Political Marketing during Najib Tun Razak Premiership

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Abstract

Malaysia is awaiting the coming new general election scheduled to be held by the latest in April 2013. For Malaysians and foreign observers, for the first time we can see an interesting contestation in strength between the ruling Barisan Nasional headed by the Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak and the opposition Pakatan Rakyat led by the charismatic Anwar Ibrahim. Both leaders, Najib and Anwar, have projected themselves as the leaders for the multiracial society in Malaysia. Therefore, this paper will try to analyse Najib’s political marketing in projecting himself through the lenses of political marketing. By using the qualitative research of content analysis, library research and interview, this paper will later determining of how Najib promoting and projecting their images to the people. The finding of this paper is that both leaders especially Najib Razak have utilised all efforts and interesting strategies especially in the media to project their images as leaders for the people who are appealing to the multiracial society in Malaysia.

Keywords: political marketing, Malaysia, political communication, Najib Tun Razak and Anwar Ibrahim
INTRODUCTION

Political marketing is obviously a new academic discipline and still developing. Most current definitions of political marketing identify the political marketing process as concerned more with the communication process between voters and political entities (either parties or candidates) neglecting organisational components (Shama 1975). Political marketing has also a close linked with image projections and body language of the political leaders and parties. It also reflects to the image of the country if the political marketing was ill-treated. It is related to the media projection either supporting or against any particular political leaders and parties.

P.J. Maarek (1995) defines political marketing as “a complex process, the outcome of a more global effort implicating all the factors of the politician’s political communication…political marketing is the general method of political communication, one of its means…the elaboration of a policy of political communication…a global strategy of design, rationalisation and conveyance of modern political communication”. However, one terminological is inconsistency. He also believes that political marketing has turned to be an essential element of political communication. Maarek (1995) explains that “Political communication…encompasses the entire marketing process, from preliminary market study to testing and targeting”. Maarek argues that image-making campaigns and election campaigns are the main areas of application of political marketing. In this case, media can play an important role in image-making and election campaigns.

Many countries are facing media struggles born from a system which in the first instance has enshrined media freedom but in the second instance has recognized a need to provide a reactive and counter offensive approach to the free but at times negative reporting that comes out of its news media industry. It must now work, by nature of its original deployment design, on counter methods. The Malaysian government faces the same media struggle based on a different starting position. The Malaysian system was born in the first instance from enshrining national development and secondly, on having to accommodate a growing level of independent and alternative media while minimising the cost to the national stability. Their design has traditionally demanded a pro-active and offensive position in terms of media management and political marketing. These two positions and their relative demands are keys to understanding not only the differences in media systems but also the
similarities. The end objectives for both governments are the same; preservation of national well being. Malaysia must maintain a balanced hold on national stability.

Therefore, political marketing provides that there must be a real effort to give due weight to the positive of facts rather than focus on the negative, and the approach of the media should be one of a third party who is trying to allay unfounded suspicion and fears in the community. Although the idea of political marketing is relatively new to the country, efforts to promote leaders in the election and image of the state locally and internationally have been going on, perhaps since Malaysia independence in 1957. However, this paper will observe political marketing during the 12th General Election in 2008 and the post-election political marketing strategy employed by the ruling government through the agenda of “1Malaysia”. This paper will also show several photographic images of how Najib Tun Razak is marketing himself to the public. This paper will definitely explain that political marketing is widely used by the ruling and opposing parties to project their images in gaining mass supports for the ambition of grasping political power.

