Tribune</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A third reason is that foreign correspondents employed by Singaporean publications generally only play a marginal role. In the early 1980s, for example, the *Straits Times* only employed three full-time foreign correspondents (in Bangkok, Tokyo and Washington D.C.), three part-time correspondents (in Kuala Lumpur, Manila and Melbourne) and a regional reporter who was based in Singapore but traveled a lot to Indonesia and Malaysia – the *Straits Times* traditionally employs more foreign correspondents than any other media outlet in Singapore.

In the meantime, the number of Singapore correspondents living abroad has increased to approximately 40 (not including stringers, cameramen and technicians). The *Straits Times* newspaper even has two correspondents covering different parts of China and one each in Japan, Korea and India. But their output is very low in comparison to the high volume of text the international wire services produce. Reuters alone provided over 2.5 million news items from 209 countries in 18 languages in 2004.

The composition of the wire service market has changed over time. In 1968, the Lao News Agency was established. Four years later, the Philippines News Agency was founded. And in 1988, the United News of Bangladesh agency was launched. Unfortunately, media outlets and journalists in Singapore still do not make use of these services effectively. None of the Singapore media participates in exchange systems such as the “Asia News Network” (ANN), which was established in 1982 by the Organization of Organization of Asia-Pacific News Agencies (OANA).

As a result, Reuters (United Kingdom) and the Associated Press (United States) are still the two dominant wire services for media and journalists in Singapore, followed by the English-language services of the Agence France-Presse (AFP, France), Itar-Tass (Russia), Kyodo

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862 The information was provided by Cheong Yip Seng during the interview with the author of this dissertation.
(Japan), Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA, Germany), and the Chinese-language service of Xinhua (Mainland China). In addition, the Straits Times often takes articles which have earlier been published in the New York Times or the Washington Post.

| (98) Foreign news agencies and media relevant to the journalists in Singapore |
|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Name                        | Type           | Country       |
| Agence France-Presse (AFP)  | News agency    | France        |
| Antara News Agency          | News agency    | Indonesia     |
| Associated Press (AP)       | News agency    | United States |
| BBC World                   | Radio / Television | United Kingdom |
| Bernama News Agency         | News agency    | Malaysia      |
| CNN                         | Television     | United States |
| Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA)| News agency    | Germany       |
| Financial Times             | Newspaper      | United Kingdom |
| Itar-Tass                   | News agency    | Russia        |
| Kyodo                       | News agency    | Japan         |
| New York Times              | Newspaper      | United States |
| Press Trust of India        | News agency    | India         |
| Reuters                     | News agency    | United Kingdom |
| Wall Street Journal         | Newspaper      | United States |
| Washington Post             | Newspaper      | United States |
| Xinhua                      | News agency    | China         |

Although this goes beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is interesting to note what news items international agencies generally cover. In terms of numbers and placement, the highest priority is given to news provided by institutions and companies located in the United States, such as the White House, World Bank and Microsoft.

| (99) Selection of 40 often mentioned sources |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Name                                        | Type           | Country       |
| AOL Time Warner                             | Company (media) | United States |
| BP                                          | Company (oil)  | United Kingdom |
| Citigroup                                   | Company (finance) | United States |
| Coca Cola                                   | Company (beverages) | United States |
| DaimlerChrysler                             | Company (cars) | Germany       |
| Deutsche Bank                               | Company (finance) | Germany       |
| European Union                              | Government     | Belgium       |
| Exxon Mobil                                 | Company (oil)  | United States |
| Frankfurt Stock Exchange                    | Stock exchange | Germany       |
| General Motors                              | Company (cars) | United States |
| HSBC                                        | Company (finance) | United Kingdom |
| Hong Kong Stock Exchange                    | Stock exchange | Hong Kong SAR |
| Hyundai                                     | Company (cars) | Republic of Korea (South) |
| IBM                                         | Company (computer) | United States |
| Intern. Atomic Energy Agency                | Organization   | Austria       |
| London Stock Exchange                       | Stock exchange | United Kingdom |
| Microsoft                                   | Company (software) | United States |
| Mitsubishi Motors                           | Company (cars) | Japan         |
| New York Stock Exchange                     | Stock exchange | United States |
| North Atlantic Treaty Organization          | Organization   | Belgium       |
| Office of the President                     | Government     | Indonesia     |
| Office of the Prime Minister                | Government     | Japan         |
| Org. for Security and Coop.                | Organization   | Austria       |
| Pentagon                                    | Government     | United States |
| PNB Paribas                                 | Company (finance) | France       |
As far as the transmission of local news is concerned, relatively little has changed. The most common methods of informing journalists still have to do with holding press conferences or sending out press releases. Until the early 1970s, press releases were usually either sent through the postal service (pigeons were never regularly used in Singapore) or directly delivered to the newsrooms. By the mid-1990s, fax transmissions became increasingly popular. Since then, however, fax is often replaced by e-mail.

The efficiency of transmission of foreign or international news has greatly improved over the time. In Singapore’s early days, news from overseas usually arrived by ship. This is the reason why the first newspapers were called *Shipping Gazette* (1858) or *Straits Produce* (1868). The editors took the news from the papers the captains had carried along. Until the 1850s, this kind of transmission was very slow. It became much faster with the introduction of steam ships in 1842 and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Due to their steam engines, ships no longer needed to adjust their schedule around the monsoon season and so did not need to navigate around the African horn in order to travel between the ports in Western Europe and Southeast Asia.

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In 1842, telegraphy was introduced in Singapore, and in the following years, submarine cables were laid connecting Singapore with Hong Kong (1869), Penang and Madras (both 1872). For a long time, cabled news was very expensive. The Straits Times newspaper was the first to start using it on a regular basis in the early 20th century. By 1952, this technology was even used for photo transmission. And in the 1970s and 1980s, thermo fax was becoming popular for the transmission of words.

In the meantime, computers (1969) and satellites (1972) were installed. Today, all news agencies use combinations of computers and satellites for the transmission of news to the media and journalists. Some such as “Factiva” (owned by Reuters) provide their services via e-mail or the Internet, which were introduced in Singapore in 1987 and 1991 respectively. Only ships are no longer used, because even foreign magazines are flown in by plane nowadays.

| (100) Vehicles for the transmission of news to the media and journalists in Singapore |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Vehicle         | Invention        | Introduction in Singapore | Usage            |
| Postal service  | ~ 2400 B.C.      | 1819               | Local / Regional |
| Ships           | n.a.             | 1819               | Regional / Global |
| Steam Ships     | 1737 A.D.        | 1842               | Regional / Global |
| Telegraphy      | 1837             | 1869               | Regional / Global |
| Telephony       | 1875             | 1879               | Local / Regional / Global |
| Telefax         | 1848             | 1879               | Local / Regional / Global |
| Air planes      | 1849             | 1929               | Regional / Global |
| Satellites      | 1957             | 1972               | Regional / Global |
| Email           | 1971             | 1987               | Local / Regional / Global |

The dissemination of news from newsrooms to the general public is described in other chapters of this dissertation. However, the tremendous impact of the expansion of the postal service, the introduction of radio (Radio Singapura, 1933) and television (Channel 5, 1967) broadcasting, the establishment of an island-wide cable system (“Singapore Cable Vision”, 1993) and the launch of the first public Internet access providers (TechNet, 1992) cannot be emphasized enough.

| (101) Vehicles for the dissemination of news to households in Singapore |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Vehicle         | Invention        | Introduction in Singapore | Requirements |
| Newspaper       | 1621             | 1823               | Printing Press |
| Magazine        | 1731             | 1830               | Printing Press |

Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 64.
For further information, see the chapter about the technological development.
### (102) Selection of 15 countries ranked in the 2005 Information Society Index\(^\text{873}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Computer</th>
<th>Telecom</th>
<th>Internet</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>1,035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>1,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.7 Regulations binding the media and journalists

In addition to other obstacles, there are a number of laws affecting the news flows in Singapore. The “Official Secrets Act” (1935) punishes the disclosure of official documents. The “Judicial Proceedings Act” (1960) prohibits reporting on pending cases (e.g. divorces). And the “Singapore Armed Forces Act” (1972) prohibits national servicemen to speak on the record without written consent of the authorities.

### (103) Selection of laws which can be used to restrict the distribution of media\(^\text{874}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Meaning for the media</th>
<th>Passed</th>
<th>Modified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broadcasting Security Act</td>
<td>Requires radio and television media to be licensed, regulates businesses and empowers the authorities to intervene</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Films Act</td>
<td>Regulates the possession, distribution and exhibition of films, and establishes the “Board of Film Censors”</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Security Act</td>
<td>Provides the internal security of Singapore by empowering the government to ban publications prejudicial, etc.</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of Harmony Act</td>
<td>Empowers the government to restrain the publications of religious leaders who cause ill-will between religions</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper and Print. Presses Act</td>
<td>Requires newspapers to be licensed, regulates businesses and empowers the government to intervene</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penal Code</td>
<td>Prohibits the sale of obscene books, defamation, decency and</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The most restrictive of these is the “Newspaper and Printing Presses Act” (NPPA), which was passed in 1974, strengthened in 1986, and amended in 2005.\footnote{875} It regulates the print media in two ways: First of all, it requires all printing presses and publications to be licensed. These licenses must be renewed annually, and can be refused or revoked by the authorities without reason. Since the 1986 amendment, even foreign publications must abide by it. This means that there is no longer a right to circulate publications, as recommended in the MacBride Report - it is a privilege granted by the authorities.\footnote{876}

Furthermore, the “Newspaper and Printing Presses Act” puts the management of the local media effectively under control of the authorities by employing a system of “management shares” which grant voting rights 200 times that of ordinary shares. Since the 1977 amendment bares anyone from holding more than three percent of ordinary shares, at least one percent must be “management shares”, and those “management shares” can only be held by persons approved by the minister, the authorities have practically a say in all important decisions.\footnote{877}

There are two main effects of this: Everyone takes care not to get in trouble with the authorities, because resistance is useless, and even those who could afford it hesitate to establish a media company to challenge the two monopolies, because the chance of success is very low and the risk of getting one’s license revoked very high, not to mention the fact that the authorities would be directly involved in all major decisions anyway.

The same situation generally applies to radio and television because both are regulated by the “Broadcasting Act” of 1944, lastly amended in 2005. Even film-makers practice self-

\begin{footnotes}
\end{footnotes}
censorship because all movies must be first submitted to the “Board of Censors” before public screening, according to the “Films Act” of 1981, lastly amended in 2002.\textsuperscript{878} Only publishing on the Internet and other digital devices such as mobile phones is more or less unrestricted. The main reason is that registration of digital media and its contents would not be effective. Webmasters could easily transfer the files to a server abroad and so evade the sphere of influence of the Singaporean authorities. The only way to regulate the Internet effectively is by forcing the access providers to filter certain keywords and block “harmful” sites. In total, around 100 websites are blocked in Singapore.\textsuperscript{879} Among them are several porn websites such as \textit{Playboy.com} but also the cartoon collection \textit{Chick.com}.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
Name & Content \\
\hline
Cannabis.com & About hemp, cannabis and marijuana \\
Chick.com & Cartoon gospel tracks \\
ForMatureAudiencesOnly.com & Links to porn websites \\
Penthouse.com & Photos of nude women \\
PersianKitty.com & Links to porn websites \\
Playboy.com & Photos of nude women \\
Sex.com & Links to porn websites \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{(104) Selection of websites blocked in Singapore\textsuperscript{880}}
\end{table}

7.8 The role of journalists and self-censorship

In such an environment, the freedom of the press is very limited. Journalists can question the actions of the government but must be careful to avoid harsh criticism of the authorities. Doubting the legitimization of the ruling People’s Action Party demands quite a lot of courage and questioning the system as a whole courts disaster. In such cases, the risk of losing one’s job or being prosecuted is extremely high.

In other countries, particularly those in the “West”, many people would be unsatisfied with such a situation, but Singapore is different. There is simply no liberal tradition of media and communications there. During colonial times, the local media were founded, owned,
operated and read by the British colonialist, and they were committed to the British habits.\(^{881}\)

Today, the local media are owned, run and read by Singaporeans, and committed to being Singaporean. Most of the (local) experts interviewed for this dissertation, however, defend and some even actively support Singapore’s strict media laws and codes.

Over the years, a number of codes of conduct and media concepts were implemented in Singapore.\(^{882}\) The codes of conduct are less relevant but the media concepts have some impact on the society. They are based on some general assumptions. One is that in Asian or Chinese societies in particular, the system is more important than the individual. That is often credited to Confucius (551-479 B.C.) and emphasized in the “Core Values” by Lee Hsien Loong (1999).

