**Public Relations and Sport in Sabah, Malaysia: An Analysis of Power Relationships**

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## Declaration

This thesis has been composed by Che Ching Abd Latif Lai. The work the thesis embodies has been done by Che Ching Abd Latif Lai and has not been included in another thesis.

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**Abstract**

The central theme of this thesis is about 'power'. This thesis is an endeavor to explore how 'power' could affect the dynamic of communication and relationships between actors. Power has been chosen as the central theme as a way of building new theory about public relations as proposed by Curtin and Gaither (2005). The same thing can be seen from the sports studies literature, particularly in the relationship between the three main actors in sports; NGB, Media and Sponsors. The investigation of public relations activities in sports is due to the fact, as shown in the sports studies literature, that there was a lack of recognition of the role of public relations in sports.

To provide answers for the above aims, this thesis employed the critical, cultural research approach. Bourdieu (1991) conception of capital together with Berger' (2005) dimension of power relations were used to frame the study. Using a semi-structured interviews, data of this research gathered from respondents based on a purposive sampling technique. The data was analysed using a thematic analysis approach where seven central themes emerged. The findings in this research suggest that power or capital does affect the dynamics of communication and relationship between actors.

The implications of this thesis is that it managed to map the dimension of power relations based on the capital possessed by the actors. In terms of theoretical implication the finding of this study has enhanced the conception of capital. However, the findings also shows the weaknesses or limitation of Bourdieu' conception of capital. From a sports study perspective, taking the roles of power between actors, this thesis suggests that the Malaysian sports development currently is at the crossroads. It is either to continue with government direct involvement in sports or to let the private sectors to lead the development of sports in Malaysia.

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**Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications and Conclusions**

**Introduction**

The central theme of this thesis is power. It aims to explore how power may affect the dynamic of communication and relationship between actors. The reason why power has been chosen as the central theme of the thesis is to fill the gaps found in the literature of public relations. Edwards (2006, p.229) argues that current views of power in public relations literature are poorly developed. Edwards (2006) has suggested that 'more productive view of power requires an understanding of the context in which public relations operates; that is, as a socially embedded profession' (p.229). Curtin & Gaither (2005) have also suggested that power should be taken as the focal elements in developing a new theory of public relations. In sport studies literature, particularly in the relationship between the main actors in sports; NGB, Media and Sponsor, the question of power also form as the central theme of investigation.

The idea to investigate how public relations work in the context of sports, particularly in Malaysia is due to the fact the role of public relations lacks recognition in sports studies literature. Sports, undoubtedly is become more and more important either politically and economically. Sports also led to cultural change in which the role of communications is essential. This has further justified the reason to investigate public relations works in the context of sports in Malaysia.

This thesis also aims to fill the contextual gaps of sports and public relations in Malaysia. Understanding of sports from a social science perspective, particularly in media and communication discipline in the context of Malaysia was underdeveloped. This is due to the current focus of understanding sports from the sports science perspective. Therefore this thesis was trying to break the ground to provide the platform for further research in understanding sports in Malaysia from the media and communication perspective.

On the other hand, public relations research in Malaysia was dominated by functionalist paradigm. Critical and cultural paradigm in public relations research was seen as the minority and often perceived as the anti-establishment group. However, the more important point on why critical and cultural paradigm was chosen over the functionalist paradigm is due to the fact that critical and cultural studies offer the flexibility of interpretivism. That is to interpret things in their context. Sports and public relations is the uncharted territory in the context of public relations research in Malaysia. Thus it is appropriate to apply critical and cultural paradigm.

The geographical focus of public relations research in Malaysia was also imbalance. Geographically speaking, Malaysia is divided into two mains areas; the peninsular Malaysia where Kuala Lumpur (Klang Valley), the capital of the country is located. The second is the state of Sarawak and Sabah, located in the Borneo Island. Most of the studies in public relations were conducted in Klang valley, and often the case those study claims to represent public relations in Malaysia, whereby

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in fact, Sarawak and Sabah have economic, political and social conditions that are slightly different than of those in Klang Valley. Hence, this thesis conducted specifically in the context of Sabah, will offer different views of public relations practice in Malaysia.

The thesis was framed using the concept of capital by Bourdieu (1991) together with the dimension of power by Berger (2005). This is because, Bourdieu (1991) argues that actors are actively position and re-position themselves in the field using whatever capitals they have. This is certainly implies dynamics of relationships between the actors in the field. What we do not have is how this dynamics relationship will shape the relations between actors. That is why the need to use Berger (2005) dimension of power relations.

The investigation was carried out based on critical and cultural paradigm. Data gathering was conducted using semi-structured interviews. Respondents for this thesis were chosen based on a purposive sampling technique. This sampling technique was chosen because it allows the researcher to get the most productive sample that can provide valid feedback thus reducing the dross rate of feedback. There are two local sports organizations being chosen as the subject of study. These two organizations were chosen solely based on their current activities. In brief, the Sabah Football Association (SAFA) is involve in promoting the new image (re-branding exercise) for the association; Malaysian Ladies Golfers Association are actively promoting golf for women by recruiting new talents from as young as seven years old rural school girls.

This thesis manages to prove that power does affect the dynamic of communication and relationship between actors involved. It manages to map the dimension of relationship between actors based on the capital they possessed. The finding of the thesis also managed to enhance the conception of capitals by Bourdieu. Interestingly, at the same time the findings also shows the limitation of Bourdieu' conception of capital. From the sports studies perspective, taking into account the role of power between the actors involve, this thesis shows that Wolfe, Meenaghan & O'Sullivan (2002) argument that economic power is the major factor that caused the shifting balance of power in sports network from NGB to media and corporate sponsors. However, in the case of sport in Sabah, this is not happening. This is due to the fact that private and corporate sectors involvement in sports was very limited.

The organization of this thesis was divided into five chapters that are interrelated to each other. The first chapter of this thesis provides the theoretical background of the study. This first chapter is the literature review chapter. In this chapter, the discussion will be on power, type of power, as well as concepts relevant to power such as interest and actors. The discussions also touch on power in public relations and sports. Basically, this chapter set the tone of the thesis.

The second chapter concerned with the research method. This chapter highlights the research approach in answering the research questions. The choice of qualitative paradigm instead of quantitative paradigm is explain in this chapter. Explanation and justification on the choice of semi-structured interview as a mean for data gathering, the purposive sampling procedures as well as the data analysis technique is explain and discuss in this chapter. Furthermore, a self-reflection is also added to put the research in the right context, particularly the researchers' personal involvement in this research.

The third chapter deals with the background of the study. In this chapter, the details background of public relations practice in Malaysia is discuss. This chapter provides a ground breaking contextual of sporting landscape in Malaysia. This could be considered one of the contributions of this thesis, because there was almost no existing literature discussing the background of sports in the context of Malaysia. Background of the local sports organizations that have been chosen as a subject of study was also discussed in this chapter. These organizations are the Sabah Football Association (SAFA) and the Malaysian Ladies Golfers Association (MALGA).

The fourth chapter presents the analysis of how power could affect the dynamic of relationship between actors in the two local sports organizations. This chapter aims to answer the research questions. The analysis shows how symbolic power does affect the 'power over' dimension. The symbolic power almost eliminated all the dynamics in relationship between the actors. Social and cultural capitals shape the dynamic of relationship between actors in the dimension of horizontal, 'power with' relationship. This chapter also shows the limitation of Bourdieu' (1991) conception of capital.

The final chapter discusses the implications and contribution of the thesis. One of the contributions of this thesis is the findings managed to enhance and at the same time highlighted the limitation of Bourdieu' conception of capital. In terms of sports landscape, the findings also shows that there are differences between the models of sports networks develop in the west as compared to the sports cultural context in the east. Finally, this chapter highlight that this thesis could act as a catalyst to encourage more debate on the public relations body of knowledge in Malaysia which are dominated by the functionalist paradigm.

**Chapter 1 Literature review**

**Power, public relations and power, and sports studies and power**

**1.1     Introduction**

The main aim of this chapter is to review relevant conceptual scholarship concerning power, public relations and sports studies.  The organization of this chapter is divided into two parts. The first one will deal with power. In this first part, the concept of power will be analysed from the political sociology perspective. The second part of this chapter will be to analyse how the concept of power are being use in public relations and sports studies literature. This is essential to the entire research project as it will set up the theoretical framework which eventually leads to the shape of the data analysis.

Power is the central concept in political sociology (Olsen and Merger, 1993). Because it is the key to the fact that some people realise their interests more than others do. Indeed, the latter is one of the primary ways power in society has been measured. In general, power has been heavily associated with the ability and the access to resources to be utilised to influence others. The concept of 'power' as a social phenomenon is a well-researched area in social sciences, and thus brings about different interpretations of the concept of power. Therefore, this chapter aims to highlight these demarcations by addressing several questions about power such as the definition, sources, actors involved, types of power, as well as a relevant model and theory about power. This discussion is to serve as a background for the analysis about power in public relations literature as well as power in sports studies literature.

Aldoory (2005; p.89) argued that the concept of power along with identity and difference have always been part of public relations but have not always been explicated, critiqued, and highlighted in public relations research. Curtin & Gaither (2005) in echoing Aldoory's point above concluded that a common criticism in recent literature is the failure of the dominant theoretical paradigm to take into account the key role that power plays in public relations practice. Curtin and Gaither (2005; p.97) sees power as a very essential element in developing the new theory of public relations that it (the new theory) should: (i) recognise the primal role of discourse and position of public relations as a meaning-making process; (ii) recognise the inherent role of power in relationship; and (iii) recognise the constant renegotiations of power within those relationships.

This however does not mean that there are no efforts being taken to look into how power plays a role in public relations practice. Most studies being conducted about power in public relations have come from the discursive, critical paradigm as opposed to the dominant paradigm—

the functional and positivist school. In fact, the questions of power have been used as a point to debate and argue the functionalist perspective about public relations. As argued by L'Etang (2008) that "the critical paradigm is very clearly outside the dominant paradigm. It points out the limitation of systems by asking hard questions about the possession and use of power, the natures of authority, morality and political economy" (p.256)

One such study was conducted by Berger (2005) who criticised the symmetrical public relations theory. Berger (2005) argued that whilst this theory managed to acknowledged the primacy of the dominant coalition in making organizational decisions and influencing public relations practices it reveals little about the powerful inner circle. His study based on interviews with 21 public relations executives reveals complex power relationships and a matrix of constraints that undermine and limit the function, rendering it difficult for practitioners to do the "right" thing, even if they want to (p.5).