POLITICAL MARKETING IN POST-ELECTION PERIOD: THE NAJIB’S ERA

Since he took office as the nation’s sixth prime minister on April 3, 2009, several decisions of Najib Razak give a clear indication that he wants to engage the people. He has urged the people to join him in his quest to revitalise the country through the concept of “1Malaysia”, his main political marketing or brand.” His slogan is “People First, Performance Now.” “1Malaysia,” the thrust of Najib’s new administration, is centered on mutual respect and trust among the country’s various races, and is intended to be the guiding philosophy in programmes and policies as well as in Najib’s vision for the economy, politics, and direction of the government. This new concept resembles those introduced by Najib’s predecessors such as Mahathir’s Bersih, Cekap, Amanah (Clean, Efficient, Trustworthy) and Abdullah’s “Work With Me, Not For Me” programmes (The Star Online 2009). Acknowledging the importance for any government to have the trust and confidence of the people, Najib has urged the government to be truthful to the people (Bernama 2009a), and introduced the eight values of “1Malaysia”: a culture of excellence, perseverance, humility, acceptance, loyalty, meritocracy, education, and integrity. These follow with slogan as Table 1 below.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Slogan</th>
<th>Theme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>\textit{Rakyat Didahulukan, Pencapaian Diutamakan} ((\text{People First, Performance Now}))</td>
<td>\textit{Generasi Didahulukan, Pencapaian Diutamakan} ((\text{People First, Performance Now}))</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>\textit{Menjana Transformasi}</td>
<td>\textit{Generating Transformation}</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>\textit{Transformasi Berjaya, Rakyat Sejahtera}</td>
<td>\textit{Transformation Successful, People Prosperous}</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>\textit{Janji Ditepati}</td>
<td>\textit{Promises Fulfilled}</td>
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Along with the spirit of “1Malaysia,” Najib also introduced Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for his ministers. Minister Koh Tsu Koon in the Prime Minister’s Department said that the KPI were aimed at monitoring the performance of ministers and deputy ministers and making improvements, but not at hauling them up for disciplinary action. The KPI framework and guidelines were drafted based on those used to evaluate the ministry secretaries-general and department directors-general. Public feedback and views on the quality of the civil service, including media reports, will be among factors used in evaluating KPIs for ministers and deputy ministers. Direct feedback received by ministries also will be taken into account and dialogue sessions will be continued (Bernama 2009b).

Furthermore, the new Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin reiterated the government’s policy of “1Malaysia,” saying that the era of “government knows best” had ended and that it was time to engage the people in making decisions. Najib has identified six major policy areas in which KPIs will play an especially important role in improving the effectiveness of the Malaysian government. These are known as National Key Result Areas (NKRAs). The NKRAs include crime prevention, reducing government corruption, increased access to quality education, improvements in the standard of living for low income groups, upgrades to rural infrastructure, and improvements in public transportation (PSnews 2010). For the political marketing purposes, the “1Malaysia” concept has been constructed to become a brand. For instance, in 2010, the government was funding 1Malaysia Clinic with the planned opening of about 50 medical clinics to provide basic medical services for illnesses and injuries such as fever, cough, colds, wounds and cuts, diabetes, and hypertension. Malaysia citizens are charged RM1 for treatment and medication and for the non-citizens are charged RM15. In 2011, the 1Malaysia franchise was branched off into a grocery store franchise.
going by the name Kedai Rakyat 1Malaysia (KR1M), with the first store being located at the Kelana Jaya Line Light Rail Transit (LRT) station in Kuala Lumpur. Besides, the government has also given cash handout of RM500 to a lower income group, salary below RM3,000.00, called Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia (BR1M) to ease the burden of high cost of living. All these initiatives were for the purpose of winning the supports of lower income group for the ruling BN.

However, there are criticisms made especially by the opposition that Najib’s new concept is too rhetorical and has no real policy agenda, except to gain support and create a new government image, but with the same old repressive politics still in place. For instance, Anwar Ibrahim has ripped into the Najib administration’s “1Malaysia” program, calling it cosmetic and nothing more than a bald-faced political move to try to win back support from non-Malays. Other opposition politicians such as Lim Kit Siang (Zahiid 2009) and Tunku Abdul Aziz (2009) and online news portals such as The Malaysian Insider (2009a) have questioned the meaning and content of “1 Malaysia,” but Anwar gutted the whole concept, pointing out that Najib’s comments about unity and togetherness are only for public consumption. He argued that behind the scenes, the Biro Tatanegara (BTN), an agency under the Prime Minister’s Department, continues its indoctrination programs for Malay civil servants and politicians, telling Malays to be wary of Chinese and Indians. Anwar’s attack on the “1Malaysia” concept also reveals a growing uneasiness among the opposition about BN’s charm offensive to regain the support of non-Malay voters, the segment of voters who since the 2008 general election have become a reliable voter bloc for the PR. The new administration also has liberalized the financial services sector and attempted to solve the thorny issues of conversion of children to Islam when marriages breakdown. Nothing has been said about dismantling the NEP or spelling out how equality can be achieved among Malaysians, with the main architecture of affirmative action still in place and the Malay-centric civil service calling the shots at the implementation stage. In his blog posting, http://www.anwaribrahimblog.com, Anwar noted that UMNO called PR the tool of the Chinese and also hammered the DAP as a chauvinist party for its Malaysian Malaysia concept (The Malaysian Insider, 2009b).