Another assumption is that in a multicultural society like Singapore, ethnic and religious matters can easily become “explosive issues”. As the classic example, the 1950 “Maria Hertogh Riots”, during which 18 people got killed and more than 170 people were injured, is usually used by academics, politicians and journalists for defending the system.\(^{883}\)

| (105) Codes of conduct introduced in Singapore |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Name                          | Publisher                     | Year            |
| Code of Professional Conduct  | Singapore National Union of Journalists | 1975            |
| Code of Advertising Practice  | Advertising Standards Authority of Singapore | 1976            |
| Code of Ethics for ASEAN Journalists | Confederation of ASEAN Journalists | 1989            |
| Internet Code of Practice     | Singapore Broadcasting Authority | 1996            |

| (106) Media concepts in Singapore |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Name                          | Creator                       | Year            |
| Development Journalism        | Press Foundation of Asia      | 1967            |
| Asian Values in Journalism    | Lee Kuan Yew                  | 1976            |
| Core Values                   | Lee Hsien Loong               | 1988            |
| Next Lap                      | Goh Chok Tong                 | 1990            |
| OB Markers                    | Unknown, maybe Lee Hsien Loong | 1995            |
| Create.connect@sg             | Ministry for Information      | 2000            |

As a result, it is often believed that the journalists in Singapore have more responsibility than journalists in other (Western) countries. To many foreigners and some locals, this concept is often difficult to understand. From their point of view, “a journalist is a journalist” and “there is only good and bad journalism”, as one of the experts interviewed for this dissertation


suggested. But the discussions about “Asian Values in Journalism” show that there are
different perceptions.884

One of the latest and most remarkable concepts introduced in Singapore has become known
as “OB Markers”, a term used in golfing. It refers to the limits of a wide range of topics
citizens and journalists can discuss without getting themselves into trouble. Diane Mauzy
even argues that it represents a “trial-and-error approach” that allows for more commentary
and gradually increasing openness.885 The opposite point of view, that “OB markers” lead to
even further self censorship, is also convincing, because no one exactly knows what is
allowed and what is not.886

However, there is a high level of self-censorship in Singapore. Some issues are completely
ignored and others are handled with great care.887 Examples of self-censorship can be found
in almost every issue of Singapore’s newspapers.888 The argumentation of Cheong Yip Seng
is even more revealing. When asked whether he would report a supposed street fight
between Chinese and Malay where some people got killed, the editor-at-large answered:
“Very simple, I wouldn’t carry it. […] Publishing the story would mean the whole city get to
know. There is no guarantee that people wouldn’t misinterpret it.”889

Nevertheless, the public trust in the news provided by journalists is extremely high. The most
important sources of information, according to the Study on Usage and Impact of the Internet
in Singapore, are newspapers, television and radio – they are regarded as being even more
important than what relatives, friends and colleagues say. More than 76 percent of
Singaporeans trust news put forth by the media. Interestingly, the trust in news provided by
the government is almost as high.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Internet-users (in percent)</th>
<th>Non-internet-users (in percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>78.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>64.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

884 Owais Aslam Ali: Freedom of the Press and Asian Values in Journalism, Paper Presented at the Seminar on
Asian Values in Journalism Held in Kuala Lumpur from 24 to 25 August 1995, place and date of publication
886 Compare with the discussion in Young PAP: Discussion Forum,
888 See also James Gomez: Self Censorship, Singapore’s Shame, Singapore, 2000, p. 55 et sqq; and James
et sqq.
890 The tables are based on data provided in Eddie Kuo: Internet in Singapore, A Study on Usage and Impact,

213
### Other “important” sources of information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Internet users (in percent)</th>
<th>Non-internet-users (in percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>79.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Trust in news by medium

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Internet-users (in percent)</th>
<th>Non-internet-users (in percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radios</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>74.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Trust in news by other institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Internet-users (in percent)</th>
<th>Non-internet-users (in percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious organizations</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business companies</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>70.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Intimidation in an atmosphere of fear

Some authors such as James Gomez try to make their readers believe that there even is “Surveillance and Intimidation” in Singapore. But this can hardly be confirmed because the examples given by James Gomez are not convincing.

In his latest book, James Gomez quotes an e-mail dated 23 May 2001 in which someone called Robert Ho praises the Think Center (which was founded by James Gomez) as “one of the liveliest” non-profit websites “carrying both thoughtful, even profound articles”. According to James Gomez, the sender of this e-mail was arrested by the police for inciting violence through the Internet six months later. James Gomez gives the impression that those events (the e-mail and the arrest) are somehow related but there is no evidence of this.\(^{891}\)

However, there is no doubt that there is an atmosphere of fear in Singapore, even though the colonial times ended long time ago. Over the years, dozens of people were detained without trial under the “Internal Security Act” (1960) which allows the authorities – among other

things – the preventive arrest of those regarded as subversive persons. Particularly in the period between 1963 and 1975, many political activists and trade unionists were detained. During “Operation Cold Store” in February 1963, at least 107 leaders of the opposing Barisan Sosialis party and other leftists were arrested.

(111) Selection of ten political prisoners arrested between 1963 and 1975

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lim Hock Siew</td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chua Kee Seng</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chong Meng Kee</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wong Sin Yah</td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ng Chek Boon</td>
<td>1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ang Choon Hong</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leong Chee Fook</td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee You Seng</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeo Kwee Hua</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tan Keng Chuan</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The best example of a “political prisoner” is a former member of parliament from the Barisan Sosialis party: Chia Thye Poh was arrested on 28 October 1966 for participating in demonstrations and strikes. Although he denied the allegations, he was detained for 23 years without trial. On his release in 1989, he was prohibited from participating in any political activities, issuing any public statements and from joining any association without the permission of the authorities. For three years after his release, he was required to live on the island of Sentosa, off Singapore’s coast. The restrictions on him were not lifted until 1998 or 1999. At that time, he was 58 years old and therefore not dangerous to the government anymore.

Journalists such as the former general manager, the editor-in-chief and the senior editorial writer of the Chinese-language Nanyang Siang Pau newspaper were also arrested under the “Internal Security Act”. They were accused of bringing Tung Tao Chang to the newspaper, under whose editorship the reporting allegedly changed to one of “glorifying communism and stirring up communal and chauvinistic sentiments over language and culture”.

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In cases where the “Internal Security Act” does not apply, other laws are applicable. For example, in autumn 1992, the journalist Patrick Daniel, who worked for the English-language “Business Times” newspaper at the time, was accused on nine counts of breaching the “Official Secrets Act” (1935). He was fined the maximum amount of 2 000 Singapore dollars on each charge, or 18 000 Singapore dollars in total.\textsuperscript{897}

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|p{10cm}|c|c|}
\hline
Title & Meaning for the people & Passed & Modified \\
\hline
Penal Code & Punishes all kinds of criminal offences & 1871 & 1998 \\
\hline
Official Secrets Act & Prohibits the disclosure of official documents and information & 1935 & 2005 \\
\hline
Sedition Act & Punishes the sedition, including spreading disaffection against the government & 1948 & 1985 \\
\hline
Internal Security Act & Provides the internal security of Singapore by empowering the government to detain people without trial & 1960 & 1997 \\
\hline
Maintenance of Harmony Act & Prohibits causing ill-will between the religions & 1990 & 1992 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

At worst, people in Singapore can be accused under the “Penal Code” or the “Misuse of Drugs Act”, both of which contain a series of presumptions which shift the burden of proof from the prosecution to the accused.\textsuperscript{899} While smaller drug offences are usually fined with imprisonment and strokes of the cane, there is a mandatory death penalty for heavier drug offences. This means that in these cases, judges have no other option than to hand down a death sentence to those convicted.

To illustrate this: In April 1995, Poong Yuen Chung, an 18 year old Chinese shop assistant from Hong Kong, was executed after smuggling (without her knowledge?) heroin into the country. In April 1996, Rozman Jusoh, a 24 year old Malaysian worker, was hanged because he had tried to sell 1.04 kilograms of cannabis. In September 2000, Thiru Selvam, a 28 year old Singaporean, was executed because the drug addict had been found with 800 grams of cannabis. In September 2001, Zulfikar Bin Mustaffah, a 32 year old Singaporean, was executed because the drug addict had possessed 70 grams of heroin. And in September


What many people fear is not so much the death penalty itself, but the lax handling of it. In September 2003, the Prime Minister at the time, Goh Chok Tong, said in an interview with the \textit{BBC} that about 70 to 80 people had been executed in the previous months. Asked why he did not know the precise number, he answered: “I’ve got more things to worry about.”\footnote{Agence France-Presse: PM Goh says only 10 people executed not 80, Singapore, 15 September 2003.}

To make this clear: According to Amnesty International, Singapore has the world’s highest per capita execution rate (13.57 executions per one million people). In the period from 1990 until 2000, at least 340 people were killed.\footnote{Amnesty International: High Execution Rate Shrouded in Secrecy, London, 2004, p. 1.} Interestingly, a significant proportion came from countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia or Bangladesh and only very few from “Western” countries. Only in one case, when a domestic helper from the Philippines was executed in 1995, did an execution of a foreign national lead to a diplomatic crisis.\footnote{Flor Contemplacion was executed for murder, despite many Filipinos believing that she was innocent or at least suffering from insanity if she actually did commit the murder. Asiaweek: Beyond the Rage, Lessons from the Case of Flor Contemplacion, Hong Kong, 07 April 1995, p. 17.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Murder</th>
<th>Drug Trafficking</th>
<th>Firearms</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>&gt; 89</td>
<td>&gt; 247</td>
<td>&gt; 4</td>
<td>&gt; 340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from criminal trials, civil lawsuits can be filed to bring someone down. The most cited example is the case of Jusua Jeyaretnam, who was the first opposition candidate to become a member of parliament after a decade of one-party parliament. Just for saying during an election rally in 1997 that “Mr. Tang Liang Hong has just placed before me, two reports he has made to the police against, you know, Mr. Goh Chok Tong and his people”, eleven suits were filed against him by members of the ruling People’s Action Party. They argued that this innocuous sentence would imply and be understood to mean that the plaintiffs were guilty of


Understandably, many people find the current situation frightening and therefore try to avoid any discussion with the authorities. This is one of the reasons why the non-profit organization “Freedom House” (located in the United States) has never ranked Singapore as a “free” country having a “free flow of news.”\\footnote{Adrian Karatnycky: Freedom in the World, The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties, 2001-2002, New York, 2002, p. 532-536.} Other reasons, such as the dependence of journalists and the media on the government, have been described in the previous parts of this dissertation.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|l|}
\hline
Year & Political rights & Civil rights & Status \\
\hline
1972 & 5 & 5 & Partly free \\
1973 & 5 & 5 & Partly free \\
1974 & 5 & 5 & Partly free \\
1975 & 5 & 5 & Partly free \\
1976 & 5 & 5 & Partly free \\
1977 & 5 & 5 & Partly free \\
1978 & 5 & 5 & Partly free \\
1979 & 5 & 5 & Partly free \\
1980 & 5 & 5 & Partly free \\
1981 & 4 & 5 & Partly free \\
1982 & 4 & 5 & Partly free \\
1983 & 4 & 5 & Partly free \\
1984 & 4 & 5 & Partly free \\
1985 & 4 & 5 & Partly free \\
1986 & 4 & 5 & Partly free \\
1987 & 4 & 5 & Partly free \\
1988 & 4 & 4 & Partly free \\
1989 & 4 & 4 & Partly free \\
1990 & 4 & 4 & Partly free \\
1991 & 4 & 4 & Partly free \\
1992 & 4 & 5 & Partly free \\
1993 & 5 & 5 & Partly free \\
1994 & 5 & 5 & Partly free \\
1995 & 5 & 5 & Partly free \\
1996 & 4 & 5 & Partly free \\
1997 & 5 & 5 & Partly free \\
1998 & 5 & 5 & Partly free \\
1999 & 5 & 5 & Partly free \\
2000 & 5 & 5 & Partly free \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}
Conclusion

8.1 Why the idea of the “New World Information Order” is unrealistic and outdated but still useful to devise a new vision

Half a century ago, scientists discovered that there are imbalances in the flows of news. These findings soon reached the international community. Already in the 1970s, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) organized several hundred conferences, symposia and workshops. At those events, many experts dreamed of a world, where the exchange of news is “more just and more efficient” and where everyone has the “right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”. Therefore, a “New World Information Order” should be introduced.

But, as in other “Cold War” debates, the positions differed and three principal parties formed: the “West” led by the United States, the “Socialist Bloc” led by Russia and the less organized “Third World”. Each had a different background and was applying its own theoretical framework (e.g. Lenin’s perception of the press). And in the case of the “Third World”, the positions were not even expressed with a single voice. So it is not surprising that even the UNESCO itself, particularly the management and the rising influence of the “Third World” in the organization, was coming under attack.

In order to achieve at least some basic agreement, the management of UNESCO suggested to the participants of the 19th General Assembly held in 1976 in Nairobi the assignment of the “International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems” chaired by Seán MacBride. Together with 15 other experts, he analyzed communication problems in contemporary societies for nearly four years.