Researchers from the critical paradigm have drawn on "frameworks and insights from sociology and cultural studies" (L'Etang, 2008, p.256). Edwards (2006) and Ihlen (2009) for instance, draw their sociological approach on public relations from the work of Bourdieu. Weaver, Motion and Roper (2006) and, Motion and Leitch (2009) used the work of Foucault to analyse discourse transformation in public relations.

Therefore, my position on this research will be oriented toward the sociological perspective, because as argued by Bourdieu, the task of sociology is to uncover social structures and the mechanisms that help produce or transform them (Ihlen, 2009, p.63). In fact, Bourdieu (1991) argued that symbolic power can only be understood by looking into the structure, the class that gives the 'transferred power' to the language. In other words, it is inevitable to look into the social structures to understand how power will affect the dynamic of communication and relationship between actors.

Examination into how the concept of power is treated by the sports studies literature is central to this thesis as my research aimed to uncover the role of power in shaping the dynamics of communication between the actors involved. The sports studies scholars do acknowledge and recognise the role of power as stated by Hall (1986) in his forward for a book by John Hargreaves titled '*Sport, Power and Culture*' claimed that; "*Sport is (are) a social phenomenon and setting it squarely in the context of power and culture where, in my view, it properly belongs*". Hargreaves (1986) defined power in sports studies as those who has the access to scarce resources and how available resources are deployed. He further argued that deploying resources depend on the ability

of agents to develop an appropriate language, institutionalise reflection and generate knowledge. The network of actors in sport studies also become the focus of investigation concerning power relations. One such study conducted by Wolfe, Meenaghan & O'Sullivan (2002) aimed to investigate the relationship between the main actors in sports which they identified as sports networks; National Governing Body (NGB), media owners and corporate sponsors, and how the power in this relationship shifted between these main actors.

## 1.2    Definition of power: power over, power to, and power with

Stewart (2001) argued that the discussion on the lexicon of power can be divided into two main arrears; a dominant tradition and the alternatives view. A dominant tradition of power analysis defined by scholars such as Giddens, Foucault, and Mann, uses a strategic conception of power. Giddens (1976) looks at power as transformative capacity of human agency. This capacity refers to the capability of the actors to intervene in a series of events so as to alter their course. Mann (1986) argued that power is all about the ability to affect the behaviours of others or more precisely, the ability to affect the probability that others will perform some behaviour. Foucault, who massively influential writings about power, implied that there is no escaping domination, that it is everywhere, and there is no freedom from it or reasoning independent of it (Lukes, 2005. P.12). Stewart (2001) further argued that all the above definition of power could be grouped together and called 'power over'.

In his analysis Foucault developed his own model of power. He argued that power is all about domination. And, the concept of domination can be divided into two main parts. The modern form of domination is clearly explained by the disciplinary model. Whilst the traditional forms of domination indicated in his 'classical sovereignty model' which is repressive, coercive, direct and mobilise who are subject to it in nature. The modern disciplinary model emphasis more on productive quality, subjectivity is necessary to the successful operations of particular regime of power. These two model actually share the same premise or framework of 'power over' or domination. The differences between the two model is by how the domination being expressed. The sovereignty model view domination as a prohibition and punishment of the censured action. The disciplinary model on the other hand inculcates the required action by making it the desired action within the inescapable framework of political rationalities and technologies of power.

Lukes (2005) argued that 'much writing and thinking about power, is more specific and it concerns 'power over' another or others and, more specifically still, power as domination' (p.12). 'Power over' refers to power as domination and the use of a strategic capacity to achieve goals and

normally will employ various parameters in analysis such as organizational parameters, ideological and structural. Berger (2005) defined 'power over' from the public relations perspective as "a traditional dominance model where decision making is characterised by control, instrumentalism, and self-interest. Public relations is an influence variable in this view" (p.6). The power over is the dominance model in power analysis as this model reflected in an asymmetrical world view in public relations literature (Grunig, 2001), in several longer theoretical lines (e.g., traditional Marxism and Weberian conflict theory), and in actual capitalist management structures and discourse practices such as Deetz, 1992 and Weaver, 2001 as cited in Berger (2005).

Berger (2005) further argued that 'power over' today are more often conceptualised as 'hegemony', a noncoercive form of domination in which "subordinated groups actively consent to and support belief systems and structures of power relations that do not necessarily serve...those groups' interest" (Mumby, 1997,p.344 quoted in Berger 2005). Existing dominance structures and organizations practices and discourse produce a world view that is 'acceptable' to both the powerful and the relatively powerless (Deetz & Mumby, 1990 quoted in Berger 2005). On this view, public relations support such power relationships through the production of persuasive texts and strategic attempts to influence discourse (Gandym 1992; Leitch & Neilson, 1997; Weaver, 2001 in Berger 2005). This is what Berger (2005) argued as public relations is an influence variable, means public relations as a tool in influencing discourse.

Berger (2005) like other scholars who are interested in the dynamic of organization looks at organization as a place of conflicting ego between the actors. L'Etang (2005) argued that Berger's work shows "that managerial life is not rational, logical and predictable but messy, emotional, political and fragmented. Of particular interest is his analysis of resistance in which the public relations practitioner aligns him/herself with alternative organizational cultures (sub or micro) to subvert the dominant or official culture prescribed by management. This work also links to Morgan's (1986, 1993) research, which uses metaphor to demonstrate how there are always multiple perspectives at any point in time within an organization, a feature which has not so far been dealt with in public relations writing on internal communications—employees are too often treated as a single public" (p.522).

The key word that I would like to highlight from the above is 'political'. It shows how organization is a field that is full with power struggle. This implication is well suited with the subject of this research. While I must admit that in the context of an industry like the sports industry in Malaysia, PR practitioners are relatively few, have limited authority within an organization, and their work is task-based rather than strategic. However, this did not stop me from applying Berger's

(2005) conception of power in this study due to the nature of sports in Malaysia. The nature of sports industry in Malaysia is politically driven. Management of sports associations are run and dominated by politicians. This fact alone is enough to justify applying the conception of power by Berger's (2005) in understanding the dynamics of power relations between actors involves in sports association in Sabah. While Berger (2005) concern more with the organizational politics, on the resistance of public relations practitioners towards the management, this research looks at how the management of sports association as a whole facing the resistance from the public in executing their public relations / communications campaign. The main point here is the application of 'power over', 'power to' and 'power with' in analysing power relationship between actors.

This definition of 'power over' is more straightforward. The dominant actors have better control and access to the resources compared to the non-dominant actors. In the context of public relations, the practitioners as the dominant actors has more access to resources such as information, technological know-how and fund to influence discourse. If the media, for instance, needs important information which only the public relations practitioners know about it, then it makes the public relations practitioners has 'power over' the media practitioners.

Even though 'power over' has become the dominant model in power analysis there are still critiques towards the notion of power over. Lukes (2005) for instance, argued that 'it was a mistake to define power by saying that A exercises power over B, when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interest; power is a capacity not the exercise of that capacity (it may never be, and never need to be exercised)... power as domination is only one species of power' (p.12). Another critique is by Bologh (1990) as quoted in Berger (2005), she argued that Weber (Weberian thinking of power over) sees the world as a site of ongoing conflicts where actors struggle to impose their will and view on others and where relationships grow out of dominance and coercion. These 'power over' relations represent a distinctly masculine world for Bologh, one that contrasts sharply with her feminist view wherein non-coercive relationships and organizational forms are possible and dialogue, mutual recognition, and empowerment are valorised. Life may be characterised by self-interests, coercion, and conflicts, but Bologh contended that life also involves our 'responsiveness to, and respect for others' (p.215) and our essential 'rootedness in relationships' (p. 216). Weberian thinking is flawed because it fails to 'take an interactive, relational perspective' (p.288) with others (Berger, 2005). Thus, the following will be discussed on the alternative view of power as opposed to the dominant model of power over.

The alternative view sees power as the expression of collective autonomy, conceived as the inter-subjective generations of specific forms of solidarity or 'power to'. This division conceptualises

political conditions, characteristics and implications of power as action in concert. Stewart (2001) argued that the alternative concept of power lies in the location of concept of power. Unlike the dominant tradition that sees power located in the object-subject relation, the alternative concept of power concerns more the generation of social power.

Lukes (2005) argue about the needs to look at alternative views in the analysis of power and social relationships. The concept of power 'that will be useful in the analysis of social relationship must imply an answer to the question: what counts as a significant manner? What makes A's affecting B significant? Now, the concept of power, thus defined, when interpreted and put to work, yields one or more views of power—that is ways of identifying cases of power in real world' (p.30). Lukes (2005) suggests that the works of Parson (1957, 1963a, 1963b, 1967) and Arendt (1970) offer alternative ways of conceptualising power, involving alternative criteria of significance. It is no coincidence that Stewart (2001) also cited and analysed the later works of Arendt (1989) as an alternative view of power.

Parsons seeks to 'treat power as a *specific* mechanism operating to bring about changes in the action of other units, individual or collective, in the process of social interaction' (1967:229 quoted in Lukes, 2005). That specific mechanism according to Lukes (2005) refers to the use of 'authoritative decisions to further collective goals' (p.31). The 'authoritative decision' is what Parsons argued 'the power of A over B is, in its legitimised form, the right of A, as a decision-making unit involved in collective process, to make decisions which take precedence over those of B, in the interest of the effectiveness of the collective operation as a whole' (p.318 quoted in Lukes, 2005). Lukes (2005) argued that Parsons's conceptualisation of power ties it to authority, consensus and the pursuit of collective goals, and dissociates it from conflicts of interest and, in particular, from coercion and force. Power depends on the institutionalisation of authority.

Arendt's view of power is rather similar to that of Parsons where power is about consensus, legitimacy and giving more power to the people. Arendt defined power as:

> 'The human ability not just to act but to act in concert. Power is never the property (that which) of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together. When we say of somebody that he is in power we actually refer to his being empowered by a certain number of people to act in their name. The moment the group, from which the power originated to begin with disappears, his power also vanishes. *It is* the people's support that lends power to the institutions of a country, and this support is but the continuation of the consent that brought the laws into existence to begin with' (Arendt 1970:44 quoted in Lukes, 2005).