According to Lim Kit Siang, the police lockdown and mass arrest of lawmakers and activists amid a chaotic Perak state assembly session on May 7, 2008, shredded Najib’s “1
Malaysia” concept.\textsuperscript{1} Lim said that the arrests made it impossible for Najib to calm rising public anger over his perceived role as the orchestrator behind the BN’s harsh takeover of Perak on February 5, 2009, saying: “It is unlikely that Najib will be able to live down the political baggage of having orchestrated the three-month Perak constitutional and political crisis and stalemate spawning two Menteris Besar (Chief Ministers), two Speakers, two assemblies together with three renegade state assembly members and a renegade state assembly clerk unless he is prepared to act boldly to admit his colossal error and misjudgment and agree to dissolve the Perak State Assembly to hold a Perak state-wide election to return the mandate to Perakians.” (Zahiid 2009)

The Perak crisis started when three PR members of the state assembly defected as independents friendly to BN. Najib, then Deputy Prime Minister, announced on February 4 that BN Perak had the numbers to form the government in Perak due to the defection. Later, the Sultan of Perak issued a statement on behalf of Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin, Perak Menteri Besar, that all Executive Councilors must resign with immediate effect. However, Nizar refused to resign, which caused a series of legal battles between BN and PR, both sides claiming to be the legitimate government, thus weakening the political system and democracy of Malaysia and that of Perak, in particular. On March 14, 2009, even Malaysia’s former premier, Mahathir Mohamad, said that the takeover was not in accordance law, and that the mistakes, bad strategy, and carelessness in the February 5, 2009 power grab, orchestrated by Najib Razak, had led to the crisis in the state (Teoh 2009b). Six people were charged with insulting the Perak ruler after he backed BN’s effort to govern the state. One pleaded guilty and was fined RM10,000, while the other five claimed innocent and asked for trial. UMNO asserted that those who opposed the Sultan’s decision had committed treason.

Shad Saleem Faruqi (2009) maintains that the Perak political crisis has tarnished all institutions—the Sultanate, the judiciary, the federal executive, the civil service, the police, the law officers of the Crown, the court registry, the Anti-Corruption Commission, and the Election Commission. The opposition claims that all of these institutions were misused and manipulated, and that the federal constitution was disregarded to ensure that the BN would stay in power in Perak. The Court of Appeal’s ruling to overturn the judgment of the High

\textsuperscript{1} According to former Menteri Besar of Perak, Nizar Jamaluddin, the total number of people arrested was 157 (Teoh 2009a).
Court on the legitimate Menteri Besar of Perak deepened the crisis.\(^2\) Therefore, many leaders from the PR and BN, such as MCA Deputy President Chua Soi Lek, the Malaysian Human Rights Commission (SUHAKAM), and NGOs such as the Malaysian Bar Council and Aliran demanded that the state assembly be dissolved as the best way to resolve the crisis and return democracy to the people. Oowed to the Perak crisis, it appeared that the agenda of “1Malaysia” was more or less to force the people to unite under BN’s autocratic rule. Although Malaysia is heading toward deliberative democracy, BN is seen, especially by the opposition, to employ any method its leaders please to ensure it continuation in power.

Back to the concept of 1Malaysia, in response to his critics in the opposition and his party UMNO’s members, in an interview with the newspaper Malay Mail (7 December 2012), Najib still believes that 1Malaysia will bring prosperity to the nation. Below is the snip of the interview on 1Malaysia:

You’ve been talking about 1Malaysia all the time. And there were factions that were skeptical of 1Malaysia in UMNO itself. How do you come to terms with that? UMNO and 1Malaysia.

Anytime you choose something, you introduce something new, there will be a period of acceptance, and that goes with 1Malaysia as well. I didn’t define the concept very clearly but that was by design. I decided that there should be an element of strategic ambiguity so that once you introduce the concept like that, as time goes by, the definition could be defined by taking on board the views of people as we go along. And I think we’ve done exactly that and the concept of 1Malaysia is now clearly understood.

Outside of UMNO, there are still skeptics…the minorities who are still skeptical about 1Malaysia.