In their ensuing report entitled “Many Voices, One World” (1980), they did not come to a single conclusion but made 82 recommendations. In general, they recommended that developing countries restructure their media systems and that industrialized countries

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support these efforts with knowledge as well as financial and technical means. One of the main goals was to increase the diversity and availability of media and news by improving the overall conditions of the press. Among other things, the commission recommended the establishment of national news agencies, training centers for professionals, archives and libraries.\textsuperscript{912}

On the following occasion, the UNESCO members more or less agreed to implement the recommendations, but how the report was interpreted and used by the members differed. While some understood it as a manifesto against the overwhelming media power of the former colonialists, others used the opportunity to point to the violations of “Human Rights” in the “Third World.” \textsuperscript{913}

At the height of the conflicts, three countries withdrew from UNESCO: the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Singapore. As a result, the organization was plunged into its worst crisis ever, which led to fundamental changes on all levels, including the adoption of a new strategy and the appointment of a new director-general.

This development shows that there was never a chance to realize the “New World Information Order”. One might even argue that already the discussions about it were just a continuation of other Cold War debates. Then, the assignment of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems would have been just horseplay.

More importantly, the vision of the “New World Information Order” assumes that there could be a single solution for all the communication problems affecting more than four billion people with different cultural backgrounds and varying political, economical, technological and social problems. Obviously, this was very presumptuous. Today, no one would seriously try to carry out such an untenable plan.

From today’s point of view, however, the vision of a “New World Information Order” is not only unrealistic but also outdated. Apart from the fact that no one believes in it anymore, the main reason is that the overall state of affairs has changed. When the ideas were discussed, the political world was bi-polar or tri-polar. In the meantime, the “Cold War” came to an


abrupt end and hence the number of players has increased. Today, it would be necessary to put every single issue on the table again and UNESCO would certainly not provide it anymore.

Furthermore, Seán MacBride and his co-authors woefully underestimated some issues, particularly (personal) computers. They did not anticipate that the prices for hardware would fall so fast, that usage of software would become so simple and that computers would be connected to form networks (Internet, World Wide Web). Another technology that is fully neglected in the report is mobile communication (cellular phones). 914 Both have substantially changed the way people interact and news is transmitted.

Nevertheless, many general thoughts of the report Many Voices, One World are still up-to-date. The reason is that the authors did not regard communication as an isolated phenomenon. Instead, they also took the historical dimensions into account. The development of the press, for instance, was considered starting with the invention of movable type by Johannes Gutenberg (invented in 1448). Similarly, the development of telephony was considered starting with the patent of Alexander Graham Bell (1867). 915

On this very broad level, relatively little has changed over the last two or three decades: Newspaper, radio and television are still the leading mass media. In large cities, mass media are generally more easily available and more prevalent than in rural areas. This disparity also applies to industrialized and developing countries. Even the dominance of the “Big Four” transnational news agencies is unchanged, although one has practically disappeared (United Press International) and others have gained influence (e.g. Deutsche Presse Agentur). 916

More importantly, the report questions in what culture, communication and media system the people want to live in, how they want to be informed and inform, and what would be necessary for it. This central and timeless question is, of course, still very useful.

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8.2 How the mass media have developed in Singapore

In Singapore, culture, communication and media have always been delicate issues. During colonial times, only the British and other Europeans were said to have culture or to be civilized. The reason is that they were generally higher educated, better off economically or at least stronger armed than the Muslim Malay fishermen. As a result, they regulated and controlled the communication and media.

A gradual change began in the 1860s, when the number of Chinese arriving exceeded the number of Malays, because the Chinese imported many valuable goods (i.e. porcelain, paper, ink) and practiced their traditions in the public sphere (i.e. festive processions). Henceforth, the society was split into four distinct groups: The higher classes were the British, followed by the Chinese, with Malays and Tamils being the lowest classes.

Since Singapore’s independence (1963) and its separation from Malaysia (1965), all people are equal under the law, but culture is still closely related with ethnicity (appearance) and heritage (country of origin of the ancestors) – compare with the modern definition of culture by Edward Hall according to which culture is not inherent but must be learnt. In practice, the Chinese dominate today. Some Chinese even believe that they are more civilized because the Chinese culture is said to be more than 5 000 years old.

Such racial slurs are the reason why any expressions of culture (i.e. theater plays) are looked upon with some skepticism. Since the riots in the 1950s (“Maria Hertogh Riots”) and 1960s (“Mohammed Sultan Riots”), it is even feared that ethnic matters (understood as being culture) and religion (as an integral part of culture) can become “explosive issues” because it is believed that Singapore’s multicultural society is “fragile like an egg and therefore the government must hold it firmly that it does not drop and break”. Therefore, the press was accordingly shaped.

In terms of numbers, the press in Singapore has greatly improved. There are now ten daily newspapers with an average number of around 60 pages on weekdays and around 100 pages on weekends. The combined daily circulation is more than 1.1 million copies. This development is largely attributed to the growth of the population, the increases in purchasing

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918 For further information, see the part “Circumstances”.
919 Song Ong Siang: One Hundred Years History of the Chinese in Singapore, London, 1923, p. 6 et sqq.
power and advertising revenues, the expansion of existing communication infrastructures (i.e. the postal system) and the introduction of new technologies (i.e. full page make-up). Unfortunately, the role of the media as regulated by legislation (i.e. “Newspaper and Printing Presses Act”) as well as the introduction of several concepts (i.e. “Asian Values in Journalism”), has narrowed.

During colonial times, all important newspapers in Singapore were founded, owned, managed and read by the British. The “Golden Age” of newspaper publishing began in the mid 19th century when the *Straits Times* (1845) and a number of other newspapers were launched. The “good old days”, when the editor was the proprietor, lasted until the conversion of the *Straits Times* into a private company in 1900. Newspaper publishing was becoming a big business then. Even a rubber multimillionaire invested in it (Tan Kah Kee in 1923 in the Chinese-language *Nanyang Siang Pau* newspaper).\(^922\)

Except for the brief period of Japanese occupation (1942-1945) when all newspapers were closed down or renamed by the Syonan Newspaper Association, the press supported the British. When the *Straits Times* was revived, it ran the headline “Singapore is British Again – Our Day of Liberation”. One of the reasons is that the press had a “useful job to do” in this “phase of rehabilitation”.\(^923\)

If any, the press played only a marginal role in the struggle for independence. This explains why the “mouthpiece of British colonial interests” (meaning the *Straits Times*) was running into trouble with politicians such as Lee Kuan Yew. As soon as his People’s Action Party won the next election and he became prime minister, the “birds of passage” scouted to Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) to “proclaim from there that they would die for the freedom of the press in Singapore”.\(^924\) But the *Straits Times* returned to Singapore as soon as the city separated from the Federation of Malaysia (1965) and supported the People’s Action Party in the nation-building process then.

Henceforth, the press was put increasingly under pressure. In 1970, the last “expatriate manager” of the *Straits Times* fled from the country. In the following year, four top executives of the Chinese-language *Nanyang Siang Pau* were arrested for being involved in a “black

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\(^923\) *Straits Times*: Singapore Diary, Singapore, 3 October 1945, after Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 143.

\(^924\) Mary Turnbull: Dateline Singapore, 150 Years of the Straits Times, Singapore, 1995, p. 262.
operation”. For the same reason, the *Singapore Herald* and *Eastern Sun* were closed down.925

The control over the press was further extended in 1982 when the two leading Chinese-language newspapers, *Nanyang Siang Pau* and *Sin Chew Jit Poh*, were merged. The government explained this move by citing economic problems but its *Singapore Monitor* experiment did not work out.926 Two years later, the Chinese-language press was merged with the English-language press (1984).

As a result, all newspapers (the *Tamil Murasu* was acquired in 1995) belong to one single holding company (Singapore Press Holdings) which is legally (through the “Newspaper and Printing Presses Act”) as well as financially (through the investment company Temasek) controlled by the government. Today, however, the duty of the Singapore press is reduced “to inform, to educate, to activate, and to entertain”.927

Basically the same applies to radio (1936) and television (1963). Broadcasting was introduced by the British, taken over by the Japanese during World War II, and later handed over to the local authorities. They renamed the main broadcasting institution four times, but (except the short period between 2001 and 2004) there was no competition.928 Apart from four less important radio channels, all radio and television channels are now operated by one single company (Media Corporation of Singapore) which belongs to a government investment holding company (Temasek). The latter is even true for Singapore Telecommunication and Star Hub.

Meanwhile, even four foreign publications (*Time*, *Asian Wall Street Journal*, *Asiaweek*, *Far Eastern Economic Review*) were restricted in circulation because they had rejected publishing “correction letters” by the government (“Right of Reply”).929 In curtailing the circulation of foreign periodicals, several points were made very clear. The most important one is that journalists should be careful when they write about Singapore in order not to get in trouble with the authorities.930

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928 In 2001, the Singapore Press Holdings challenged the dominant Media Corporation of Singapore by launching two free-to-air television channels, *Channel U* (Chinese) and *TV Works* (English, later renamed in *Channel 1*) but the channels were turned over to the Media Corporation of Singapore in 2004.
So the total numbers of newspapers, radio and television channels, and even telecommunication services have been increased in the last few decades but the diversity of news and opinion has not expanded at the same rate, since there are only monopolies left. The Singapore Press Holdings publishes all newspapers (except for a free advertising sheet) and the Media Corporation of Singapore operates all (except four unimportant) radio and television channels in Singapore. And the Singapore Telecommunication and Star Hub share (with Mobile One) the bulk of the telecommunication and Internet access market.

In each of these companies, the government investment company Temasek has a controlling interest (between one percent “management shares” and 100 percent ordinary shares).\footnote{Temasek Holdings: Our Investments, http://www.temasekholdings.com.sg/our_investments/our_investments.htm, Singapore, 2004, accessed 2006.} Needless to say, the government also legally wields power over the media. Among other things, the “Newspaper and Printing Presses Act” (1974) and the “Broadcasting Security Act” (1994) empower the authorities to revoke licenses without explanation.

A controversially discussed question is whether this understanding of culture, communication and media is still up-to-date. Some of the experts interviewed argue that the “egg” is not as fragile as it used to be.\footnote{Cherian George: Singapore, The Air-Conditioned Nation, Essays on the Politics of Comfort and Control, 1990-2000, Singapore, 2000.} However, the tight rules strongly affect the flows of news into, within and out of Singapore.

8.2.1 How news are disseminated into, within and out of Singapore

Although Singapore is actually an export economy (the total external trade is even greater than the entire gross domestic product), the highly industrialized “information society” is an importer of news.\footnote{Gavin Peebles: The Singapore Economy, Glos, 1996, p. 159.} The inflow of news is much larger than the outflow.

In the past few decades, this gap has even widened. The reason is that the growing population in the small city-state increasingly demands foreign news, but produces relatively little news itself. Today, there are more foreign media and news available in Singapore than ever before, but the exports of media and news from Singapore have not been increased at the same rate.
To illustrate this: In Singapore, the newspapers are full of foreign news. In addition, there are at least fifty foreign newspapers regularly available in Singapore. Also, the local radio and television channels broadcast foreign news nearly every hour. Even most songs and movies are from overseas. In addition, there are more than thirty foreign free-to-air radio and a dozen foreign free-to-air television channels available in Singapore, not to mention the more than thirty foreign channels available through the cable system.\textsuperscript{934}

But there is only one radio channel (\textit{Radio Singapore International}) and one television channel (\textit{Channel News Asia}) broadcasted to a wider region, and they often report more foreign than local news due to the demand abroad. Not even Singapore’s leading English-language \textit{Straits Times} newspaper is regularly available in Kuala Lumpur, although Malaysia’s capital is just around 400 kilometers away.\textsuperscript{935}

As an importer of media and news, Singapore depends heavily on the supply. One might even say that Singapore is exposed and vulnerable to incoming news flows because it can just regulate some streams (i.e. the distribution of foreign magazines through circulation restrictions) but not the (content) supply itself (i.e. the reporting in the foreign publications).

However, the overwhelming majority (approximately around 80 percent) of imported news is transmitted by a handful of transnational agencies.\textsuperscript{936} The most relevant of these are Reuters (regularly used since 1900) and the Associated Press (used since 1946) which are based in London and New York respectively.

Until 1900, foreign news was usually taken from the newspapers which were carried by ship. Between 1900 and the establishment of the Sentosa Earth Station in 1972, telegraphy (undersea cables) was the main vehicle.\textsuperscript{937} Since then, news are increasingly transmitted through two geostationary Intelsat IV communication satellites (one above the Pacific Ocean, the other one above the Indian Ocean) or undersea cables and is directly fed into the computer article management systems.


\textsuperscript{935} Due to an agreement between the \textit{Straits Times} (Singapore) and the \textit{New Straits Times} (Malaysia).

\textsuperscript{936} Rolf Scheller: News Flow in Asia, A Study of 10 Countries, Singapore, 1983, p. 16.

The importation of foreign print media has improved similarly. During colonial times, most foreign publications were imported from London. Until the introduction of steam ships (1842) and the opening of the Suez Canal (1869), the speed of travel was very slow and the routes were very long. Since the establishment of the Selatar Airport in 1929, foreign publications are usually delivered by plane. Today, most foreign publications in Singapore arrive at Changi Airport (1955). A large number comes from Hong Kong. Two examples are the Financial Times (Asia) newspaper and the Newsweek magazine.