Lukes (2005) argued that Arendt's way of conceiving of power ties it to a tradition and a vocabulary that she traces back to Athens and Rome, according to which the republic is based on the rule of law, which rests on the power of people. Except in those eras women did not have equal role with men. From this perspective, power is dissociated from the command-obedience relationship and the business of dominion. It means that Arendt's perspective on power is more towards the orientation of 'power to' which is more interested in the location of power. Rather than looking at power as an entity of individuals or organizations, Arendt sees power as the element of the system; in this case the system refers to the society. Because Arendt (1970) believes that power cannot be equal to violence (the dominant paradigm) because violence is an instrumental, a means to an end, but never will be legitimate. Power, 'far from being the means to an end, is actually the very condition enabling a group of people to think and act in terms of the means-end category' (p.51 quoted in Lukes 2005).

Both Parsons and Arendt's definitions of power indicate power as a capacity, a facility and ability, not a relationship. The view of 'power to' clearly ignoring 'the conflictual aspect of power. The fact that it is exercised over people disappears altogether from this view. Thus, the central interest, the securing of people's compliance by overcoming or averting opposition, in studying power relations in the first place has disappeared (Lukes, 2005 p.34).

The alternative view of power offered in the aforementioned discussion shows a contradiction with the alternative view of power as discussed by Berger (2005). Berger (2005) in his analysis about the roles of power in organization specifically by the dominant coalition towards the practice of public relations argued that there are three views of power. 'Power over' remains the dominant view of power, whilst most of political sociology scholars such as Stewart (2001), Lukes (2005) and Whitmeyer (1997) acknowledge that 'power to' is the alternative view of power analysis, Berger (2005) on the other hand offered different definition of 'power to' and 'power with'.

Lukes (2005) clearly defined 'power to' as a capacity, facility and ability of a group of people to act and decide; whereas, Berger (2005) defined 'power to' as a form of resistance that public relations practitioners may use to try to counter a dominance model. 'Power with' defined as an empowerment model where dialogue, inclusion, negotiation, and shared power guide decision making (Berger, 2005. P.6) is more like the definition of 'power to' by Lukes (2005). The differences between these two definitions could be attributed to the different background of the two. Berger (2005) was more interested in uncovering the effect of the domination coalition in the decision making process towards the practice of public relations, whilst Lukes (2005) was keener to analyse power from the political sociology perspective. However, it is not the intention in this chapter to

further debate the many different views of power, but just to highlight the differences and to note how these differences might influence my research project.

## 1.3    Sources and typology of power

The discussion on sources of power will be drawn from the work of Mann's (1986) Theory of power, which was analysed and criticised by Whitmeyer (1997) and Stewart (2001); and, the work of Bourdieu specifically referring to his symbolic and social capital as analysed and criticised by Ihlen (2009) and Edwards (2006). The analyses of sources of power will eventually lead us to the discussion of typology of power by referring to the seminal typology of power first suggested by French and Raven (1959 cited in Cho and Cameron, 2007).

Mann (1986) argued that there are four major sources of social power (power) such as military, economic, political, and ideological. Mann conceives of these power sources as ways in which humans and other actors pursue their goals. He considers these four sources to be analytically distinct, although they may be used in conjunctions and simultaneously (Whitmeyer, 1997 p.212). The following are the brief definitions of what Mann (1986 quoted in Whitmeyer, 1997) argued were major sources of social power:

i)      Military powers are of organised physical force wherever they are organised. Military power derives from the necessity of organised physical defense and its usefulness for aggression.

ii)     Economic power derives from the satisfaction of subsistence needs through the social organization of the extraction, transformation, distribution, and consumption of the objects of nature;

iii)    Political powers are those of centralised, institutionalised, territorial regulations. Political power means state power. It is essentially authoritative, commanded and willed from a center.

iv)     Ideological power derives from the human need to find ultimate meaning in life, to share norms and values, and to participate in aesthetic and ritual practices. Control of an ideology that combines ultimate meanings, values, norms, aesthetics, and rituals brings general social power.

Stewart (2001) in response towards Mann's argument above stressed that these sources of power are initially specified not as dimensions, levels or factors but as 'overlapping networks of social interaction'. Therefore, social power or powers are considered as an organization, institutional means of attaining human goals. The sources of power such as military and economic power according to Whitmeyer (1997) were enhanced by organizations and of course there are specific economic and military specialist organizations. In another word, these sources of power were mostly employed and practiced by organizations.

However, Whitmeyer (1997) in criticising the above classification by Mann (1986) pointed out that Mann (1986) employed a phenomenological approach and that consequently his study of power reveals mostly the apparent actors – such as armies, bureaucracies, churches, and mass media – as power holders. The tendencies of focusing too much on the obvious power holders and relying on the phenomenological approach, according to Whitmeyer (1997), '...holds us back from an important goal, knowing the relative power of actors in society. We do know a lot about the power of an important group of power holders, how they use their power, and the relative power of the actors, within that group. However, we do not know necessarily all the actors who most realise their interests (p.213).

Whitmeyer (1997) further argued that another weakness of Mann's sources of power is that he (Mann) neglects the social structures and social institutions that could also affect people's behaviour in pursuing their goals. The collective productions of social structures and social institutions can exert power too. 'That is, their effects on people's behaviour are not directly reducible to the goals of power-holding actors' (p.213).

The capability of social structures and social institutions in exerting power according to Whitmeyer (1997) was clearly evidenced in the studies conducted by:

> "Blau (1977) [who] analyses how demographic social structure is likely to affect behaviour in a variety of ways. Boudon (1974) shows how certain job application processes can constitute a bottleneck in status attainment processes and thus affect people's achievement of status" (p.214).

Therefore, based on the aforementioned weaknesses of Mann's method in classifying sources of power, Whitmeyer (1997) suggested a modified explanation scheme of power. Whitmeyer (1997) based his suggested modified explanation on the model of actors. In brief, this model consists of two main components which are the motivators, and the set of considered behaviours. This model generally aims to describe the behaviour of actors. Whitmeyer (1997, p.215) further claimed that this model 'conforms to purposive or rational actor models (e.g., Coleman 1990), or practical actor models (e.g., DiMaggio and Powell, 1991), as well as models used by a variety of other theorists (e.g., Bourdieu 1977; Rosenberg, 1991)'. Whitmeyer (1997, p.215) argued that based on his model of actors, we can deduce ways a person's behaviour can be affected or ways in which power can be exerted over a person. 'The three general possibilities are to affect the set of motivators, to affect the set of currently considered behaviours, and to affect the link between behaviours and motivators (p. 215)'.

However, in the context of this thesis, political and ideological power are worth further investigation due to the fact that the government has been in the driving seat for sports evolution in Malaysia. Therefore, I would like to assume that political and ideological power will certainly be at the centre of play in this thesis. Political power is 'the most direct and apparent means of affecting the link between behaviours and motivators, and not surprisingly, they are the best-studied aspects of power' (Whitmeyer, 1997, p.216). There are numerous ways in which government, the apparent actors who hold political power, can exercise their power, thus affecting the link between behaviours and motivators. Creation of constitutions, laws, regulations, and governmental and quasi-governmental institutions were cited by Whitmeyer (1997) as the important methods usually employed by government in exercising their political power. Affecting the agenda would also affect the behaviour of those who follow that agenda. However, Whitmeyer (1997) did not provide any examples in explaining how the process of affecting agendas could be seen as exerting political power.

Another related and important concept that is worth noting in the political power discussion is the concept of state penetration and the amount of infrastructural power. These two concepts are crucial in understanding the implementation of political powers (Mann, 1993). The state penetration concept refers to how the tools of this power (political power) are implemented, as this process is very important to ensure that the intended outcome will be achieved. Whitmeyer (1997) cited the example that if you want people to buy fewer imported cars, it is not enough to set quotas or tariffs. The quotas or tariffs must also be enforced, which requires government monitoring, effective use of the legal system, and so forth (p. 217).

Another interesting aspect worth noting in Mann's analysis of political power is his observation that the central elite do not have the tremendous ability to achieve their interest even if they have control over the state penetration and the amount of infrastructural power. This phenomenon is what Mann's called the fallacy of monocratic bureaucracy. Whitmeyer (1997) argued that Mann's analysis of political power is partially correct in noting that the central elite do not have tremendous ability to achieve their interests even the power of the common people and local actors does not make up the difference because there seems to be 'missing power'. "The 'missing power' is in the middle, in the bureaucratic structure, in the system. It is not serving the interests of any small elite. Rather, it is the unintended and often popularly disliked emergent effect of many individuals using their own small amount of power in part to further their own interests" (p. 217).

This 'missing power' in the middle, in the bureaucratic structure, in the system could be appropriately equated to the concept of 'power to' relations suggested by Berger (2005). "Power to

relations refers to approaches, processes, and resources that public relations managers (and others) may use to try to counter or resist a dominance model" (Berger, 2005 p.18). Berger (2005) further argued that the 'power to' is a political resources, or forms of resistance can be classified broadly into two categories; sanctioned and unsanctioned. These sanctioned and unsanctioned forms of resistance practiced by "many individuals using their own small amount of power to further their own interest" (Whitmeyer, 1997, p.217), is equivalent to the 'missing power' concept that could affect the interest of dominance coalition in organizations and eventually create the dynamics of relationship and communication between actors.

Sanctioned forms of resistance are seen as working within the system and are therefore acceptable in the organizations. Such approaches are more often presented or described as ways to enhance advocacy and advance the function and role, rather than as forms of resistance. Unsanctioned forms of resistance on the other hand refer to actions or approaches that are 'outside the system' and unacceptable to the organization. In brief, there are four broad categories of unsanctioned forms of resistance: covert action; alternative interpretations; whistleblowing; and association-level activism.

The 'missing power' and the 'power to' relations with its sanctioned and unsanctioned forms of resistance provide a good platform of uncovering how power could affect the dynamics of relationship between actors. In a hypothetical situation, an organization may want to project something but would be unable to achieve the desired goal due to the work of someone inside the organization; this example would be explained by the 'missing power' and 'power to' concepts. On this thesis these types of 'missing power' and 'power to' prove to be essential in understanding how power affect the dynamics of relationship and communication between actors.