They’re skeptical of 1Malaysia because of the experiences they’ve encountered. They may not see 1Malaysia as something that has been practised within the entire government system. But again people must realise this is a journey. When you introduce something, it is a journey before you get

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\(^2\) The High Court ruled on May 11, 2009 in favor of Nizar of PR as the legitimate Menteri Besar. However, the Appeal Court overturned the decision to grant Zambry Abdul Kadir of BN to be the right Menteri Besar a week later.
to a situation where it becomes all embracing. Because you’re talking about people, adjusting people’s minds and attitudes. And of course some people have certain interpretations, certain prejudices as well which are not easily overcome. So you have to allow this and see this as part and parcel of a long journey. But what is important is not only that the journey has started, but we’re well on our way. We have not reached our destination yet but we are well on our way to getting it embedded as part of our national psyche and as well as our Malaysian way of life.

1Malaysia is already being practised by the masses. It is the politicians who are not practising it for (political) expediency. We’ve been practising 1Malaysia since the time of the Tunku (Abdul Rahman), since the time of your late father (former prime minister Tun Abdul Razak)…

During the period of Tunku and my late father, there was this notion that we must get all the races to work together. But there was no attempt to really define it. There was no attempt to translate that into certain values associated with 1Malaysia. For example, under the 1Malaysia concept which I have propounded, there are few basic fundamental principles attached to it. Number one is that we have to have a principle of social justice, about being inclusive, moderation….This is the first time that we’re trying to really define it in terms of principles and values associated with 1Malaysia. So I think it’s a much more comprehensive way of looking at it. So that once you have those, you can translate into government policies, you see. Government policy…imagine it’s a house and the roof of the house is 1Malaysia. People First, Performance Now. Then you have the pillars, the various Economic Transformation Programme (ETP), Government Transformation Programme (GTP), Political Transformation Programme (PTP) and all that. But the overarching is 1Malaysia. We needed to define what 1Malaysia means. In the past people talked about working together but there was no real operational definition of what that meant.³

Political Marketing through The Internet

The most common way for Malaysians to communicate and deliberate on national and international issues is through the Internet. The blog, news portals, and Facebook have become channels for ‘political marketing and can be directly accessed by political leaders from both the government and the opposition. The Internet now becomes the perfect tool for political marketing in Malaysia. In fact, most influential political leaders have their own blogs and Facebook accounts. The Internet can definitely provide a forum for deliberation in the larger flow of communications in the public sphere. Many political blogs, especially owned by political leaders such the Raja Petra (Malaysia Today), Mahathir Mohamad, Anwar Ibrahim, Lim Kit Siang, and Najib Razak, and Facebooks such as those of former minister and now PKR leader Zaid Ibrahim (http://www.facebook.com/myzaidibrahim), PAS President Abdul Hadi Awang (http://www.facebook.com/abdulhadi?ref=mf), Najib Razak (http://www.facebook.com/Dato-Sri-Najib-Tun-Abdul-Razak/27767103249?ref=ts), Anwar Ibrahim (http://www.facebook.com/Anwar-Ibrahim/16194831839?ref=mf), and Lim Kit Siang (http://www.facebook.com/limkitsiang2.0?ref=ts) advertise and broadcast only their activities and statements concerning current issues.

Furthermore, netizens merely comment on policy issues, but hardly any deliberation is found between political leaders and the netizens concerning the formulation of public policy. M. Bakri Musa (2009) analyzes many of these Web sites or blogs. He observes that Najib’s Web site is professionally designed and maintained. It makes full use of the new media, including Youtube, Facebook, and Twitter, but unfortunately its contents do not reflect the man. Musa complains,

When I surf the websites of Mahathir, Lim Kit Siang or Anwar Ibrahim, I know that what is written reflects the person, right down to the tone and style of writing. I do not get that sense with IMalaysia.com. It is written as if from a third person perspective instead of being personal, the very reason for having a blog. Of course I do not expect Najib Razak to write his own speeches; he has other important things to do like running the country. I do expect him however, to be on top of his speechwriters, and to do the final reading and make the necessary editorial changes so those speeches would...
truly represent and sound as if they emanated from him. He has to leave his imprint.

Not only is the style and tone of 1Malaysia.com divorced from Najib, but so too is the content. When someone asked him what the “1Malaysia” concept meant, Najib was unable to articulate it coherently. He was unable to relate his “1Malaysia” concept to his party’s pursuit for a unity government. Far from being his guiding vision, Najib’s “1Malaysia” is nothing more than the slick concoction of his highly-paid public relations personnel. This Web site also lists Najib’s policies, statements, and agenda, inviting only positive comments from visitors without any initiative to have deliberation on policy agenda.