The increasing availability of foreign electronic media is also remarkable. Since the Japanese used a wireless station on the Malay island Penang in 1942 to urge the citizens in Singapore to protect themselves from the B29 bombers, Singapore is increasingly exposed to foreign broadcasts. Nearly all originate from Malaysia or Indonesia due to Singapore’s small size and its location between those two countries. Some stations are even located directly behind the border (e.g. FMJB 107.5 in the Malaysian border town Johor Bahru and Batam TV in the city of Nagoya on the Indonesian island of Batam) and send their signal towards Singapore.

As a result, the inflow of regional news has rapidly increased in the last two decades. But even foreign regional news are often produced or at least disseminated by transnational news agencies because the media in Malaysia and Indonesia also heavily depend on the wire services of Reuters and Associated Press.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(115) Simplified schema of the flow of media and news into Singapore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Origin</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johor Bahru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moscow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(116) Simplified schema of the flow of media and news out of Singapore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Destination</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia in general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia in particular</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relatively little has changed in the dissemination of news within the city, although the number, frequency, volume and circulation of newspapers and magazines as well as the number, availability and airtime of radio and television channels have been increased since the country’s independence (1963) and its separation from Malaysia (1965). There are still four major streams of information along ethnic lines because each of the four language groups (English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil) has her own distinct newspapers, magazines, radio and television channels.

During colonial times, newspapers were only delivered in the afternoon or evening. In the meantime, most newspapers have switched to morning publication. In addition, radio (1936) and television (1963) were introduced. As a result, the dissemination of news has become more diverse. In the early morning, radio is the main medium for news consumption, followed by newspapers. In the evening, television is usually preferred over the others.940

The best informed are the English-educated citizens, particularly young, male businessmen. The reason, apart from their higher purchasing power, is that four of the ten daily newspapers or half (551 463 copies) of the combined newspaper circulation (1 197 301), as well as nine of the 18 radio channels and the largest television channel are in English.941 Since 1999, there is even an English-language television news channel available (Channel News Asia).942 The least informed are the relatively few Tamil-educated, particularly elderly women.943 There is not even an afternoon newspaper serving this group.

Characteristic is also the top-down direction. During colonial times, the British administration provided the most important news and controlled the media. Today, the Singapore government is the main source of news and controls the media even more effectively than the British did. What in other countries is described as “civil society” hardly exists in Singapore, because even registered societies have little influence. As a result, there are almost none news flows from the bottom upwards (see the “Feedback Groups”).

Recent developments also give insights. Since 1994, the Internet is accessible to the public. As a result, not only has the inflow of foreign news heavily increased but also the exchange of news within Singapore, particularly due to mobile communication. In December 2005, the total number of mobile phone subscriptions (4 256 800) was almost as high as the total population (4 351 400).

Another recent development is that the facilities in Singapore are increasingly used to disseminate news to other countries. Some of the publications printed and distributed from Singapore are the *Asian Wall Street Journal* and the *Time* magazine. The news agency Reuters and the large British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) have moved their regional offices from Hong Kong to Singapore. Singapore Telecommunication has even attracted downstream customers from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Brunei, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Thus, the central thesis of this dissertation can be confirmed: The news flows in Singapore have become much more efficient but not more just in the past several decades, because the major obstacles to freedom of the press (i.e. post-publishing censorship) have not been removed. In fact, the regulations (i.e. “Newspaper and Printing Presses Act”) were even tightened, monopolies were established (Singapore Press Holdings, Media Corporation of Singapore), and the central government has been able to monitor the content of news to a greater extent.

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Singapore) and concepts to further bind the press were introduced (e.g. “OB Markers”). Therefore, it is still worth discussing the imbalances in news flows there, even though the idea of the “New World Information Order” is unrealistic and outdated now.

(119) Milestones in the development of news flows in Singapore

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>The Prince of Wales Gazette newspaper appears on the Malay island Penang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>A postal office is opened in the former Parliament House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>The Singapore Chronicle is launched as the city’s first newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>The first books are printed by missionaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>The Singapore Free Press newspaper is started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>Steam ships are introduced so that ships do not depend on the monsoon season anymore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>The Straits Times newspaper is launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>The Suez Canal is opened so that ships must not travel around the African horn anymore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Telegraphy is introduced and the first submarine cable to Hong Kong is installed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>Editors of the Straits Times make use of the Reuters news services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>Telegraphy is introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>During the Russian-Japanese War, the local demand in international news increases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>The first libel case against a journalist is filed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>The Nanyang Siang Pau newspaper is launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>The Sin Chew Jit Poh newspaper is started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Selatar, the country’s first regular airport is opened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>The “Official Secrets Act” prevents the disclosure of official documents and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>The British Malaya Broadcasting Corporation is established and Radio Singapura is launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>The first overseas phone call is made from Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Japanese troops invade the city and take control over all mass media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>The Straits Times and several other newspapers are revived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>The Straits Times subscribes to the Associated Press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Due to reporting in the press, the “Maria Hertogh Riots” break out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Changi International Airport is opened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>The Straits Times moves its headquarters to Kuala Lumpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>The “Internal Security Act” empowers the authorities to detain people prejudicial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Television is started as a pilot project. Later, the first television channel is launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>The first computer is installed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Singapore separates from the Federation of Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>The new country joins several international organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>The People’s Action Party wins all seats in the parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Two newspapers are closed down and several journalists are detained without trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Singapore makes use of the Maritime Satellite System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Singapore’s first satellite earth station receives signals from Intelsat IV over the Indian Ocean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Transponders are leased in order to connect to the Indonesian Palapa system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>The Straits Times moves back to Singapore and henceforth supports the People’s Action Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>A facer-canceller table is put into operation at the Singapore Post office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Color television is introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>The “Newspaper and Printing Press Act” regulates the media industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>The British Broadcasting Corporation sets up a relay station in order to broadcast BBC World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>The Singapore National Union of Journalists introduces a “Code of Professional Conduct”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Full international direct dialing becomes available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>The 2-digit postal code system is changed to a 4-digit system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Two leading Chinese-language newspapers are merged into one single holding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>The Chinese-language press is merged with the English-language press into one single holding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Four international magazines are restricted in circulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>The first e-mail is received in Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>The first cellular mobile radio system is introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Internet access becomes available to the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>“OB Markers” are introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>The Singapore Broadcasting Authority issues the “Internet Code of Practice”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>The internet top level domain “sg” is introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>The country’s first satellite ST-1 is launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>The Singapore Cable Vision is connection 99 percent of all households with Singapore One</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.3 Which aspects of the “New World Information Order” are still relevant regarding Singapore

Though the “New World Information Order” was never introduced, because it is unrealistic and now outdated, it had some impact. Already the discussions about it led to the establishment of several national news agencies (i.e. United News of Bangladesh, 1988). Even the tiny-city state Singapore benefited from the UNESCO programs and also followed some of the recommendations published in the report Many Voices, One World.

Already in 1968, an assistant UNESCO director-general in charge of communication (his name is unknown) visited Singapore in order to discuss the communication problems in Singapore with the deputy prime minister, the minister of finance and officials from the Economic Development Board.

Shortly after, an UNESCO expert in archives administration, whose family name is said to be Verhoeven, was assigned to the National Library to survey the archives and records in the departments. It is primarily his doing that the National Archives of Singapore were established and that the National Library was able to focus on public services. As a result, both the number of books and the number of library memberships increased.

Meanwhile, the Singapore government applied to the UNESCO “Program of Participation” and was awarded some fellowships. These financial means were used by Ang Kok Peng, a scientist and politician, to teach a course at the National University of Singapore at which 24 people from eight countries participated.

One might even argue that the establishment of the Asian Media Information and Communication Center (AMIC) on the campus of Nanyang Technological University is an outcome of the discussions about the “New World Information Order”. It generated so much

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949 Unknown: Letter from the Assistant Director-General in charge of communication to the Director-General about a technical inspection mission to Singapore, dated 8 April 1968, Paris, not published yet.

More importantly, the postal system - the backbone of communication - was expanded. As a result, the number of mail items increased by more than five times (from 158 million in 1965 to 830 million in 2005).\footnote{Singapore Post: How Your Mail Gets Delivered, http://www.singpost.com/singpost_06about_how.htm, Singapore, 2005, accessed 2006.} Today, there is a post office or at least a mailbox along all main roads.

Also the education system was expanded. As a result, the literacy rate increased from 72 percent in 1965 to more than 90 percent in 2005, and the number of students at higher education institutions from 8 315 in 1965 to more than 100 000 in 2005.\footnote{Government Printing Office: Singapore Year Book 1965, Singapore, 1965 p. 225, 236-238.} Today, there are enough schools and teachers for all students (in the average, one teacher per 25 students).

But only those recommendations were implemented which were considered to be in the specific interest of Singapore (and it’s ruling People’s Action Party). To the present day, there is no national news agency, although it would have been easy to establish one when the two leading Chinese-language newspapers were merged (1982) and the Chinese-language press was merged with the English-language press (1984).

More importantly, citizens in Singapore do still not have the “right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”. Community presses, for instance, are still not allowed without explicit approval from the authorities. Instead, there are narrow definitions of what is news (“Duty of the Press”), what should be published (“Asian Values in Journalism”), what may be debated (“OB Marker”) and an unquestioned reverence for authority (which is often attributed to Confucianism).\footnote{Seán MacBride: Many Voices, one World, Communication and Society, Today and Tomorrow, Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information Order, Paris, 1980, p. 138.}

This is quite remarkable, because Seán MacBride and his co-authors explicitly recommend the abolishment of all kinds of censorship. Therefore, monopolies established by political action should be broken up, bureaucratic and judicial obstructions removed, and parliamentary privileges curtailed.\footnote{Seán MacBride: Many Voices, one World, Communication and Society, Today and Tomorrow, Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information Order, Paris, 1980, p. 139.} Instead, the opposite was done in Singapore: In the same year, the government decided to withdraw from UNESCO, all newspapers were
merged into one single holding company (Singapore Press Holdings) and all radio (except four less relevant) plus all television channels were merged into another (Media Corporation of Singapore). One and a half years later, the “Newspaper and Printing Presses Act” was amended in such a way that even foreign publications can be “gazetted” (and four international publications were indeed restricted in circulation). Also, some other regulations have even been tightened.

A major obstacle is the strict legislation which undermines the freedom of speech (“Societies Act”) in general and the freedom of the press in particular (“Newspaper and Printing Presses Act”, “Internal Security Act”, “Official Secrets Act”). Another obstacle is the financial involvement of the government in the mass media (i.e. through “management shares” held by Temasek). Further obstacles are the atmosphere of fear (“see enemy hiding behind every tree”) and the unwritten rules (“OB Marker”). Among the people, there is even an unquestioned reverence for authority which is closely related to the general feeling that the Singapore society is “fragile like an egg” (“Maria Hertogh Riots”).

Thus, some aspects of the “New World Information Order” are still useful regarding Singapore, particularly those outlined in the report “Many Voices, One World” and dealing with press freedom. Apart from the 82 recommendations, notably parts I, III and V of the report discuss the “right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”. Besides, they provide background information about other topics such as on concentration of ownership, censorship, democratization of communication, the rights and responsibilities of journalists, and even codes of professional conduct.

However, the review of the discussions regarding the “New World Information Order” combined with the example of the development of news flows in Singapore prove Rupert Murdoch’s statement: “Never has the flow of information and ideas, of hard news and reasoned comment, been more important.”