The last source of social power as argued by Mann (1993) is the ideological power. Ideological power derives from the human need to find ultimate meaning in life, to share norms and values, and to participate in aesthetic and ritual practices. Control of an ideology that combines ultimate meanings, values, norms, aesthetics, and rituals brings general social power. You have ideological power if you 'monopolise a claim to meaning; monopolise norms', and monopolise aesthetic/ritual practices.

Mann (1993; cited from Whitmeyer, 1997; p.219) argued that the key in the process of exercising ideological power are the literacy, and effects of church, educational institutions, media, and intellectuals. Clearly church, educational institutions, media, and intellectuals provide information, and influence behaviour thereby. Most indirectly, they tell us about the world around

us and tell us what it means, that is, how it relates to our motivators. Over the long term, churches, educational institutions, media, and intellectuals try to create norms and values, although not necessarily the same or even compatible norms and values (Whitmeyer, 1997; p.219).

Whitmeyer (1997) argued that the ideological power can be divided into two levels; macro and micro. The holders of macro tools of ideological power are the media, educational institutions and so forth, whilst the micro tools of ideological power are held by people's primary and secondary networks. They are not organised but presumably operate with parallel interest. These primary and secondary networks refer to parents, friendships, working networks and neighbours, as these groups inform and sanction each other.

Obviously the macro tools of ideological power such as the media have played essential roles in the shaping of people's day-to-day worldview. The media's agenda setting, for instance, creates meaning out of nowhere to be consumed by people. And, this is exactly what Bourdieu (1991) refers to as the concept of symbolic power. "Symbolic power introduces power based on the cognitive transformation of tangible resources into artefacts that inhere more and different meaning and value than their material attributes would suggest" (Edwards, 2006 p.230). The dominant group is the one who are generating this symbolic power to help them to garner support and maintain their position by misrepresenting their interest to the public with the intention to normalise social structure (Edwards, 2006 p.230). The fact that dominant groups are able to generate symbolic power makes this an interesting focus in this thesis. Questions that should be asked: how does this dominant group become dominant? Further, it should be asked: what kind of power do they have that makes them a dominant group? These questions while partially answered by Bourdieu (1991) when he argued that power are institutionalized, but on the other hand Bourdieu also argues that actors are powerful in negotiating and renegotiating their own position.

Mann (1993) limits his argument about ideological power by proposing that institutions such as the media, churches and educational institutions are the tools to exercise ideological power. Bourdieu (1991) on the other hand goes one step further by arguing that language is "the main tools through which symbolic power is perpetuated and symbolic violence exercised, because of its role in actualizing symbolic power relations" (Edwards, 2006; p.230). Edwards (2006) further argued that Bourdieu sees public relations as a discursive force producing symbolically powerful language. Public relations practitioners have greater resources than other groups to participate in debates; their ability to generate misrecognition through those debates is great (p.230). Language according to Bourdieu (1991 cited from Ihlen *et.al* 2009) is both a battlefield and a weapon. Language structures our understanding of the world and that it is the medium by which these understandings are

communicated. In language and language use, traces of the social structure are expressed and reproduced. Ihlen (2009) argued that "unlike many rhetoricians, linguists, and discourse analysts, Bourdieu did not focus only on language itself, but also on objective structures, to explain and understand these power relations" (p.64). Ihlen (2009) argued that an analysis of everyday language can help us to grasp what is taken for granted within society, the *doxa*, or what is unquestioned universal opinion. An analysis of *doxa* and the stories that, for instance, the bureaucracy tells is thus a crucial activity for researchers to examine truth claims and the use of symbolic power.

However, what is worth noting in here is the fact that even though public relations practitioners have the access to greater resources to determine 'language' that can shape the discourse, they (public relations practitioners) also have to face the struggle to gain media access. Whilst public relations are not all about media relations, I would say half of the tasks of the public relations practitioners are indeed involved with media relations. Media relations in this context refer to activity of gaining access to the media. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, it is essential to look into the roles of the media, and the relationship between the media and public relations practitioners to determine how this struggle could affect the desired outcome of public relations activities. The following discussion is a good explanation on how the struggle of power between public relations practitioners and the media could affect the shape of relationship between them.

French and Raven (1959, cited from Cho & Cameron 2007) has developed a typology of power that could be a useful framework for understanding public relations' power in relationship with media professionals. French and Raven (1959) argued that there are five types of power that public relations practitioners have in dealing with media professionals. The following is a brief description of this typology of power as cited from Cho and Cameron (2007, p.176):

i)      Reward power refers to power with the ability to reward. This power increases when A perceives that B can mediate the reward. However, if B unsuccessfully tries to exert power outside his range, B's power tends to be decreased;

ii)     Coercive power comes from A's expectation that he will be punished by B if he fails to conform to expected behavior. In order to achieve conformity, B must have a strong negative valence through the threat of punishment in certain situations. B also must have restraining forces to prevent A from withdrawing from his range of coercive power;

iii)    Legitimate power refers to power that comes from A, dictating that B has a legitimate right to influence A, and that A has to accept this influence. Legitimate power in a formal organization comes from a relationship between offices, not from personal relationship;

iv)     Referent power of B is based on the identification of A with B. When A desires to be like B, B has referent power over A;

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v) Expert power of B depends on how much A attributes knowledge in a given area to B. Advice from an attorney general is a good example of expert power.

Cho and Cameron (2007) in summarising the above typology of powers argued that if one attempts to utilise power beyond that range, one's power will tend to be diminished. Also, exerting coercive power decreases attraction of A towards B and increases resistance, whereas reward power increases attraction and decreases resistance. Finally, if the coercion is considered legitimate, it will produce less resistance (p.176). Cho and Cameron (2007) in their study of examining the power those health public relations practitioners believed they have in media relations found out that expert power shows strong correlations with media job performance and expertise in health in addition to moderate correlations with openness towards the media and personal closeness with reporters (p.182). In the context of this study, if the health public relations practitioners believe that they have the expert power over media professionals, what will be the perceived power of sports public relations practitioners? Or in other words, what and how do these types of power affect the relationship between sports public relations practitioners and the media, as well as the other groups indirectly related to sports such as fans?

**1.4 Actors**

Another important aspect worth noting in power analysis is to identify the actors involved. Scholars like Mann (1993) relied on a phenomenological approach in analysing power. A phenomenological approach, in brief, could be defined as the content of experience as the starting point of inquiry. It means that the researcher will proceed chiefly by considering the obvious holders of power and investigating how they will exercise their power. The dominant approaches to the structure of power in modern stable democracies, the elite, resource-dependence, and state autonomy approaches, begin with the obvious group of the potentially powerful-the elite, big corporations and their top executives, top government officials, media and their chief executives, top military brass. It then looks at what these actors do, to what extent they co-operate and conflict, and who among them seem to be more powerful (Whitmeyer 1997). Mann (1986) in his analysis of power was circling around the 'big actors' such as armies, bureaucracies, churches, and mass media as a power holder. Stewart (2001) in his argument about power analysis also believes that 'States as central pillars of modernity therefore remain at the centre of power analysis (p.240).

Apart from the above-mentioned type of actors, the characteristics of 'actors' involved in power analysis are also worth noting. In explaining the characteristics of actors in power analysis, I would like to draw on the concept of the dialectic of control by Giddens (1982). This concept rejects

the idea that power relations can ever be meaningfully thought of in zero-sum terms. Giddens proposed that all actors always have some possibilities of 'exercising' power.

> "Actors in subordinate positions are never wholly dependent, and are often very adept at converting whatever resources they possess into some degree of control over the conditions of reproduction of the system. In all social systems there is a 'dialectic of control', such that there are normally continually shifting balances of resources, altering the overall distributions of power" (Giddens, 1982:32).

The concept of 'power over', 'power with' and 'power to' by Berger (2005) as discussed earlier in this chapter is a clear explanation about the position of actors in exercising power and how these actors could affect the shifting balances of resources. Looking back, the term 'power with' as an alternate view of power was used much earlier by Mary Parker Follet. She argued that managers should foster 'power with' rather than 'power over' (Graham, 1995: 23-24, 103-104; cited in L'Etang, 2008: 169 – 170). Another important concept in looking how actors involved are very adept at converting whatever resources they possess to have control over the exercising of power is the concept of 'missing power' in the middle of bureaucracy. These two concepts obviously supported the above argument by Giddens (1982) that all actors have some possibilities of exercising power. Therefore, it is very important to take into consideration that in analysing power a researcher needs to investigate not only the obvious dominant power holders but also the non-dominant actors. In the context of this research, apart from investigating the dominant power holders such as the media, the sport governing bodies and the sponsors it is also essential to examine the roles of the non-dominant actors such as the fans as well as the staff of the sport governing bodies in exercising their 'power'.

Stewart (2001) in his discussion about power and domination has categorised Giddens as one of the scholars whose views about power come from the dominant tradition of power analysis. However, careful interpretations on the concept of dialectic of control seems that Giddens actually acknowledged that there is no such thing as absolute dominant power among the actors as these actors have the capability of adapting and converting whatever resources they have into some degree of control. What will be the effect of the concept of dialectic of control has on the concept of distributive power or power over? Whilst the concept of distributive power seems to be more realistic in explaining power it was indeed too limited in terms of defining power because most of the actor who have been the focus of power studies (e.g. Motion & Leitch, 2007; Cho & Cameron 2007) was the dominant actors and neglecting roles of the subordinate actor thus suggesting that it rejects the notion of dialectic of control. However, by acknowledging the fact of the concept of dialectic of control and at the same time maintaining the concept of distributive power this will certainly push the boundary of power discussion or power analysis to the leading edge. The analysis

of power can now be broadened to involve also the roles of subordinate actors, specifically in the questions of shifting balances of power.

## 1.5 Power and Influence

Up to this point, the discussion on power has indicated that power is an element which is inevitable in relationships. However, does power really act as a foundation in relationships or is it influence that matters? This question is essential because Willer, Lovaglia and Markovsky (1997) argued that "Frequently social theorists conflate power and influence, often subsuming influence under a broad conception of power *and understanding the* conceptions of power and influence are fundamental to the understanding of society" (p.571). Thus, from this issue I go on to address whether it is necessary to establish the differences between power and influence in relationships. This is because, as shown in the following discussion, some believe that we use power to influence others, whilst others believe that we use influence to get power.