Many political blogs also seem to have a self-reinforcing function where like-minded users simply help each other solidify their fixed preferences by cutting themselves off from any meaningful critique of their own beliefs and values. Described by Cass Sunstein (2001) as a kind of “echo-chamber,” many bloggers in Malaysia maintain that they do not want to engage in critical kinds of exchanges on-line, but instead use blogs to seek and interact with like-minded individuals. Moreover, the same technology that allows users to access an infinite number of debates and news sources also allows them to ignore and filter out those that may be critical of their own viewpoints (Harmon 2004). The upshot is that the fragmentation and polarization of online communities undermines the deliberative credentials of blogs, as they may be more about monologue than discussion (Maynor 2007). Besides realising the need for blogs to be used in practicing ‘political marketing, freedom of cyberspace is the most crucial issue in the current stage of Malaysian politics. This freedom must ensured so that the people have alternative media to express their views, especially in policy matters, because the print and broadcasting media are controlled and dominated by the ruling government. Whether the views accepted is up to the political leaders and policy makers to decide.

CURRENT IMAGE AND MEDIA MANagements

Najib Razak who assumed office as the nation’s sixth Prime Minister on 3 April 2009. Around the time of his appointment, Najib’s popularity rating stood at just 41 percent, an embarrassing figure considering his predecessor Abdullah Ahmad Badawi enjoyed a figure of
46 percent despite being criticised as largely ineffective. This is due to the allegation made by the opposition and foreign media of Najib’s involvement in the brutal murder of the Mongolian model Altantuya Shaariibuu with his close advisor Abdul Razak Baginda. For instance, French newspaper Liberation published a story detailing grisly on how Altantuya was allegedly killed. The Liberation provided no documentary evidence of the sensational details, but the resurfacing of these links with the Altantuya murder appears designed to embarrass Najib. This issue had also been covered by several other newspapers in such as the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and Singapore.

Furthermore, the prime minister has weathered harsh criticism, accusations of varying credibility and especially close scrutiny of his performance. Najib came into office inheriting the weakest economic situation since the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s. He faced the prospect of foreign direct investment (FDI) being halved and the country going through a severe recession, with the economy contracting by 4 percent to 5 percent. As finance minister (prior to becoming prime minister), Najib announced two economic stimulus packages, the first in November 2008 totaling RM7 billion, and an additional package in March 2009 totaling RM60 billion (Yeoh 2009).

However, in one of the Merdeka Center polls, Najib received 65 percent of approval rating from Malaysians answered positively to the question “How strongly are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way Najib Razak is performing his job as the Prime Minister?” Among Malays and Indians, the figure is even higher at 74 per cent while it was 48 per cent among Chinese (Liew 2009). There are several reasons that brought him to the result. In projecting his positive image, Najib has urged, in the mainstream media, the people to join him in his quest to revitalize the country through the concept of “1Malaysia” with the slogan, “People First, Performance Now.” “1Malaysia,” the thrust of Najib’s new administration, which hinges on mutual respect and trust among the various races, will be the guide in

4 The newspaper claims that Najib had indeed met with Altantuya, who was the mistress of Abdul Razak Baginda, his close aide and associate, in Paris in 2005. A photograph was allegedly taken showing the three in a Paris nightclub, the Liberation said without providing any evidence. The Liberation also suggested that Abdul Razak had been Najib’s intermediary for arms purchases. In October 2006, the newspaper claims that Altantuya was informed that the commission paid by Armaris, a Spanish company involved in Malaysia’s acquisition of three submarines for one billion euros (RM4.7 billion), had been deposited in a bank account in Malaysia. The commission of 114 million euros was allegedly paid into the account of Perimekar, a company Razak controlled. Altantuya then allegedly flew to Kuala Lumpur to demand her share of the commission, which was to have been US$500,000 (Lau 2009).
programs and policies as well as in his vision for the economy, politics and direction of the government (Bernama 2009c).