## Annex

### Documentation of the interviews (in chronological order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and Time</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Focus of the interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 22nd, 2004, 3.15-4.00 p.m.</td>
<td>Eric Thompson</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore</td>
<td>Society and culture in Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 22nd, 2004, 4.15-5.00 p.m.</td>
<td>Tan Ern Ser</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore</td>
<td>Understanding Singapore Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 25th, 2004, 10.00-11.25 a.m.</td>
<td>Michael T.H. Lim and Koh June May</td>
<td>Director and Senior Marketing Manager</td>
<td>Media Development Authority</td>
<td>Development of media in Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 25th, 2004, 4.00-5.30 p.m.</td>
<td>Viswa Sadasivan</td>
<td>Chairman, Producer</td>
<td>The Right Angle Group</td>
<td>Independent media in Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 26th, 2004, 5.30-6.30 p.m.</td>
<td>Crispin Maslog</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>School of Communication, Nanyang Technological University</td>
<td>History of mass media in Southeast Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 28th, 2004, 10.00-11.15 a.m.</td>
<td>James Gomez</td>
<td>Book author, politician, activist</td>
<td>Think Centre Asia</td>
<td>Press freedom and freedom of speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 29th, 2004, 10.00-11.00 a.m.</td>
<td>Krishnasamy Bhavani</td>
<td>Director and Press Secretary to Minister</td>
<td>Ministry of Information, Communication and the Arts</td>
<td>Media regulations in Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 29th, 2004, 3.15-4.30 p.m.</td>
<td>Ang Peng Hwa</td>
<td>Associate Professor, AMIC-Chairman</td>
<td>Asian Media Information &amp; Communication Centre</td>
<td>Development of media in Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 29th, 2004, 4.45-6.45 p.m.</td>
<td>Cherian George</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>School of Communication, Nanyang Technological University</td>
<td>Society and culture in an Air-Conditioned Nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 30th, 2004, 3.10-4.30 p.m.</td>
<td>Patrick Daniel</td>
<td>Managing Editor</td>
<td>The Straits Times, Singapore Press Holding</td>
<td>The role of the press in Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 30th, 2004, 4.45-7.30 p.m.</td>
<td>Soh Yew Peng</td>
<td>Lecturer, book author</td>
<td>School of Film &amp; Media Studies, Ngee Ann Polytechnic University</td>
<td>The development of Singapore’s modern media industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1st, 2004, 9.40-11.15 p.m.</td>
<td>PN Balji</td>
<td>Director, former Editor-in-Chief</td>
<td>Bang Public Relations PTE LTD.</td>
<td>The role and influence of print media in Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 3rd, 2004, 10.30-11.45 a.m.</td>
<td>Cheong Yip Seng</td>
<td>Editor-at-large, former Editor-in-Chief</td>
<td>English-Malay Newspaper Division, Singapore Press Holding</td>
<td>History of the Straits Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 21nd, 2005, 16.00-18.00 p.m.</td>
<td>Arun Mahizhnan</td>
<td>Deputy Director</td>
<td>Institute of Policy Studies</td>
<td>Development of the press in Singapore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questionnaire used as a guideline during the interviews

Academic background

As part of his dissertation about the development of transmitting news in Singapore, the author is interviewing selected academics, politicians and professionals. This questionnaire serves as a guideline for the interviews.

Instructions for use

The questions may be answered with “Yes” or “No”. It is also possible to answer “Both” (Yes and No) or “Neither” (neither Yes nor No). In case someone does not know the answer, “Don’t know”, or if someone prefers not to answer a question at all, “No answer” should be ticked. If possible, the reason for each answer should be noted.

Personal data

☐ Academic ☐ Politician ☐ Professional

Full Name:

Position:

Institution/Company:

Date and place of the interview:

Questions

1.) Founded by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819, it seems that in Singapore the colonialists arrived before the menials. Is the former British colony a Western state?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Both ☐ Neither ☐ Don’t know ☐ No answer

2.) After independence, Singapore joined the Federation of Malaysia. Are the people of Singapore part of the Malay nation?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Both ☐ Neither ☐ Don’t know ☐ No answer
3.) The majority of people living in Singapore are ethnically Chinese. Is Singapore a Chinese society?

- Yes
- No
- Both
- Neither
- Don’t know
- No answer

4.) Founded, owned, run and read by British, it seems that the English-language newspaper *Straits Times* served for a long time British interests only. Is that true?

- Yes
- No
- Both
- Neither
- Don’t know
- No answer

5.) In 1959 its editor Leslie Hoffmann and Lee Kuan Yew were fighting over the freedom of press. The secretary-general of the People’s Action Party (PAP) threatened that “any newspaper that tries to sour up or strain relations between the Federation and Singapore after May 30 will go in for subversion.” May this be seen as the first attempt to put the media under political control?

- Yes
- No
- Both
- Neither
- Don’t know
- No answer

6.) Soon after Singapore’s separation from Malaysia in 1965 “The Straits Times Press” was divided into three separate companies. The one that continued to publish “The Straits Times” in Singapore did a complete turnaround and henceforth supported the PAP. Was that surprising?

- Yes
- No
- Both
- Neither
- Don’t know
- No answer
7.) In 1980, Seán MacBride recommended on behalf of UNESCO the establishment of a “more just and more efficient information order”. This report was reviewed by numerous academics located in Singapore. It even seems that the Singaporean government followed several recommendations. Can you confirm that the MacBride-report has had impact on academic research and political decisions in Singapore?

O Yes  O No  O Both  O Neither  O Don’t know  O No answer

8.) One of the recommendations by Seán MacBride that the Singaporean government did not follow was the introduction of press freedom in Western sense. Is this the reason why Singapore withdrew from UNESCO?

O Yes  O No  O Both  O Neither  O Don’t know  O No answer

9.) In 1984 all local newspapers (except the small Tamil Masura) were merged into the Singapore Press Holdings. The principal reason, as announced in the media, was to cut costs. Can you confirm that this merger was not politically motivated to cement the power of the PAP?

O Yes  O No  O Both  O Neither  O Don’t know  O No answer

10.) In the following years foreign magazines came under pressure. The government restricted the sale of the Time magazine, Asian Wall Street Journal, Asiaweek, and Far Eastern Economic Review because they had published “untrue” information and refused to publish letters by the government without editing them. Are such restrictions a proper way to deal with single articles in international magazines?

O Yes  O No  O Both  O Neither  O Don’t know  O No answer
11.) During the 1990s “Asian values” was a major topic. Several academics argued that “Asian values” apply notably to journalists. Do you think “Asian” journalists have more responsibility than “Western” journalists?  
○ Yes ○ No ○ Both ○ Neither ○ Don’t know ○ No answer

12.) While in other countries the media are watchdogs of the government, it seems that in Singapore the government is the watchdog of the media. Is that true?  
○ Yes ○ No ○ Both ○ Neither ○ Don’t know ○ No answer

13.) Both the government and the media continuously repeat that the “Singaporean society is fragile like an egg and therefore the government has to hold it firmly, that it doesn’t drop and break”. Is this perception of the society correct?  
○ Yes ○ No ○ Both ○ Neither ○ Don’t know ○ No answer

14.) In multicultural Singapore, ethnic matters (race) and religion are considered to be “explosive issues”. Thus, any inflammatory discussion of these topics is illegal. Do you believe that street disorders could arise due to reporting in the media?  
○ Yes ○ No ○ Both ○ Neither ○ Don’t know ○ No answer
15.) Supposing a street fight broke out between Chinese and Malay and some people got killed, the editor of the *Straits Times* was asked if he would carry this story on the first page. Cheong Yip answered: “Very simple, I wouldn’t carry it. [...] Publishing the story would mean the whole city gets to know. There’s no guarantee that people wouldn’t misinterpret it.” Do you share his view that concealing such a story is more important than publishing it?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Both
- ○ Neither
- ○ Don’t know
- ○ No answer

16.) Today, Singapore is the leading media hub in Southeast Asia. It has several submarine cables and three satellite earth stations. One might suppose that numerous media companies in other countries could not publish or broadcast without the Singaporean infrastructure. Is that true?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Both
- ○ Neither
- ○ Don’t know
- ○ No answer

17.) Although Singapore has excellent domestic facilities, the access to media is limited. Ordinary inhabitants are not allowed to use satellite dishes and numerous Internet sites are technically blocked. Would you call these rules restrictive?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Both
- ○ Neither
- ○ Don’t know
- ○ No answer

18.) Practically, there is only one employer in the media industry because all newspapers belong to one holding group which is under government control. Thus, the staff must be very careful not to “bite the hand that feeds them”. Is “self-censorship” among journalists common?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Both
- ○ Neither
- ○ Don’t know
- ○ No answer
19.) In comparison with their local colleagues, the hundreds of foreign journalists serving media outside Singapore enjoy much more press freedom. Do you think it is strange that the news flow through and out of Singapore is much less controlled and restricted than the news flow into and within the city?

○ Yes ○ No ○ Both ○ Neither ○ Don’t know ○ No answer

20.) Within the city, several news streams may be observed. Each ethnic group has its own newspaper, radio and television station. Each religion has its own spokesmen and listeners. Younger people prefer other media in contrast to elder people. Can you identify any further streams?

○ Yes ○ No ○ Both ○ Neither ○ Don’t know ○ No answer

21.) In countries where English is the only language that all people understand, English-language newspapers usually have much more impact on the public opinion than other print media. Does this apply to Singapore as well?

○ Yes ○ No ○ Both ○ Neither ○ Don’t know ○ No answer

21.) In the late 1990s, computer specialists and “human right activists” believed that Internet may let more people participate in public discussions. Thus, the whole flow of news would become more just. Do you believe that this will come true anytime?

○ Yes ○ No ○ Both ○ Neither ○ Don’t know ○ No answer
22.) More than two decades ago, Seán MacBride had demanded a “more just and more efficient information order”. Regarding Singapore, do you think the flow of news has become more just and more efficient in the meantime?

☐ Yes    ☐ No    ☐ Both    ☐ Neither    ☐ Don’t know    ☐ No answer

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Further remarks

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Transcript of a conversation with John A. Lent

About John A. Lent

John Anthony Lent was born on 8 September 1936 in East Millsboro, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. He studied at Ohio University from which he received a Bachelor and a Masters of Science in Journalism. He received a Ph.D. in mass communication from the University of Iowa. He taught at the University of Western Ontario, where he held the first Rogers Chair in mass communication, at Universiti Sains Malaysia, where he developed the first communication studies program in Malaysia, at the University of Wyoming, Marshall University, Wisconsin State University, West Virginia Institute of Technology, De La Salle College (Philippines), where he held a Fulbright Scholarship, and at the University of Toronto Archaeological Field School.

Since 1974, John A. Lent is affiliated to Temple University in Philadelphia and, since 1976, is Professor of Communication there. In addition, he has held numerous positions, editorships and memberships and was awarded a number of prizes, scholarships and other honors.

In the last 42 years, John A. Lent has done research in more than fifty countries, published more than 70 books and hundreds of articles, most of them about mass communication in Asia.\(^{959}\) He pioneered in fields such as Asian mass communication, Caribbean mass communication, popular culture and comic art. His extensive bibliography about “The New World and International Information Order”, published 1982 in Singapore, is one of the main resources of this dissertation.\(^{960}\)

About the conversation

The conversation was audio taped on Monday, 18 July 2005, 4.00 -4.30 p.m, at the “14th Annual Conference” of the Asian Media Information and Communication Center which was held from 18-21 July 2005 in Beijing, China. The comments in the footnotes were later added by the author of this dissertation and do not necessarily reflect the perspective or opinion of the respondent.


The conversation

No one covered the debate about the New World Information Order in the 1970s as precise and detailed as you did. When you look back, what do you think about it?

John A. Lent: First of all, the discussion started before the Seventies. There were some people who were talking about some of these issues, Herb Schiller for instance.\(^{961}\) I got involved in it in 1974. The IAMCR met in Leipzig, Germany, and I was asked to present a paper.\(^{962}\) I presented a paper on what I call the “Four Conundrums.”\(^{963}\) They liked it quite a bit and apparently shared it with Masmoudi who was working with the Non-Aligned-Countries Movement.\(^{964}\) I didn’t know until many years later that some of the points in my paper were used setting up the “New World Information Order”, as well as some of the points made by other people.\(^{965}\) The way I understood it, it mainly came out of the Non-Aligned-Countries Movement. Of course, UNESCO was also working in that area.

As for what I thought/think about it: It was a very vibrant time. There was so much concern about some of the issues: the quality of news, the news flow, media/cultural imperialism, development communication, etc. If there is anytime that these crucial issues were taken seriously, then it was that time because the NWICO became such an issue. You know, it was even picked up by the mainstream media in the United States; they were reacting against it. I thought it was a very important time. But suddenly all of it was dropped. At the end of the Seventies, there was this rush to new technology. It seems that some of the issues that were

\(^{961}\) Herbert Schiller: Mass Media and American Empire, New York, 1969.
\(^{962}\) The International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) is a professional organization in the field of media and communication research. It was established in 1957. IAMCR: Welcome to IAMCR, http://www.iamcr.net/thtm/whateng.htm, place and date of publication unknown, accessed 2005.
\(^{963}\) The paper was presented on 19 September 1974 in Leipzig, German Democratic Republic, in the “Working Group on Mass Media and Developing Nations” at the “International Scientific Conference” which was headlined with “The Contribution of the Mass Media to the Development of Consciousness in a Changing World” and sponsored by International Association for Mass Communication Research. The paper was published several times, for example in Oldrich Bures (Ed.): Developing World and Mass Media, Prague, 1975, p. 36-55.
\(^{964}\) The Tunisian politician Mustapha Masmoudi had quit his post as Minister of Foreign Affairs six months before the conference. Soon after, he became the most popular representative of the Non-Aligned-Countries Movement, an international organization of over 100 states which considered themselves not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc.
so important throughout the Seventies that had been germinating for years were put on a back burner. So many of the things that people were thinking about, and trying to do something about, no longer were that important. And, of course, some of that happened when the United States pulled out of UNESCO. If I am not mistaken, the US contributed something like a third of the budget. So the number of conferences dwindled compared to the Seventies when there were so many conferences everywhere. They put it all on the back burner.

I remember that you wrote at this time that too many people spend too much time on too many conferences...

John A. Lent: Yeah, right, right… (He is laughing).

... One might even argue that all these discussions have more damaged than helped because in the end, UNESCO was isolated, etcetera.