The idea that power includes influence, and influence includes power can be seen from the definition given by Zimbardo and Leippe (1992 cited from Willer et.al. 1997) that social influence is the change in people caused by what others do. Wrong (1979) asserts that power is identical with intended and effective influence, whilst French and Raven (1968) define power in terms of influence and influence in terms of psychological change (cited from Willer *et.al* 1997).

However other theorists also have sought to demarcate power and influence. Parson for instance argued that power derives from positive and negative sanctions through which ego may attempt to change alter's intentions (1963:338 cited from Willer *et.al* 1997). Parson's attempt to differentiate between power and influence seems more philosophical; that is why Willer *et.al* (1997) argued that Zelditch (1992) draws the distinction more sharply: "what distinguishes power is that it involves external sanction...Influence, on the other hand, persuades B that X is right according to B's own interest". Mokken and Stokman (1976) offered a similar if not even sharper distinction: "The exercise of influence takes place mainly by means of persuasion, information and advice, but, for power, force, coercion and sanctions are sufficient (quoted from Willer *et.al* 1997, p.573).

As discussed earlier, the demarcation between power and influence helps in the understanding of the differences between the two, which could prove essential in understanding how power and influence affect the dynamic of communication and relationship. However, as argued by Willer *et.al* (1997) that the demarcation of power and influence "would not prevent us from reaching the conclusion that the two terms should be combined. If power and influence produce each other and do so from similar conditions, the terms should be merged" (p.594)

From this research point of view, it is sufficient to undertake the demarcation of power and influence as argued by Mokken and Stokman (1976). However, as argued by Willer *et.al* (1997) we should not refrain from combining power and influence together from similar conditions. This leads me to believe that I power is indeed influence and likewise. Thus, for this research I shall not differentiate between the two.

**1.6     Power and Public relations**

This section seeks to review the concept of power in public relations literature. Bourdieu and Foucault are the scholars whose work has influenced most of the study about power in public relations literature.  The review on power in public relations will be based on three main elements of power: sources, actors, and type of power.

*1.6.1     Power in public relations: The influence of Bourdieu and Foucault*

Bourdiue' symbolic capital was one of the concepts that have been widely debated by public relations scholars, in the context of power in public relations. Edwards (2006) was the earliest to bring the concept of 'symbolic capital' into the public relations literature, followed by Ihlen (2009).

Ihlen (2009) argued that the sociology of Bourdieu 'implies that social actors struggle and compete to position themselves in fields with the help of different form of symbolic and material resources (*capital*)' (p, 62). It is indeed true that in the current situation politics, economics and the ever-expanding impact of information technology this will result in organizations' positions being volatile. In another words, public relations practitioners and organizations are the actors in society. Organizations usually struggle and have to compete with other organizations to gain 'better' positions in society; thus, they will need to utilise all available resources to achieve desirable positions. Public relations practitioners as communicators also have to compete with other communicators such as media practitioners, advertisers and marketers to attract the attention of the public.

The theory of practice is seen as Bourdieu's main contribution to social science. Bourdieu constructed this theory by drawing the work of classic sociologists such as Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. Bourdieu claimed that his three concepts of *habitus, field* and *capital* have made the opposition between subjectivism and objectivism obsolete (Ihlen, 2009, p: 65, also see Edwards, 2006, p.230). In brief, subjectivism is a perspective that believes that social reality is produced through the thoughts, decisions and actions of individual agents, whilst objectivism assert that people's action are determined by objective social structures such as those relating to class,

ethnicity, gender and language (Webb et al., 2001, cited from Ihlen 2009, p.64-65). The following is a brief description of *habitus, field* and *capital* drawn from Ihlen (2009).

*Habitus* is a structuring mechanism that generates strategies for actors in the social world and through which actors relate to the social world. Habitus can be understood as a system of durable dispositions; that is, as an internalised mental or cognitive structure that functions both consciously and unconsciously and constrains what people should and should not do (Ihlen, 2009 p: 65). In other words, habitus refers to mechanisms that drive people, and argues that people are also capable of driving the mechanisms. Ihlen (2009) argued this as an open system; it produces society, but is at the same time produced by it (p.65). *Field* is a social space occupied by actors. Relationship and positions of actors is determined by forms of unequal power or capital. For example, the relationship between A and B is structured by the position occupied by A or the position of B as well as the amount of capital possessed in between A and B. (see Edwards, 2006 p.230)

*Capital* as the aforementioned discussion is something that is needed by the actors who struggle to positions themselves in the field. Ihlen (2009) argued that Bourdieu has written of several types of capital, which later on, he narrowed down to three fundamental types: economic capital (money, property); cultural capital (knowledge, skills, educational qualifications); and social capital (connection, membership of group). All these capitals may also be grouped as symbolic capital (p.66), which was argued, by Edwards (2006) as being 'generated by dominant groups misrepresenting their interests to the public, thereby normalizing social structures and habitus that support their position' (p.230). Ihlen (2009) argued that the characteristic of capitals is as follows:

i. Capitals are gained not naturally given, demand investment and are not something that is inherited,
ii. Capitals only function relationally within a field,
iii. Capital is scarce; it is in demand, and it creates differences.

The concept of *habitus, field* and *capital* by Bourdieu (1991) can be used to frame an organization's public relations activities. Organizations that are located in one or several fields compete with each other to position themselves with the help of struggling actors. The actors' struggle to make sure that the organizations' discourse is discussed defined and settled within fields. The amount and the type of capital possessed by organizations will determine the success of their struggle within the field (Edwards, 2006; Ihlen, 2009). However, in the context of this thesis, the concept of *habitus, field* and *capital* are useful in framing the analysis of how power could affect the dynamics of communication and relationship between actors. In this thesis, the analysis will go a step further outside the boundary of the organizations.

Another influential figure in the study of power in public relations is Foucault. However, in the context of this thesis, am more inclined to use Bourdieu' concept of *capital* to frame the discussion and analysis due to the research aim to look into the role of power in understanding the dynamic of communication and relationship. Foucault work as analysed by PR scholars such as Motion & Leitch (2009) was more related to the understanding of discourse production and transformation as well as the role of power/knowledge in the context of discourse formation. And, discourse formation is not the focus of this thesis.

### 1.6.1 Previous studies of power in public relations

The process of exerting power cannot be isolated from the process of relationship. This is because as Whitmeyer (1997) claims power is all about an attempt to influence and change individual or group behaviour, and this process certainly involves relationships in terms of communication between actors and subjects. Public relations practitioners are the actors in shaping the way society perceives an organization; the effort to influence society's thought certainly involves the need for power. This is in line with Aldoory (2005) when she pointed out that the concept of power along with identity and difference have become key concerns for organizations and publics because they affect relationships and relationships outcomes.

However, in the context of public relations literature the focus on power is very scarce. Leitch and Neilson (2001) argued that public relations scholarship has neglected the concept of power to its detriment (cited from Motion and Leitch, 2009). It was only recently that the importance of power being acknowledged and investigated (e.g., Berger, 2005; Edwards, 2006; Weaver, 2001; Weaver, Motion, and Roper, 2006) (Motion and Leitch, 2009 p.95).

For example, the circuit of culture model proposed by Curtin & Gaither is comprised of five interrelated elements. Curtin and Gaither stress that none of the elements can stand alone in explaining the process of public relations. The circuit itself implies that it is kind of a never ending process. These elements are: representation; production; consumption; identity; and regulations. Curtin and Gaither (2005) argued that power is the central element in each one of these five moments. In defining power, Curtin and Gaither (2005) argued that it is essential to move away from the more traditional definition of power by the Marxist-critical approach; hence, they shifted the definition of power by looking at Foucault's view of power.

Edwards (2006) concludes that current views of power in mainstream public relations theories are poorly developed, and that they are more explicit but still largely reflective of an agentic or structural perspective. In other words, the discussion of power in public relations literature was

more confined to the organizational level, which understands how public relations practices are affected by power inside an organization. Berger's (2005) investigation on how power struggles inside an organization, among the dominant coalition, affect the work of public relations activities represents a clear example of how power has been explored in public relations literature from the agentic/structural perspective.

I will now go on to show how the main elements of power, such as the sources of power, the actors involved, and the types of power, are being investigated in public relations literature about power.

Most studies about power in public relations were confined to the dominant tradition of power over. The concept of social capital by Bourdieu which proposed by Ihlen (2005 & 2007) as a basis for discourse about power in public relations clearly shows the concept of power over. The social capital is one of the several resources used by organizations to obtain or maintain positions of power and to gain support and understanding from stakeholders, which can be translated into mutual relationship. The symbolic power by Bourdieu which is cited by Edward (2006) as a concept to explain the process of public relations also falls under the category of dominant tradition of power over. Symbolic power is generated by dominant groups misrepresenting their interest to the public, thereby normalizing social structures and habitus that support their position. Bourdieu (1991) defined symbolic power through a given relations between those who exercise power and those who submit to it.

Motion (2005) adopted a Foucauldian lens to critique public relations practices that engage stakeholders in participative processes with predetermined outcomes. The study illustrated how a government-university alliance deployed public relations to gain legitimacy for economic change with the business community and more generally, New Zealand citizens. Similar approaches were used by Motion & Leitch (2007) to examine the effort of an organization to engage its stakeholders in the decision making process. The study found that the effort to engage stakeholders in decision-making processes were actually attempts by the organization to manipulate the public and exert indirectly their power over the public.

The actors who are involved and being studied in public relations literature concerning power were limited to the dominant actors only. Study conducted by Cho and Cameron (2007) aims to examine the power of health public relations practitioners in media relations. The focus of investigation in this study was on public relations practitioners and media practitioners. These two actors were indeed the dominant actors. Study by Berger (2005) to examine the effect of power

struggles within the dominant coalition to the practice of public relations is another example of dominant actors becoming the focus of enquiry.

Like the dominant tradition of 'power over' which concentrated more on dominant actors, the public relations literature, as the aforementioned pointed out, also shows the same pattern. Motion and Weaver (2005) and, Motion and Leitch (2007), enquiring into the involvement of the public in decision making processes found that, in the end, it was the dominant actors who emerged victorious. The focus on the more dominant actors is caused by the utopian aims of some public relations scholars such Grunig, Toth etc. to achieve mutual and perfect understanding between the organization and its public, thus resulting in the failure to consider the dynamics of the public, assuming that they are composed of information processing-individuals. Jahansoozi (2006) argued that this situation (mutual and perfect understanding) is achievable only if the elements of power are taken out, which is not possible. In addition, Karlberg (1996) noted, 'symmetry assumes that all segments of the population have the communication skills and resources to represent themselves in public discourse" (p.273). Yet the realities of practice seldom support such an assumption (Curtin & Gaither, 2005).