Realising that efficient implementation is the key to the success of the stimulus package, in May 2009, Najib stressed on the necessity of coming up with a new economic model for the country, which breaks away from the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) initiative that only focused on Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Najib announced on 22 April 2009 that the immediate dismantling of a rule that required companies in 27 service sub-sectors to set aside 30 percent of their company for Malay investors. Later, he announced new measures to boost the country’s financial services sector, allowing greater foreign stakes in investment banks and both Islamic and commercial insurers from 49 percent to 70 percent. In an interview follows the unprecedented “First 100 Days” event held on 11 July 2009 in which Najib emphasised that his administration would focus on six national key result areas – crime prevention, combating corruption, providing greater access to quality and affordable education, improving the quality of life for the poor, improving rural infrastructure and upgrading public transportation in the medium term.5

With the negative image portrayed for Najib in the foreign media, the Malaysian government is spending believed to be worth some RM20 million to get positive publicity for the administration overseas. Although the contract has not been signed yet, the administration keen to award the contract to the Apco Worldwide. The Apco Worldwide will likely involve in getting Prime Minister Najib Razak and Malaysia onto slots on major news channels such as the Consumer News and Business Channel (CNBC) and Cable News Network (CNN) and in foreign newspapers such as the Wall Street Journal. There will also be a lobbying element. It is understood that the Najib administration is also working hard to secure an official visit from the US president to Malaysia, as this would boost the his international image (The Malaysian Insider 2009c).

The Apco Worldwide is understood to have had an official based in Najib’s office since the early days of the administration. The Apco Worldwide and other public relations specialists from the US have also been helping Najib craft his 100 days strategy. This

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5 Barely a month into his new role, Najib’s new government also released 13 people who were held without trial under the ISA. He also promises to review the law which labeled as draconian especially by the opposition because it has not only used to detain terrorists but it has proven to be used against the leaders of opposition parties. Due to several new measures imposed by Najib, supports in his administration seem increasing.
includes his 1Malaysia message and other key platforms of his administration. However, Najib is not the first prime minister to have used expensive foreign help to boost his image and that of his administration.6

However, Najib also imposes several restrictions to the media. For example, the Merdeka Review reported on 15 May 2009 that seven “sensitive” matters have been banned from being discussed on air in RTM radio programs to prevent “controversy”. The banned topics were the opposition party politics, sex, race, language, religion, the monarchy, and morals related to current political developments (Gan 2009). About two weeks after Najib became premier, the four private TV stations under Media Prima – TV3, NTV7, 8TV and TV9 – were ordered not to name political analyst Abdul Razak Baginda, Najib’s close aide, when reporting on the Altantuya murder case. In fact one ntv7 talk show host-cum producer, Florence Looi, was issued a warning letter by her management and downgraded in her responsibilities after she was considered violating the NTV7’s “editorial policy”. This happens because she asked one of her two guests on her current affairs show, “Point of View”, dated 5 July 2009, to rate Najib’s performance in his first 100 days. The guest, Leslie Lau, a “Malaysian Insider” consultant editor, gave Najib a “C” or “D”, a bad rating (Surin 2009). All these actions are for the purpose to boost Najib’s positive image in local Malaysia and abroad, and to ensure the public opinion always in government’s control.

CONCLUSION

This paper was trying to analyse Malaysian politics from the perspective of political marketing. Although this can be considered as a preliminary analysis on political marketing, this new discipline, a combination between politics and marketing, have been utilised extensively in order to dominate the public sphere and perception for political power. Thus, media plays a significant role to project certain images of the leaders either positive or negative in the eyes of the public.

During the 2008 General Election, the ruling BN had used the print and broadcasting media to market themselves with positive images, but negatively portrayed the opposition

6 Ibid. Badawi also used a foreign-based public relations firm to help project a positive image of himself as a progressive Muslim leader, and Malaysia as a modern Muslim nation. Mahathir had used American lobbyist Jack Abramoff.
parties. However, the opposition had used the new media, namely the Internet effectively to market themselves against negative reporting from the print and broadcasting media.

The post-2008 General Election has seen the prime minister, Najib Tun Razak, utilising extensively political market to his advantage in promoting himself as a great leader of Malaysia. Projecting images of unity, togetherness, people at heart’s leader and peace are very important and have given to the introduction of “1Malaysia” concept. Due to stiff competition between BN and PR, leaders had been seen to exercise certain types of body languages in public to attract their supporters, followers and people as a whole in projecting their images. These definitely proved that political marketing, even though is relatively a new filed in Malaysia, has been using by political leaders to promote themselves and their parties in order to gain support from the public, influence the public opinion, and making sure political power will be in their hands. Political market will be definitely useful in understanding political behaviour of the politicians and people in Malaysia.

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