John A. Lent: Perhaps there was too much discussion, with harmful effects. There was a lot of misunderstanding. A lot of it was caused by the watchdogs of freedom of expression. Individual’s issues were not UNESCO’s issues and were not Non-Aligned-Country’s issues. But at these conferences were also government officials and they voiced their opinions. And it seems that that was what was picked up by the U.S. mainstream media. It was generating a backlash on some of the issues.

When I was listening to the discussions this morning, I had the impression that some of the terms used are basically the same that were used in the Seventies and Eighties. Is the debate still going on or is it another, absolutely new discussion?

John A. Lent: To a certain degree, I think, the debate is still going on. It was not forwarded from the Seventies. A lot has been replaced or covered over. Today, there is much more enthusiasm for new technologies,

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966 The United States of America had carried at least 25 percent of the UNESCO budget and withdrew in 1984.
967 Alone in the year 1977, at least twenty conferences had been held in different countries.
970 In the morning of the first day of the “14th AMIC Annual Conference, John A. Lent, along with with Abdul Waheed Khan, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, and other distinguished experts held a forum on “Opportunities and Challenges for the Millennium”.
digitalization, globalization, etcetera. Some of the terms of the Seventies have been going out and others introduced. Besides, there have been people who made some serious criticism about cultural imperialism and some of the other issues of the 1970s’ debate. It is true that there were shortcomings of some of that theory. But to pull it all out of public discourse on the basis of some of this criticism and to say that it is no longer a relevant issue, to me is ridiculous. There are people who argue that culture/media imperialism is no longer relevant because you have the active audience and all this sort of thing. But it is very relevant. Look around, you are in Beijing. You see media imperialism and you see it very strongly.\textsuperscript{971}

That is why I am writing my dissertation about it.

John A. Lent: I think it has a lot of relevance, perhaps more relevance today than back then because of the rapid spread of information and entertainment and also because the divide between have and have not has even gotten wider with the new information technology coming in. People continue to talk about the “Global Village”, but we are already beyond this issue.\textsuperscript{972} The “Global Village” is only for a small part of the world population. Fifty to sixty percent of the Earth’s population have never touched a telephone, not to speak about computers. There are still the Have and the Have-Not. Now they call it “Digital Divide” and things like that.\textsuperscript{973} But those are the same issues to me, with new terms. There was a twist in policy. People feel that there shouldn’t be a negative reaction to these issues. They try to see it positive.

For several decades, you have observed the development of media in Asia. Has anything changed?

John A. Lent: Tremendous changes, sure. When I started out in 1964, television was still new in many parts of Asia.\textsuperscript{974} You did not have the multitude of

\textsuperscript{971} In China, the mass media is still strictly under control of the communist party, although the government is lifting the regulations now.

\textsuperscript{972} The term “Global Village” was coined by Marshall McLuhan.

\textsuperscript{973} “Digital Divide” is mostly used to describe the socio-economic gap between people or communities who have access to new media and those who do not. It does usually not refer to the contents or its sources.

\textsuperscript{974} In the mid-1960s, only about twenty countries in the world had a regular television service.
channels that you have today. In summer 1965, I spent some time at the Asahi Shimbun newspaper in Tokyo and I was so impressed by the fact that they had gotten involved in so much technology that was not used in the West. It was there in the West, but it wasn’t being used. Asahi Shimbun was transmitted by facsimile from one city to another. The newsroom was computerized. But that paper was an isolated case. In Pakistan, newspapers were still using hand-set types. The whole technology has changed.

Of course, the re-imitation of the West is there too, at this time. There was always a high percentage of Western content in television in Asia. The difference today is that you do have many more local programs. But I still believe that the West has high influence. You have to look at the sources of those programs. They may be local in the sense that they use local talents, but the concepts are still Western. Look at “Who wants to be a millionaire”. It is broadcast in forty different versions in forty different countries.

So there is still a lot of imitation which to me is a type of cultural/media imperialism. There are many changes. The cities are much bigger than they were forty years ago. As a result, the newspapers are much bigger in terms of circulation. But the major media are still produced in the big cities, as they always have been and deal with urban issues.

Has the understanding and the role of media changed in Asia?

John A. Lent: You mean, in terms of freedom of expression? I think so. There has been an increase of freedom in many countries because the governments have changed. There was no elected government in Taiwan in 1964. In 1965, I was living in the Philippines where they elected Ferdinand Marcos...
for the first of two elected terms and then his long dictatorship began. South Korea was under dictatorship, Pakistan under martial law. Remember, China was under Mao at that time. All that has changed.

Now the governments are different in many of these countries. There are more elected governments and there is more people’s participation. That is reflected in the media, and in the concepts of the media. I did a little study in the early Seventies in a number of countries in Asia. I wanted to know which newspapers use editorial cartoons. At this time, there were no parodies of the heads of state, no caricature picture of leaders. There were no caricatures out of respect for the elders or out of respect for the leaders. There is still a sense of that today. We still see hardly any caricatures in Asia. In Taiwan, you did not see any caricatures of government officials until 1987.

But it has been generally recognized that the media play an important role in society. In the 1960s, there was no AMIC. There were no large media organizations. That comes mainly in the Seventies and after. And that has changed the whole world. Yes, there is much more freedom now.

More than two decades ago, Seán MacBride demanded a more just and more efficient information order. Regarding Singapore, do you think that this vision has come true?

John A. Lent: In a very limited way, yes. During the time of Lee Kuan Yew, there certainly wasn’t much press freedom. There was no open dialogue. In my case, I ran into trouble with the Singapore government for running an

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981 Ferdinand Marcos (1917-1989) was the tenth President of the Philippines. After a series of bombings in Manila, he declared martial law in 1972 and assumed full dictatorial control a few months later. He was removed from office by a peaceful revolution on the main highway in Metro Manila in 1986.
982 In 1961, a military coup led by general Park Chung Hee turned South Korea into a dictatorship that lasted 18 years. At that time, Pakistan was also run by a military government.
983 Mao Zedong (1893-1976) was the chairman of the Politburo and of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. In 1958, he launched the “Great Leap Forward” campaign which caused a major economic disaster and famine during which 30 million people died. In the mid-1960s, he had the idea of a “Cultural Revolution” during which at least one million people were murdered and many more were imprisoned.
985 In 1987, martial law was lifted in Taiwan. As a result, several opposition parties were formed. One, the Democratic Progressive Party with its candidate Chen Shui-bian, succeeded in 2000.
986 The Asian Media Information and Communication Center (AMIC) was established in 1971 with the support of the government of Singapore and the German Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation.
987 Lee Kuan Yew was the first Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore from 1959 to 1990. Now, his son, Lee Hsien Loong, is running the government.
article about the lack of freedom of the press there. Together with two others, I was locked in as being Marxist or Communist. It became a pretty important issue which led to Singapore being expelled or asked to leave the Socialist International, partly over these articles of the three of us.\footnote{Singapore quit from the Socialist International in 1976 as the result of some of the other parties’ efforts to get it expelled from the organization was gathering steam. Phua Kai Lit: Thorstein Veblen’s Singapore?, http://phuakl.tripod.com/ETHOUGHT/Veblen.html, place and date of publication unknown, probably Singapore, 2000, accessed 2005. Further information about the incident can be found in Devan Nair: Socialism that Works, The Singapore Way, Singapore, 1976, p. 131 et seq.}

So you couldn’t criticize the lack of press freedom without suffering consequences. I think that would be gone now, to a limited degree. But the media are still owned and controlled by the state. And, I believe, the senior minister has still some impact. I don’t think he has completely left the scene. But it is different now. It has improved, slightly.

One of the questions raised in my dissertation is why Singapore withdrew from UNESCO in the heat of the NWICO debate. Some argue that Singapore just followed the example of the United States, but others assume that it was because of economic reasons.\footnote{Compare with the article in this dissertation about Singapore’s withdrawal from UNESCO.} What do you think?

John A. Lent: \textit{I always heard that Singapore was following the US example, but I always find it difficult to understand because Lee Kuan Yew was very critical of the West and the Western media. The Singapore government regularly filed libel charges against Western media and even cut their circulations.} I wondered whether there was some sort of economic pressure from the United States. But if so, why Singapore and why not other countries? The idea of the money, however, does not make any sense to me, because 18 to 19000 US Dollars is nothing, very little money.\footnote{Over the years, the Singaporean government reduced the circulation of following international print media: \textit{Time} magazine, \textit{Newsweek}, \textit{Asiaweek}, \textit{Far Eastern Economic Review}, \textit{Asian Wall Street Journal}, \textit{The Economist}.} It was a very strange thing. I have no idea what was happening.

\textit{Do you expect that Singapore is going to open up?}

John A. Lent: \textit{I don’t think they are going to open up. They will open up as much as necessary to continue to push forward the concept of being a communication hub. It has been pushed now for 15 years, maybe longer.}
The same is happening in other countries looking for economic advance. In many aspects, Singapore serves as a model: How much freedom and how many civil rights are good and how those can be controlled...

Apart from that, I would like to know why you became so interested in comic art.

John A. Lent: In the mid 1960s, when I was in the Philippines, I was more interested and concerned to pull together some of the first materials on newspapers and broadcasting. I thought that this would be something for the future. I have had a lot of pleasant and very productive interviews with all types of media people, nearly in every country in Asia, and I am honored and gratified with how much time a lot of these people spent with me. But with the cartoonists it was different because no one had looked at them before. And so, when someone from academia was coming in, he was welcomed with open arms, and I was. Over the years, increasingly, I became aware of the important role comic art plays in society. Also, I found it to be a field not studied, and I have usually sought out areas new to academia.

Professor Lent, thank you very much for this conversation.
Transcript of a conversation with Francis T. Seow

About Francis Seow

Francis T. Seow was born on October 11, 1928 in Singapore. He is a barrister-at-law having been called to bar by the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple Inn. Until 1971, he held several key posts in the Singapore legal service, including that of solicitor general. Later, he became president of the Singapore Law Society.

In 1988, Francis Seow was one of the three candidates of the opposition Workers’ Party running in the general election. Although the People's Action Party has dominated Singapore politics since 1959, his prospects were promising given his high name recognition and his reputation as an advocate. But, shortly before Polling Day, he was arrested under the Internal Security Act. The authorities alleged that he had illegally received funds from the United States of America, in particular the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), to enter into elective opposition politics. However, he was detained without trial for 72 days and, according to him, treated badly. Amnesty International named him a "Prisoner of Conscience".

While still under detention, the authorities were preparing a trial for alleged tax fraud and and tax evasion against him. Meanwhile, Francis Seow was invited by New York-based Human Rights Watch to visit the United States of America to celebrate its 10th anniversary where since then he has remained in self-imposed exile, after learning that the government was changing the laws expressly to his detriment.

In 1989-90, he became the Orville Schell fellow at Yale Law School, and later a fellow at the Human Rights Program and the East Asian Legal Studies Program, both at Harvard Law School, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. While based there, he wrote several books, including To Catch a Tartar, A Dissident in Lee Kuan Yew’s Prison, in which he describes the circumstances of his arrest on the authoritarian rule of then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. In another book, The Media Enthralled, Singapore Revisited, he describes the stifling pressure on the press in Singapore. It is one of the main sources of this dissertation.992

About the conversation

The conversation was done by email. The questions were sent to Francis Seow on 13 March 2006 at 6.44 a.m (GMT+1). He replied on the same day at 9.52 p.m (GMT+1). Due to the medium, it cannot be guaranteed that it was really Francis Seow who replied but his answers give little reason for doubt. However, the comments in the footnotes were later added by the author of this dissertation and do not necessarily reflect the perspective or opinion of the respondent.

The conversation

Mr. Seow, you were arrested in 1988 under the Internal Security Act. What do you think was the main reason for it?

Francis Seow: I presented a real and credible opposition threat to Lee Kuan Yew and his government.

You were detained for 72 days. How were you treated in prison?

Francis Seow: Badly.

After your release, you fled from Singapore. Why?

Francis Seow: I was being closely monitored by the State’s security apparatchiks. Furthermore, bogus tax charges, which later grew into a few hundred charges, were leveled at me and, given my knowledge of the way the judiciary operated, I knew I would end up in prison, where Amnesty International, the Human Rights Watch, NY, amongst others, would not be able to intervene on my behalf as they had done earlier under the internal security laws. Overriding all this, the laws were changed that would effectively denied me rights of appeal to the Privy Council in London.

In absentia, you were convicted for tax evasion. Were you guilty?

Francis Seow: Absolutely not.
Meanwhile, the Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER) published the article “New Light on
Detentions”\textsuperscript{993}. Do you think it was alright to publish the article, although it was based on
one source only?

Francis Seow: Why not, if the source is credible, as, indeed, it was.

Generally speaking, may a paper legitimately publish anything it wishes, whether true or
false, so long as it is able to quote a source that actually made the statement?\textsuperscript{994}

Francis Seow: No. There is a duty on the newspaper to ensure that the source is
credible and reliable before it publishes the news.

The press secretary to the prime minister’s office sent several ”correction letters” to FEER
and other foreign publications which had run stories on different subjects.\textsuperscript{995} The editors of
FEER published the letters but the editors of Asian Wall Street Journal (AWSJ) didn’t.
Who behaved correctly?