Up to this point, it is without doubt that any discourse about power and domination are inseparable. And, this has been widely debated by scholars as mentioned above. However, the discourse of power especially in the context of public relations whereby how power and domination affect the dynamics of communication and relationship between actors were not given enough attention. While Edwards (2009), citing the theory of practice by Bourdieu did making the remarks about actors are struggling to negotiate and renegotiate their position in the *habitus,* little did she discussed about how and what type of power that these actors use to negotiate their position. Thus, this research aims to look into further details on what type of power and how these powers affect the dynamics of relationship and communication.

## 1.7    Power and sports

This section will address the treatment of power in sport studies. The discussion on this matter will begin with identifying the main strands in sport studies literature. The need to identify the many paradigms in sport studies will help us to differentiate the approach and to understand more about sport studies. It will then be followed by analysing the approach as well as the themes being taken up by scholars who have been investigating power in sport studies.

Sport studies as a mature academic discipline of its own only began in the mid-1960s. What I mean by a mature academic discipline is that it began to attract interest from other scholars from

other fields to study sports. In this case, the social scientist began to make inroads into the traditional sports boundaries by looking at the sociological aspect of the sport. The traditional sports boundaries in this case refer to the physical, biomechanics of sports. Coakley and Dunning (2000) argued that this is largely due to five main interrelated and interacting developments (p. xxi). In brief these five developments were:

i.     The recognition among university teachers of physical education that sport and physical education itself are social practices and that it was culturally and historically relative. The curricula emphasizing sports, athletics training with biomechanics and exercise physiology is restrictive and lacking the benefit associated with locating and looking at a subject sociologically.

ii.    Sociologists such as Theodore Adorno, Norbert Elias, Max Horkheimer, Charles H. Page and Gregory P. Stone realised that sport was increasingly visible and important social practice, and that a sociology in which this was not clearly recognised would represent and foster an impoverished, perhaps distorted, view of the social world.

iii.   The publication of *The International Review of Sport Sociology* was one of the results from the general process of university expansion that took place in 1960s. This expansion process was accompanied by increased competition both within and between disciplines, and it both intensified the pressure on university teachers to publish and expanded the need for publication outlets.

iv.    The institutionalization of the sociology of sport during the 1960s was argued by Coakley and Dunning (2000) as one of the key moments in the long-term ongoing process of sociology sport. This moment was also called a 'permissive revolution' were originally grounded in significant equalizing shifts in the balance of class, racial/ethnic, gender and intergenerational power, largely in favour of hitherto subordinate groups. This situation was conducive to the expansion of sociology and the spread of sociological ways of thinking, into areas such as the study of science, religion, law, the arts, medicine, education and sport.

v.     The global polarization and nuclear stand-off between the 'first' or 'capitalist' world and the 'second' or 'communist' world during the cold war 1940s – 1980s created a context in which there was a perceived need to increase understanding of global power relations and the prominent and complex part that came to be played by sport in those relations.

Within the sociology of sport there are seven contesting paradigms with some of them are overlapping. These seven paradigms are functionalism, marxism, cultural studies, feminism, interpretive sociology, figurational sociology and post-structuralism. The following will be a brief description of these paradigms cited in individual chapter in a book co-edited by Coakley and Dunning (2000):

i. Functionalism – Loy and Booth (2000) who wrote the chapter about functionalism suggest that functionalism gave the early sociologist of sport a powerful weapon to counter charges that they were engaging in a trivial scholarly pursuit. Loy and Booth (2000) further argued that functional theory will guide researchers to investigate the relationship 'between sport and institution of acknowledge importance such as the economy, the polity and education'. Functionalism emphasised 'value freedom, objective measurement and statistical data'.

ii. Marxism – the chapter on Marxism was written by a German sociologist, Bero Rigauer. Rigauer was a student of Theodor Adorno at the University of Frankfurt (Coakley and Dunning, 2000, p.2). Rigauer argued that Marxist sociology of sport is problematic because it involves socio-economic determinism, a nomothetic model of social development; thus, it hinders and prevents the development of a sophisticated Marxist sociology of sport. Therefore, the revision of Marxism by Antonio Gramsci has resulted in hegemony theory, and Rigauer acknowledges that hegemony theory is the most fruitful effort in the interpretation of Marxism. Amateurism, fair play, rational recreation, professionalization, commercialization, mass mediatization, sports consumption, gender relations, politicization of the body and racism were among the key themes being addressed in hegemony theory (Rigauer, 2000, cited in Coakley and Dunning, 2000 p.43).

iii. Cultural studies – this approach was discussed and analysed by Hargreaves and McDonald (2000) who argued that cultural studies also concerned with a perspective influenced by Marxism, in this case the hegemony theory of Antonio Gramsci. Hargreaves and McDonald further argued that hegemony is a tool for explaining how ideas and practices which seem against the interests of subordinate groups are believed in and carried out by them so as to become commonsense. Cultural studies in sports concerned race, age, disability and sexuality as well as class and gender as the research themes.

iv.     Feminism – Susan Birrell, the contributor on feminist theories in sport
        argued that the main purpose behind feminist theories in the sociology of
        sport is to theorise about gender relations within our patriarchal society as
        they are evidenced by, played out in, and reproduced through sport and
        other body practices (p.3). Feminist theorists as acknowledged by Birrel
        (2000) face challenges and criticism from outsiders that tend to be
        conservative and founded in a belief that the differences between men and
        women are either 'divinely ordained' or 'genetically determined'. They (the
        outsiders) tend to view sport as a 'masculine activity' that is not meant for
        women.

v.      Interpretive sociology – this approach is concerned more with how
        sociologists interpret things or events around them. Donnelly, (2000) a
        contributor to the interpretive approach in sociology, quoted Johnson
        (1995), "a sociological understanding of behaviour must include the
        meaning that social actors give to what they and others do. When people
        interact, they interpret what is going on from the meaning of symbols to the
        attribution of motives to others" (p.146). In the context of sports studies,
        Donnelly (2000) argued that hermeneutic analyses of sport have most
        frequently taken the form of critical analyses of print and television media.
        The overwhelming majorities of such studies have been concerned with the
        representation of gender in media, with violence/masculinity a distant,
        though related, second (p.82).

vi.     Figurational sociology – The chapter on figurational sociology was written by
        Murphy, Sheard and Waddington (2000) who noted that figurational or
        'process sociology' has grown out of the foundational work of Norbert Elias.
        The key concept is structure or networks of mutually oriented and
        dependent people.   Elias further argued that the central aspect of
        figurational sociology is power, conceptualised not as a substance or
        property possessed by particular individuals and groups, but as a
        characteristic of all human relationship (cited from Murphy, Sheard and
        Waddington, 2000, p.5). As a 'process sociology' the application of
        figurational sociology into sport studies, as suggested by Murphy, Sheard
        and Waddington (2000) falls into four categories: early sportization
        processes, and the control of violence; increasing seriousness of

involvement, and the growth of 'professional' sport; football hooliganism; and the relationship between globalization processes and sport (p.95).

vii.     Post-structuralism – This chapter of post-structuralism was contributed by David Andrews. Andrews (2000) tells us that post-structuralism allows us to expose the dark side of sporting modernity by challenging the ethos of rational human progress embodied by-and within-modern sport culture (p.5). In other words, post-structuralism offers new ways of developing perspective on the history of society as argued by Seidman (1994) that post structuralism allow us to "depart from liberal and Marxist social ideas which draw our attention to the economy, the state, organizational dynamics, and cultural values. *Post-structuralism* offers social analysis on processes relating to the body, sexuality, identity, consumerism, medical-scientific discourses, the social role of the human sciences, and disciplinary technologies of control" (p.229, quoted from Andrews, 2000, p.115). Andrews cited the work of Gruneau (1991) about body; sexuality (Miller, 1995); Identity (Sykes, 1996) are among the works that carried the post-structuralism approach in sport studies.

Up to this point, I have shown the development of sociology of sports in sport studies. I have also outlined a brief explanation of the contesting yet overlapping paradigms within the sociology of sports studies. The brief explanation on the development of sociology of sport is just to draw a simple picture of the position of sociology in sports studies. This is essential due to the context of sports studies in Malaysia whereby the physical sports science were more dominant in sport studies. It is also worth noting here that Marxism, cultural studies, feminism, interpretive sociology, figurational sociology and post-structuralism did include the concept of power in their investigations. Thus, the subsequent discussion will attempt to show how the concept of power has been used in the different approaches of research in sport studies.

Hargreaves (1986) defined power as those who have access to scarce resources, as well as how available resources are deployed. He further argued that deploying resources depends on the ability of agents to develop an appropriate language, institutionalise reflection and generate knowledge. Another important concept that relates to power is the concept of hegemony. Hargreaves and McDonald (2000) argued that hegemony is a tool for explaining how ideas and practices which seem against the interests of subordinate groups are believed in and carried out by them so as to become commonsense. Power, as further argued by Hargreaves (1986) resides more

in the ability of the hegemonic group to win consent to, and support for its leadership, and on its ability to pre-empt and disorganise opposition, so that major forces in society are unified behind the hegemonic group.

Hegemony achieved through continuous process of work that includes, potential resistance is anticipated; organised opposition is overcome and disarmed opposition by broadening and deepening the base of support (ibid. p.7). Hargreaves (1986) also outlines that in sports studies the forms of power relations are: (i) compliance of subordinate groups through the use of physical violence; (ii) economic sanctions or threats; (iii) the assertion of authority; (iv)the prestige enjoyed by agents, and (v) the agents' persuasive power. Agents' persuasive power in this context refers to the power to coerce, to command or to persuade.

Beside the aforementioned forms of power relations in sports studies, the investigation of power in sport studies can also be grouped into a few categories. The first category is the analysis of power in issues relating to gender. Power in the relationship between sports organization, sponsors and media also becomes one of the focuses of investigation. The third category is the analysis of white powers in sport studies. The following discussion is organised based on these three categories. Moreover, at the same time the discussion will also indicate the existence of the form of power relations as argued by Hargreaves (1986) above.