Francis Seow: Editors enjoy the right as a general rule to publish or not letters sent to
them. FEER, however, published those so-called ”correction letters” as a
concession to the Singapore government which, unfortunately, nit-picked
its articles, essays etcetera.

Generally speaking, should governments have a ”Right of Reply”, if a paper publishes
false information about it?\textsuperscript{996}

Francis Seow: This concept of a ”Right of Reply” is essentially Lee Kuan Yew. It has
some merit but not in the way Lee abused this so-called right.

In 1986 and 1987, FEER, AWSJ and two other foreign magazines were declared to be

\textsuperscript{993} In December 1987, the magazine reported on a meeting between the prime minister and the archbishop of
Singapore in connection with the arrests of 22 Leftists (one of them asked Francis Seow for legal assistance but
he was unable to help due to his own arrest). The government was unhappy with this article, because it was
completely based on statements by Father Edgar D’Souza, who was not present at the meeting. Far Eastern
Economic Review: New Light on Detentions, Catholic Priest Answers Jayakumar’s Allegations, Hong Kong,
volume 138, number 51, 17 December 1987, p. 28.

\textsuperscript{994} The first letter by James Fu to the editor of the magazine was dated on 12 December 1987 and appeared in
the following issue. Far Eastern Economic Review: Credible Witness?, Hong Kong, volume 138, number 52, 24
December 1987, p. 3.


\textsuperscript{996} Lee Hsien Loong: When the Press Misinforms, Speech Delivered on 26 May 1987 at the 40th World
Congress of Newspaper Publishers in Helsinki, p. 92, published in Ministry of Information: Singapore and the
publications engaged in Singapore’s “domestic affairs” and its circulations were restricted to a few hundred copies. Do you think these actions were adequate?

Francis Seow: I do not understand this question. If you mean whether their circulation restrictions were justified, the answer is no. And were they “engaged in Singapore’s domestic affairs”, the answer is also no. Lee wanted foreign newspapers to publish sycophantic news and reports to buoy up his government and its actions.

Generally speaking, should governments be empowered to restrict the circulation of a foreign publication?

Francis Seow: No, unless they are autocratic or dictatorial. Singapore, while not exactly communist, was certainly dictatorial in its actions.

Should there be a right to distribute foreign publications or should it be a privilege extended by the respective government?

Francis Seow: It all depends on the kind of government and its policy.

Some experts I interviewed argue that Lee Kuan Yew showed the world in 1987 how the media can be controlled, namely by restricting circulation. Do you agree with this perception?

Francis Seow: Yes.

They also argue that these cases tell more about the Western media than the Singapore government because in the end, all media tried to get their circulations restored, instead of boycotting Singapore. Do you agree with this perception?

Francis Seow: A cynical but, regrettably, true perception of the foreign media.

Would you like to return to Singapore anytime?

997 The circulation of the Far Eastern Economic Review was restricted from 9 000 to 500 copies per issue, Asiaweek from 10 000 to 500, the Asian Wall Street Journal from 5 000 to 400 and the Time magazine from 18 000 to 2 000.


999 For a list of the experts interviewed, see the documentation in the annex of this dissertation.
Francis Seow:  Of course. Singapore is the country of my birth. My family has been in Singapore for many generations, very much longer than Lee Kuan Yew's family. But I cannot return because of the way Lee Kuan Yew has manipulated and mangled the laws of Singapore against me.

Imagine you meet Lee Kuan Yew again, what would you say to him?

Francis Seow:  Hello. I am still around, notwithstanding all your efforts to suppress me.

Mr. Seow, thank you very much for this conversation.

\footnote{It is not clear whether Francis Seow is still a Singapore citizen. In an interview with the \textit{Straits Times} newspaper, he was asked about his feelings on losing citizenship. He answered: "Now, this is another inane question. I do not know that I had 'lost' my citizenship. This question is best addressed to the Singapore government. I have not been informed that I have 'lost' my natural born right of citizenship." \textit{Straits Times}: Unknown, 19 October 2003, published in Singapore Window: Transcript of Francis Seow's ST Interview, \url{http://www.singapore-window.org/sw03/031019fs.htm}, Singapore, date of publication unknown, accessed 2006.}
News flow in Southeast Asia

From the early 1980s to present: The development of transmitting news in the ASEAN-region towards a ‘more just and more efficient information order’ (Ph.D. Proposal)

In recent years politicians as well as academics have discussed a process called ‘globalisation’. Within this debate ‘Digital Divide’ has become a major topic. While some argue that the gap between those with access to media and the poor is growing, others are sure that never before in the history so many people had access to media and that this trend would continue. However, the topic is far more complicated, because access to media does not guarantee manifold information - and this is exactly the problem.

Still, up to 90 percent of the international news flow is handled by the so-called “Big Five” transnational news agencies, of which four are either American or British and one is in Russian hands. So not one of the important transnational news agencies was founded in or belongs to a developing country. This means, almost every single piece of news that crosses a national border is transmitted through the newsrooms in Western media capitals like New York or London – and there it can easily be controlled and modified.

Imbalances in the international flow of news

Already in the 1950s and 60s scientists discovered an imbalance in the international flow of news.

Between North and South the imbalance is characterized by the transfer of information and values from industrialized to developing countries through transnational agencies as well as the tremendous distinctions in the availability of media and access to news.

In industrialized countries only few information about less developed countries is available and in those few available news developing countries are often described as less successful, underdeveloped and poor, while industrialized countries are generally credited with such praising adjectives as successful, developed and cultivated.

But even between South and South itself the transfer of news is dominated by transnational agencies, although the report originates from the same or a neighbouring country.

Focus: The development of transmitting news in the ASEAN-region towards a more just and more efficient information order since the early 1980s

Purpose: To prove that the resolutions of the United Nations have not been transposed into the national policies as Seán MacBride originally recommended

Intention: To show that the transfer of information has only become more efficient, but not more balanced

Question: Is it still worth continuing the efforts towards a more just and more efficient information order?

Thesis: The construct of the “New World Information Order” is illusive and completely outdated, but still useful to devise a new vision for the further development of the media systems and cultures

Substantial changes in the Asian media systems

Therefore, the United Nations assigned in 1979 Seán MacBride to chair the ‘International Commission for the Study of the Communication Problems’. In his ensuing report he recommended to developing countries to restructure their media systems and to industrialized countries to support this ‘revolution’. Thus, a so-called “New World Information Order was supposed to be established.

Basically, all member countries agreed to transpose his recommendations into their national policies. But the perceptions of the report differ: While some understand it as a manifest against the overwhelming media power of former colonialists, others use it to remind on the violations of ‘human rights’ in the ‘Third World’.

However, in Southeast Asia the vision of a more just and more efficient information order has had several effects:

• Creation of several academic institutions, notably in Singapore
• Foundation of national news agencies in almost every country
• Establishment of the ‘Asia Pacific News Network’ (ANN)
• Foundation of several hundred newspapers and radio stations
• etc.

But a system that would deserve to be called a “New World Information Order” is still not achieved. In fact, some facts indicate that the news flow in Southeast Asia is not becoming more just, but more dependent from the Western hemisphere.

Latest news:

May 2003: The ‘Asia-Pacific News Network’ (ANN) has never launched own satellites, as some authors predicted in the 1990s. Instead, ANN rent a satellite from competitor Associated Press. This explained a representative of the ‘Asia-Pacific News Agencies’ (OANA) in a conversation with the author of this text.

June 2003: Practically, ANN does it not exist anymore, because OANA members exchange their news now via Internet. For all others the wire is available on Factiva.com - this company belongs to competitor Reuters.

July 2003: The OECD warns media groups not to control the Russian media scene and not to interfere in domestic issues, because new democracies are very fragile.

August 2003: Reuters plans to move 1 300 jobs to Bangalore and Hyderabad, India. This is one tenth of the whole workforce of Reuters. The reason: In India labour is much cheaper than in Western countries.

Should Singapore rejoin UNESCO?

Why Singapore withdrew from UNESCO and has still not rejoined

Abstract

The Republic of Singapore withdrew from UNESCO soon after the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain in late 1985. During that time, the idea of the “New World Information Order” was a major topic in UNESCO. In this article the author analysis Singapore’s stake in this discussion, the reasons for the withdrawal and asks, why Singapore has still not rejoined UNESCO, although the international flow of news is no longer an issue and the USA as well as the UK already came back.

Since the foundation of the “United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation” (UNESCO) in 1945, ten countries cancelled their memberships. The most dramatic withdrawal was the one by the United States of America (USA) in 1984. At that time, the USA as one of two superpowers played a major role in international relations and carried 25 percent of all expenses of the organisation. Soon after its withdrawal the United Kingdom of Great Britain (UK) and the Republic of Singapore followed. As a result, UNESCO plunged into its worst crisis ever, which led to fundamental changes on all levels - including the adoption of a completely “new strategy” in the late 1980s. Britain rejoined in 1997. About a year ago, in October 2003, even the USA returned. In fact, all countries that withdrew from UNESCO at some point rejoined sooner or later – with one exception: Singapore.

The reason for Singapore’s withdrawal is not clear because the official letter of resignation is not available in the archives of the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. It is even doubtful, who formulated the withdrawal. It can only be testified that the Director General replied and probably asked for further explanations – but Singapore never officially answered. Strange, because in the beginning the relation between Singapore and UNESCO looked quite promising and both sides benefited from it. When Singapore split from Malaysia and became independent in 1965, the tiny city state on the southern tip of the peninsula needed international approval. Thus, Singapore joined the United Nations as well as its sub-

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1006 The withdrawal of Britain and Singapore became effective on 31 December 1985.
1007 Concerning UNESCO’s engagement in the discussion about the international flow of news.
1008 As soon as Amadou-Mahtar M’Bow (Senegal) was replaced by Federico Mayor (Spain) in 1987.
1010 The author of this article researched in the archives at the UNESCO headquarters in February and September 2004.
1011 On 14 January 1988 the Director-General wrote a letter to the authorities of the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the Republic of Singapore to bring resolution 24 C/28 to their attention.
1012 The authorities of the UK and the USA replied on 28 January and 18 February 1988. Therein, they briefly reiterated the reasons for the withdrawal from the organisation and stated that they would be following the reform process at UNESCO closely and with an open mind. Only “the authorities of Singapore did not reply the Director’s General letter”. UNESCO: Executive Board; Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its 134th session, Paris, 1990, p. 7.
organisation and established national commissions for both four years later. One of the presidents, who headed the UNESCO “Singapore National Commission”, was Deputy Prime Minister Goh Keng Swee.

Several documents, ranging from letters to hotel bills, verify that Singapore originally intended to cooperate with the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Singapore even applied to the “Programme of Participation” and was awarded a few fellowships. As one of the results, the scientist and politician Ang Kok Peng was able to hold a course at the National University of Singapore that 24 participants from eight countries attended. After an official visit to Singapore, an Assistant Director-General in charge of communication even reported in a letter to the Director-General on 8 April 1968 that Singapore’s “desire to cooperate with UNESCO is strong, and the mission was given a warm welcome, particularly among those concerned with science and in the Economic Development Board. The Deputy Prime Minister gave me a long audience, while the Minister of Finance presided over a lunch ‘in our honour’ (it was also a working lunch).”

One UNESCO official who knows Singapore well but seems to have some provisos against the Singaporean government believes that Singapore by nature is not compatible to UNESCO. In his opinion, the laws of one of the most restrictive countries in the world, where even the import and consumption of chewing gum be punished with high penalties, are just too different from the liberal statutes of the international community. But another official, who represented a large country at the time of Singapore’s withdrawal, believes that Singapore simply followed the USA and the UK, either without any reflection or due to political pressure by one of these two countries.

Anyway, these two officials have something in common: Both would not speak about the withdrawal of Singapore on a public occasion without explicit permission of the Director-General and also wish that their names are not mentioned in this article. From a historical point of view, it even seems that UNESCO generally avoids speaking about the withdrawal of smaller member states. Back in the 1980s the staff was just too afraid that further countries might follow the example of the USA and this certainly still has some impact. It might also explain why today information about the withdrawal of Singapore is so scarce.

However, although their assessments differ, the two officials agree in one aspect: None of them believes that Singapore withdrew from UNESCO due to economical reasons alone, as

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1014 As an internal record card of UNESCO testifies that was created in March 1968 to serve as a name list and was several times updated until March 1983.
1015 All these documents are available for academic researchers in the archives of the UNESCO headquarter in Paris.
1016 Catherine Kerlouegan: N.N., dated 8 June 1971, Paris, not published yet.
1017 Ang Kok Peng, who died on 9 October 1997, was a long-serving member of the National University of Singapore, served as Singapore’s first ambassador to Japan and for two terms as Minister of State. He held uncontested for 12 years the so-called “Buona Vista Seat” in the parliament.
1018 N.N.: Letter from the Assistant Director-General in charge of communication to the Director-General about a technical inspection mission to Singapore, dated 8 April 1968, Paris, not published yet.
1019 Another example for the restrictive laws in Singapore is the death penalty for trafficking of drugs.
1021 Although he is unable to prove this thesis “without access to the information of intelligence services”.
1022 Some people suggested that Japan, for instance, should withdraw from UNESCO, too.
some tried to make the public believe.\textsuperscript{1023} Singapore never had to carry more than 0.1 percent of the overall expenses (approximately 19 000 to 38 000 US-Dollar per annum) and back then the Singaporean economy (as well as the national budget) was growing rapidly (in some years the economy grew even more than seven percent annually). Instead, they both believe that Singapore’s withdrawal must have had been related to the withdrawal of the USA, although a direct connection cannot be proven (yet).

According to several sources and numerous interpretations, the reason, why the USA withdrew from UNESCO is threefold: Notably during the presidency of Amadou-Mahtar M’Bow UNESCO was more and more controlled by so-called “Third World”-countries. The more “Third World”-countries joined the organisation, the more delegates from “Third World” countries participated at the general conferences and dominated the discussions.\textsuperscript{1024} While the USA paid the largest amount of all, countries like Brazil and Mexico used the opportunity to promote their own ideas and interests. Furthermore, the mismanagement of the organisation damaged the image of UNESCO. It was said (and later to a certain extent proven) that some officials were not appointed on the basis of skills and knowledge alone, but due to personal relationships and political interests.\textsuperscript{1025}

This growing conflict accumulated in the very heated discussion about a “New World Information Order”. Seán MacBride, one of the co-founders of Amnesty International and honoured with the Nobel Prize a few years later, had recommended on behalf of UNESCO to establish a completely new “more just and more efficient information order”.\textsuperscript{1026} Thus, industrialized countries should share their overwhelming power in the international flow of news and developing countries should enhance their own media structures to become strong competitors. In the very beginning, all countries concerned agreed (more or less) to transpose these recommendations into their national policies. But the more details had to be discussed, the more the perceptions of the famous MacBride-report differed. At the end of everyone’s tether, developing countries understood the report as a manifest against the overwhelming media power of former colonialists, while the USA used it as an opportunity to remind on the violations of “human rights” in the “Third World”.\textsuperscript{1027} After a while, these fundamental differences were insurmountable - and resulted in the withdrawal of the USA, followed by the UK and Singapore.\textsuperscript{1028}

It is arguable whether Singapore was still a “Third”, a “Second” or already a “First World” country by that time, but there can be no doubt that Singapore was still in a developing stage. Thus, one might guess that Singapore supported the position of other developing countries, like its immediate neighbour Indonesia for instance.\textsuperscript{1029} But this was not the case,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1023} At the 122\textsuperscript{nd} session of the Executive Board, held in autumn 1985, the participants “pointed out that a distinction should be made between the reason for the notice of withdrawal issued by the United Kingdom and Singapore. The latter was a Third World country and its intended withdrawal was based exclusively on economic considerations; it had in no way challenged UNESCO’s programme or policies”. UNESCO: Executive Board; 124th; 1986; Summary records, Paris, 1986, p. 38, 237. Compare with a speech, in which Australia’s Prime Minister addressed UNESCO. Gough Whitlam (Ed.): Speeches & Statements, Australia and New Zealand in the UNESCO, UNESCO 50\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary Celebrations, Parliament Buildings, http://whitlam.alp.org.au/UNESCO.html Wellington, 1996, accessed 2004.
\item \textsuperscript{1024} Further information can be found in almost any publication about the “New World Information Order”. A useful bibliography is John Lent: The New World and International Information Order, Singapore, 1982.
\item \textsuperscript{1027} Rolf Scheller: News Flow in Asia, A Study of 10 Countries, Singapore, 1983, p. 16 et seq.
\item \textsuperscript{1028} Britain and Singapore confirmed their withdrawal immediately after the twenty-third session of the conference and the board held a special session in February 1985 in order to study ways of dealing with that situation. UNESCO: Report of the Director-General on the activities of the Organization in 1984-1985 communicated to Member States and the Executive Board in accordance with Article VI.3.b of the Constitution, General Conference, 24\textsuperscript{th}, 1987, Paris, 1987, p. XXXIV.
\item \textsuperscript{1029} The “Kuala Lumpur Declaration” (adopted by the Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies in Asia and Oceania), for instance, was formulated just a few miles away from Singapore.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
because the main interest of Singapore was (and certainly still is) economical development – from “Third World to First”. In opposition to Indonesia for instance, which demanded the establishment of the “New World Information Order” as early as in the 1970s, Singapore never accused its former colonialists or asked for large scale reparation. Instead, Singaporean officials presented themselves as being highly educated and well equipped, which impressed numerous investors. Subsequently, Singapore kept calm; not a single document proving that Singapore officially participated in the controversial discussion between industrialized and developing countries has been found (so far). It is also hard to believe that Singapore was annoyed by the mismanagement of the organisation, because its stake in UNESCO was so small that Singapore was never really affected.

Does this consequently mean that Singapore withdrew from UNESCO due to the discussion about the “New World Information Order”? Not necessarily. It is difficult to prove this thesis on the basis of official documents. But it is worth analysing the concrete steps that were taken within this context: As early as in 1971, the Singaporean government established (with support of the German Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation) the “Asian Media Information & Communication Centre” (AMIC), a premier centre for information, research and promotion of mass communication that contains one of Asia’s largest collections of materials on communication (with more than 65,000 records today). During that period the discussion about the “New World Information Order” was already very heated, especially among academics. As a consequence, dozens of articles about the gaps in the international flow of news were published in the centre’s main publication, the quarterly magazine “Media Asia”.

The Ministry of Education “followed up the recommendations of the UNESCO consultant on the establishment of a National Archives and Records Centre.” The Chief of the Press and Publicity section of the ministry even enquired into the possibility of UNESCO’s help in organising diploma or degree courses in cooperation with the university.

From a historical perspective, it seems that most recommendations by Seán MacBride on behalf of UNESCO were sooner or later implemented in Singapore – with one exception: The Singaporean government did not allow press freedom in “Western sense”. Instead, a discussion about “Asian values in journalism” and a process of centralisation began: All newspapers were merged into the “Singapore Press Holding”, in which the government has a high stake. In addition, the government passed a series of laws that directly bind the press, put newspapers under (in)direct control of a ministry, permit the government only to establish and operate broadcasting stations and enabled the government to ban or restrict any “subversive” publication or movie. As a result, press freedom in Singapore is very limited and self-censorship among journalists quite common. This is an important indication, if one tries to understand the withdrawal of Singapore from UNESCO.

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1031 Mr. Mashuri, the Minister of Information of the Republic of Indonesia in August 1977 in Tunisia, for instance.
1032 In fact, only one official document has been found (so far) proving that Singapore withdrew from UNESCO due to the discussion about the “New World Information Order”.
1033 The Ministry of Education “followed up the recommendations of the UNESCO consultant on the establishment of a National Archives and Records Centre.”
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1035 From a historical perspective, it seems that most recommendations by Seán MacBride on behalf of UNESCO were sooner or later implemented in Singapore – with one exception: The Singaporean government did not allow press freedom in “Western sense”. Instead, a discussion about “Asian values in journalism” and a process of centralisation began: All newspapers were merged into the “Singapore Press Holding”, in which the government has a high stake. In addition, the government passed a series of laws that directly bind the press, put newspapers under (in)direct control of a ministry, permit the government only to establish and operate broadcasting stations and enabled the government to ban or restrict any “subversive” publication or movie. As a result, press freedom in Singapore is very limited and self-censorship among journalists quite common. This is an important indication, if one tries to understand the withdrawal of Singapore from UNESCO.
Whether one follows this argumentation or not, Singapore’s restrictive media system might be one reason why the country has still not rejoined UNESCO. In other countries sooner or later pressure groups or lobbies would arise. But in Singapore, where former Prime-Minister and now Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew is able to reach each of his menials by bike in thirty minutes, pressure groups are generally rare. The media are not tired to repeat continuously that the “Singaporean society is fragile like an egg and therefore the government has to hold it firmly, that is doesn’t drop and break.” Certainly, for the past few years, the government has been promoting creativity (or what the politicians believe to be creativity), but Singaporeans are (still) not used to express such “creative” ideas like the return into UNESCO if it is not the official opinion of the government (yet).

It is hard to understand why Singapore has (still) not rejoined UNESCO, because both sides would benefit from it: The city state would gain further international recognition, it could use the forum to foster its international relations and to promote its interests, if helpful even against Malaysia in the essential question of water supply (water supply is one of the main issues UNESCO deals with). And the desire of UNESCO is to represent the entire world.

Therefore, UNESCO already works on the return of Singapore. In an internal memorandum Françoise Rivière informed the staff of UNESCO on 16 February 2000 that the Director-General “has requested Mrs Hilary Wiesner […] to assist him in his efforts to encourage the United States and Singapore to rejoin UNESCO”. Soon after, the Director-General praised Singapore as a good example. On 31 January 2003 the Director-General Koichiro Matsuura mentioned that he “wrote a letter to the President of Singapore attaching the Board’s decision urging Singapore to return to membership of UNESCO.” Subsequently he sent an Assistant Director-General to Singapore to speak directly with the authorities there. Finally, he even assured that “we are in contact with Singapore on this question.”

The discussion about the “New World Information Order” that led to the withdrawal of the USA and UK is no longer an issue: Although some academics and politicians are disappointed, UNESCO does not try to interfere in the international flow of news anymore. Consequently, there is no reason why Singapore should not rejoin UNESCO. Nevertheless, up to now signals are rare that Singapore might rejoin the international organisation sometime in the future. As a result, Singapore is the only important country that is currently not member of UNESCO.


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1040 At the end of the 1980s less than 4000 societies were registered in Singapore. This is a very small number, if one considers that any group or association of ten or more people is required to be registered under the Societies Act. For further information see David Birch: Singapore Media, Communication Strategies and Practices, Melbourne, 1993, p. 9, 10.


1042 Compare with the chapter about “Political Culture” in James Gomez: Self Censorship, Singapore’s Shame, Singapore 2000, p. 7 et sqq.

1043 Singapore does not even have a permanent observer at the UNESCO headquarter as the USA always have had.


1045 At the opening session of the International Symposium on Science and Technology on 20 April 2002 in Bahrain the Director-General praised Singapore as an example for a geographically small country that has succeeded reaping the benefits of the advances in science and technology. UNESCO: Address by Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, […], at the opening session of the International Symposium on Science and Technology, 20 April 2002, Bahrain/Paris, 2002.


1047 In total, only five countries are not member of UNESCO. The Holy Sea and Lichtenstein, for instance.
14th AMIC Annual Conference

“Media in Society: Transformations and Transitions” was the title of the “14th Annual Conference” of the Asian Media Information and Communication Center, co-organized by the Communication University of China. It was held in July 2005 at Kunlun Hotel in Beijing, China. During the four days, a variety of topics were discussed in plenary and parallel sessions including media education, media ethics and alternative media such as weblogs. The key focus, however, was on the impact of the media on societies across Asia, and how media organizations are transforming in response to changes in the political, economic and technological landscape, particularly in Mainland China, where the media face many difficulties.

The quality of both the presentations and discussions was very high which is not surprising considering that the Asian Media Information and Communication Center, located at the School of Communication and Information of Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, is one of the most prestigious and best equipped institutions in the field of communication. It was established in 1971 with the support of the government of Singapore and the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation which also sponsored the annual conference. The charity-registered organization is chaired by Ang Peng Hwa, supported by an executive committee including Eddie Kuo and Arun Mahizhnan, and managed by Secretary-General Indrajit Banerjee. All of them have been researching for several years on communication in Asia and gave good impressions of their lines of thought and the results of recent analysis. Very impressive was the presence of John Lent who had contributed outstanding publications about news flow in the 1970s but spoke this time about the relevance and meaning of comic art, another subject in which he has been specializing for some years. He argued that comics reflect the opinions of ordinary citizens in an extremely creative manner, but cartoonists are becoming fewer because many media companies prefer buying cheap drawings from syndicated agencies instead of employing artists.

Although the overwhelming majority of the more than two hundred participants from all over the world are related to universities, the conference was not a dry scientific gathering. In fact, it was very lively and inspiring. David Plott for instance, who had long served as deputy chief editor at the Far Eastern Economic Review but recently took up a teaching position at the University of Hong Kong, explained the current situation of journalists. Also Cherian George, whose book about The Air-Conditioned Nation is very popular in Singapore, shared his previous working experiences at the Straits Times newspaper. In a plenary session about youth and media he even presented the progressive agenda of a newspaper for children he
has recently launched: “We practice values-driven journalism, always putting children’s needs ahead of commercial self-interest.”

If there is anything one can criticize, then that this conference just takes place annually, not more often. The next one, however, will be in summer 2006 in Penang, Malaysia. Further information about it can be found on time at www.amic.org.sg.

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Eidesstattliche Versicherung

Hiermit versichere ich, die vorliegende Arbeit auf der Grundlage der angegebenen Hilfsmittel selbständig angefertigt zu haben.

Carl Alexander Haentzschel

Berlin, den 15. Mai 2006