Stronach and Adair's (2009) study on the future of Australian women's cricket is a clear example of how the struggle of power between males and females has become the focus in the analysis of power in sport studies. This study aims to examine the development of women's cricket in Australia since the men's Australian Cricket Board (ACB) and Women's Cricket Australia (WCA) amalgamated to form a gender integrated national body, Cricket Australia (CA). Stronach and Adair (2009) found that women's cricket enjoys little improvement, in terms of publicity and promotion of the sport, due to the managerial strategy in which women have little voice in decision-making within the state organizations, and are absent from the board of CA. The men who run the game of cricket have recourse to substantial amounts of revenue and sponsorship income, which are deployed as they see fit (p.910). This study certainly affirms the form of power relations by Hargreaves (1986), that power is assertion of authority.

The question of power in sports studies also has attracted the attention of Pringle (2005) in his attempt to compare Gramscian and Foucauldian theoretical tools to examine gender related issues in sports. Pringle (2005) acknowledged that Gramsci's hegemony theory has become the most utilised tool in analysing relationships between masculinity, gender and sports. It has provided an

important anti-essentialist, antireductionist, analytical framework for examining the construction of subjectivities and power relations within sports. However, Pringle (2005) argued 'that the continuing dominance of the usage of the concept of hegemonic masculinity may not be entirely fruitful for further analysis of the articulations between masculinity and sport' (p.257). The concept of power has been an important element in the investigation of gender related issues in sports studies. This is because in order to compare Gramscian and Foucauldian theory, the underpinning elements, which in this case would refer to power, would need to be at the centre of the discussion (Pringle, 2005).

The second group of power analysis in sports studies is the category of relationship between (within) sports bodies, sponsors and media, or what I would simply refer to as organizational power. Study by Dickson, Arnold and Chalip (2005) who aims to examine interorganisational power between independent federated networks and those organisations seeking to join the federations. This study found out that organizations within the federation are shown to have a power advantage over the potential affiliates. Access to, and how the organizations used their resources were seen as a means of exercising power. Assertion of authority and economic sanctions or threats was among the form of power relations found evidence in this study. The economic sanction or threat in particular was more prevalent in another study conducted by Wolfe, Meenaghan & O'Sullivan (2002).

Wolfe, Meenaghan & O'Sullivan (2002) aim to look into the relationship between the main actors in sports, which they identified as sports networks, such as, the National Governing Bodies (NGB), Media owners and corporate sponsors, and how the power in these relationships has shifted between these main actors. This study shows that the power of sports has shifted from the NGB to the media and corporate sponsors due to the economic power held by the media and corporations.

Both studies mentioned above show how certain organizations have become powerful over other organizations as a result of the advantage of having easy access to resources. However, access to resources as a means of exercising power is not the only problem being investigated in sport studies. The following discussion shows that in sport studies race relations with regard to the supremacy of white power, has also become an important object of analysis. King, Leonard & Kusz (2007) argued that the early inquiries into the racial subject in sport studies are rather in 'formalistic terms about prejudice and discrimination, discernible in the prevalence of stacking and stereotypes'. Recent research into the subject 'has stressed the cultural construction and complex conjunctures animating the production, circulation, and consumption of racial identities, images, experiences, and institutions' (p.3).

'White power' refers to 'the attitudes, ideologies, and policies associated with the rise of blatant forms of white or European dominance over 'nonwhite' populations. In other words, it involves making invidious distinctions of a socially crucial kind that are based primarily, if not exclusively, on the physical characteristics and ancestry' (Fredrickson, 1981 p.ix, quoted from King, Leonard & Kusz, 2007, p.4). It is not my intention to further debate about 'white power'; it is only to show that the study of power in sport studies can take the form of investigations into racial subjects such as, for example, 'white power'. In the context of Malaysia, from my own personal observation, there is a possibility of studying race and sports. This is due to the fact that Malaysia is a country of mixed races where Malay, Chinese and Indian are the main ethnic groups.

Apart from looking into the different approaches of enquiry into the nature of power in sports studies, it is also equally important to examine the actors and sources of power being investigated in sport studies. As the aforementioned analysis shows the study of power in sports literature tends to focus on the obvious power holders as actors, as well as sources of power. The book written by Boyle & Haynes (2000) as well as by Bernstein & Blain (2003), a chapter contributed by Boyle & Haynes (2006) presents a case about the relationship of sports and media with the premise that the media would affect sports and vice versa. There is nothing wrong with this premise, but it only shows and affirms the argument that within sports studies literature the focus on power studies is on the main actors: media, NGB, sponsorship.

My aim is to emphasise the tendency in sports literature to discuss and analyse the obvious power holders as actors, and as sources of power, and to show the lack of significant attention being paid to equally important actors, such as the supporters/fans. However, this does not mean that there are no studies regarding fans/supporters in sports studies. In fact, the study of fans or supporters is one of the main research areas in sports studies.

Most studies about fans/supporters are conducted in order to understand the behaviour of the fans towards the sports organization, and how a particular sports organization can use this understanding to attract more attention and further support from the fans. Bogle, Blais & Eisenberg (2009) conducted a study into fan characteristics, and the relationship of these characteristics to the overall success of a team. Bodet & Bernache-Assoilant (2009) in their study examining how fans react to and identify themselves with teams found that 'sport team identification, which reflects the extent to which an individual feels a psychological connection to a particular team or athlete, has been found to be a strong predictor of numerous affective, cognitive and behavioural reactions'. Gwinner & Swanson (2003) investigated the impact of fan identification with the team on four distinct sponsorships outcomes: sponsor recognition; attitude towards sponsor; sponsor patronage;

and satisfaction with the sponsor. Giulinatti (2002) has conducted a study to develop the taxonomy of spectator identities in football. The factors of satellite TV and pay-per-view TV, internet and telecommunication corporations, transnational sports equipment manufacturers, public relations companies, and major stock markets have caused the hyper-commodification of modern football, hence creating new group of football supporters. This study has successfully identified four different types of spectator identities in football, these are: supporter, fan, follower and flaneur. Whilst these studies managed to achieve their own objectives, they also serve to tell us that there are still huge gaps that need to be addressed, particularly when it comes to the study about the power of fans/supporters.

## 1.8    Conclusion

Up to this point, there are several interesting fact from the above discussion that worth noting and highly related to this study. In other words, it contributes to the overall theoretical framework of the study and it will shape the analysis of the data as will be shown in the following chapter. Thus, the following discussion attempts to relate the study of power in public relations as well as the study of power in sports.

The first similarity is between the theory of hegemony in sports studies as well as the theory of practice by Bourdieu in the study of power in public relations. 'Power' becomes the thesis of both theories. In the theory of practice, Bourdieu argued that power is institutionalise. A person has the power based on the consent of the subject. The theory of hegemony by Gramsci put power as the main elements in forcing the hegemony of the dominant power holder towards its subordinate. The two theories argued that power is located in the relationship between object-subject. However, most of the discussions concentrate on how the obvious dominant power holder exercise their power over their own subject.

As the extension of the above, there are indeed attempts to look into what types of power that were involve in the relationship between the object-subject. Study by Berger (2005), Cameroon and Cho (2007) for instance is an example of attempt to classify the type of power in public relations literature. Study by Wolfe & Menaghan (2002) from the sports studies is indeed an interesting attempt to map the power and relationship between the most obvious actors in sports such as the National governing body, sponsors and the media.

In terms of shaping the way how the data on this thesis will be analysed, I will be drawing on the gaps found on Berger (2005) as well as Bourdieu' conception of politic, economic and social capital.

Berger (2005) has managed to uncover the dimension of power relationship between the actors in an organization. In brief, his 'power over' label is an obvious vertical, top-down power relationship. 'Power to' is also a vertical, bottom-up power relationship while his 'power with' label represent the horizontal power relationship. Berger' (2005) power dimension however interesting it is, still unable to answer a question of what type of power are actually involves in shaping those dimension.

The answer for the above question could be found in the conception of politic, economic and social capital by Bourdieu. This is because Bourdieu argues that actors were capable of negotiating and re-negotiating its position based on the capital he/she possess. However, Bourdieu limit his explanation on the type of power involve in the process of negotiating and re-negotiating the actor position on the more general terms of politics, economic and social capital, which later on were label as 'symbolic capital' by Edwards (2006).

While we can deduce based on Bourdieu explanation that power does affect the dynamics of communication and relationship, we were still unable to answer the question of how (in detail) it affect the dynamics of communication and relationship. i.e, if its involved political capital, what kinds of political power are involves likewise with economic and social capital.

What we do know from Berger (2005)' power dimension and Bourdieu' conception of capital is the fact that; (i) Bourdieu tells us that power does affect the dynamics of communication and relationship between actor; and, (ii) Berger (2005) provide us with the dimension of power relationship.

Therefore, based on the above fact, this research project embarks on identifying in detail, how power affects the dynamism of communication and relationship between actors. In the quest for answering this question, it is imperative to notice that the quest will be guided by applying sociological approach, which is to look into the structure of the society. This is due to the fact that almost all studies about power as discussed in this chapter based their analysis on the structure of the society.

## Chapter 2
## Research Methodology

### 2.1    Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to outline the methodology employed in this thesis. The organization of this chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part will deal with the theoretical aspect, whilst the second will deal with the more tactical aspect of the research methodology. A statement of the problem that led to the formation of the research questions, together with the conceptual definitions, will be discussed in the first part. The second part of this chapter will discuss the research approach, highlighting the chosen approach, the data gathering method, the analytical process, and some reflexivity in the research process.

### 2.2    Problem statement

This section identifies the gaps and issues that led to the formation of the research questions. The gap that will be highlighted is the lack of attention given by sports literature towards the role of public relations. This will be followed by highlighting the issues of 'power' in public relations as well as the issue of power in sports studies. The final issue that contributes to the formation of the research question is the issue of sports and politics in Malaysia.

The discussion on the literature review (as in chapter 1) shows that there is an apparent lacks of attention or insight in sports literature into the role of public relations in sports (Spaaij, 2009). This is despite the fact that the role of Public Relations is embedded in entertainment, sport, leisure and tourism (L'Etang, 2008). I can assume that the same thing could be happening in the context of sports and public relations in Malaysia. This assumption is based on the fact, as described in the next chapter, that the practice of PR in Malaysia was associated to politics and the corporate sector. Therefore, it is an interesting investigation to fill in the gaps of public relations in sports literature.

The second theoretical issue is concerning the concept of power in public relations theory and power in sports literature. Both disciplines, as shown in the literature, do acknowledge the role of power. In public relations literature it has been suggested by critical scholars in public relations, such as Edwards (2006) and Ihlen et.al., (2009) that 'power' could form as a basis in constructing a new theory in public relations. On the other hand, the concept of power in sports literature, especially from the sociological perspective has become the central theme. Hargreaves (1986), Hargreaves & McDonald (2000) argued that power and hegemony in sports are interrelated. The concept of power in sports literature were also evidence in the study of sports networks (Wolfe, Meenaghan & O'Sullivan, 2002; Dickson et.al, 2005), gender study (Pringle, 2005).

These issues imply that it is indeed possible to investigate public relations in sports by using the concept of 'power' as the central theme. This is due to the fact that both disciplines are putting emphasis on 'power' for further research. As proposed by Motion and Leitch (2009) that, "The networks of power that facilitate discourse production and transformation and the resultant power effects of ideological changes are an essential research area for further study" (cited from Ihlen, Van Ruler & Fredriksson 2009, p.96). Edwards (2006) also propose the frameworks of Bourdieu's fields, habitus and capital for a more comprehensive picture of how power operates in public relations.

The discussion of the concept of power in public relations literature was dominated by scholars from the critical paradigm. L'Etang (2008, p.256) argued that researchers from the critical paradigm have drawn on "frameworks and insights from sociology and cultural studies". The perspective of sociology is to uncover social structures and the mechanisms that help produce or transform them. This perspective certainly suits the condition of the research subject in this thesis. This thesis is interested in studying the dynamics of communication experience by the local sports organization in Sabah, particularly in relating to the concept of power relations.

The framework of power in this study refers to the work of Bourdieu (1991) especially the concepts of habitus, field and capital that clearly signify the dynamics of communication/relationship between the actors. In brief, the actors need the capital to position themselves in the habitus and field. This is based on the argument put forward by Edwards (2006) and Ihlen et.al (2009). This framework suits the context of sports and public relations practice in Malaysia. As shown in the discussion in chapter 3, the development of sports in Malaysia is driven by government and is heavily linked to politicians. The link to government and politicians implies that there are some power struggles involved between the actors in sports and public relations in Malaysia. In other words, the field of sports in Malaysia is full with power struggle whereby the actors are using whatever capitals they have to position themselves within the field and habitus. And, in doing so it involves the process of communication. Thus, it is of interest to use 'power' as the central theme in investigating the dynamic of communication in the process of public relations in sport, especially in the context of Malaysian sports.

## 2.3    Research question

The formulation of research questions in this thesis were based on the several reasons. First, as shown in chapter three, most public relations research in Malaysia was dominated by the functionalist paradigm. Thus, there is a need to fill the gaps by bringing in the critical, discursive paradigm to enrich the body of knowledge in Malaysian public relations. Second, public relations and sport study in Malaysia is a new thing. Thus, critical/cultural study paradigm was seen as more

suitable because ontologically speaking, critical/cultural study allows for better interpretation of meanings in human interaction.

**2.3.1 Main research question**

The main research question and research objective of this study is 'To uncover how power affects the dynamics of communication in sports organization'.

**2.3.2    Research questions:**

1. How power affects the dynamics of communication
2. How power being exercise by the actors involve

**2.4       Philosophical assumptions**

Ontological assumptions are all about what a researcher sees in the social world, or as Mason (2002) puts it, 'what is the nature of the phenomena, or entities, or social 'reality' that I wish to investigate'? (p.14). In the context of this research my ontological positions are as follows:

1. To understand and to interpret how public relations work in sports, especially in the context of Malaysian sport.

2. To explore how power relations affect the dynamics of communication in sports organizations.

Epistemology is what 'we regard as knowledge or evidence of things in the social world' (Mason, 2002; p.16). Epistemology is concerned with the theory of knowledge, principles and rules that will guide a researcher to 'decide whether and how social phenomena can be known, and how knowledge can be demonstrated' (Mason, 2002, p.16). The assumption, as discussed in chapter 1 is there will be power struggle between the actors within the sports fraternity in Malaysia. Thus, the concept of capital by Bourdieu (1991) which outline how the actors are struggling to position themselves in the habitus has been drawn as the framework of this study. This is inline with the critical and cultural studies approach. As previously mentioned, critical and cultural studies approach allows for interpretation and since this study is aiming to uncover the dynamics of communication it is indeed appropriate.

**2.5 Conceptual definitions**

*Dynamics of Communications and the concept of capital*

This section will discuss the conception of the dynamic of communication based on the conception of capital by Bourdieu (1991). The sole reason as to 'capital' was chosen as the conceptual definition is due to the fact that this 'concept' highlighted how the actors are positioning and re-positioning themselves in the habitus. In negotiating as well as re-negotiating their position within the habitus, the actors are relying on their capital. This situation is relevant to this study in uncovering how power affects the dynamics of communication. Thus, the study on the dynamic of communication should be seen from the way the actors are employing their capital (power).

Beside, using the concept of capital to conceptualize the dynamics of communication, this study also employed the dimension of power relations proposed by Berger (2005). For instance, the 'power over' clearly signify the vertical, top-down relationship between actors. The 'power-to' represents another vertical bottom-up relationship, while the power-with can be seen as representing horizontal relationship between the actors.

My argument here is, while the concept of capital offered the views of struggling actors in negotiating as well as renegotiating his or her position in the field and habitus , there is no way we could see on what form the struggles are taking places and in how we could map the relationship between the actors. Thus, by employing Berger (2005) together with the concept of capital we could see the dynamics of communication and relationship between actors based on power struggle.

In the case of this research, how power can affect the dynamics of communication and relationship can be referred to the two Local Sports Associations' (LSA) attempts to influence their stakeholders. The actors were the sports organizations, the media and the public. The people behind the LSA were the main actors. Other actors were the stakeholders such as the media, the fans and the public. The following describes the chosen LSA and the issues faced by them.

The football team of Sabah FA was once a football powerhouse in Malaysia. The 20,000 capacity state stadium always enjoyed full attendance at home matches. However, after the match-fixing scandal that involved most of the key players, the performance of the team had declined. When a new management took over, they promised to restore the past glory of the state football team. The first notable action taken by this new management was the rebranding of the team by changing its mascot, nick name and logo of the team. The new President of Sabah FA who is also the Chief Minister of Sabah hopes that with the new identity, it can have a positive impact on the fans supporting the state team (http://www.newsabahtimes.com.my/nstweb/print/35536, accessed on 29th April 2010).

The second local sports association is the Malaysian Ladies Golfers Association (MALGA) which aims to promote golf to young rural schoolgirls. In the context of Malaysian sports, golf is associated with the rich, and is considered a rich man's game. Female involvement in golf has been

very small. Thus, the effort by MALGA to promote golf to young rural schoolgirls could be seen as an aggressive effort. Normally, only the daughters of the rich who happen to be members of golf clubs would have the opportunity to learn about golf. By expanding the net to encourage more young girls to learn about golf, MALGA is certainly transforming the current discourse of golf, especially women's golf in Malaysia.

## 2.5.2 Power

Power in this research refers to but is not limited to the definition of 'power over' as discussed in the literature review. However, the tendency to look into power as 'power over' was motivated by the fact that it was a dominant paradigm being explored not only by public relations scholars but also by the sport studies scholars. The sport studies literature shows that the theory of hegemony, which is similar to the concept of 'power over', has been well used.

As shown in the literature review, discussion on power should involve the actors, sources of power as well as types of power. Thus, in this research the actors involved are the sports organization, media, sponsors, fans and public. The source of power refers to political, ideological or economic power. However, in this research the source of power will mainly refer to but not limited to what Bourdieu called as political capital and economic capital. This is because, as shown will be shown in chapter 3, political and economic power play essential roles in shaping the sporting landscape in Malaysia. The concept of 'missing power' has been discussed in the literature review, and explains the situation where, within an organization, there are a small number of people who can use their position and power to advance their own interests rather than the organization's interest. This concept is probably the best explanation on why some organizations just fail to achieve their aims. In the context of this research, this 'missing power' concept is equivalent to the practice of self-interest by certain individuals, either within the organization or by other stakeholder from outside the organization.

'Power over' being a dominant type of power will be the main focus of this research especially in uncovering how power will affect the process of discourse transformation. However, as shown in the literature review, there are alternatives to power such as the 'power to' and 'power with' concepts. Therefore, all these concepts of power will be used in this research. This is because in the relationship and struggle of power the actors involved are constantly negotiating or renegotiating their own positions and will use whatever resources available to them to turn into power.

**2.6     Research Approach**

This research, as mentioned before, is employing qualitative approaches. The reason to choose a qualitative instead of quantitative paradigm is motivated by the fact that most public relations research in Malaysia is dominated by the quantitative, functionalist paradigm. Thus there is a need to fill the gaps by conducting this research within the qualitative paradigm hence Cultural/Critical studies approach was employed in this study. In brief, Mickey (2003) defined cultural/critical studies in public relations mainly to looks at the 'text produced' by the culture in terms of its political meaning for the culture. Each text represents an articulation of power. (p.15) The same premise is shared by Bourdieu (1991) who proposed that we need to look at the language as a way of establishing power and capital in a particular culture. Both Bourdieu (1991) and Mickey (2003) believe that in order to look at the power, researcher need to look into the artefact of the culture or the producer of the meaning, which is the text and language.

By analyzing the text a researcher could for certain identified who hold the power and what are the implications. However, there is something missing in that approach; (i) how the power is being exercised? And, (ii) how power affect the dynamics of communication and relationship? Hence there is a need to re-visit the approach taken by the cultural/critical studies in relying on the artefact of the culture – the text.

While I do agree that 'the text' represents an articulation of power, it is not the single, absolute reality that a researcher who embraced the cultural studies can rely on. Interpretivists believe that the reality is relative and multiple. This tradition also believes that there can be more than one reality and more than a single structured way of accessing such realities. Thus, I believe that the best source to look into the articulation of power is to go directly to the sources of power itself. Moreover this is in line with the beliefs among the cultural/critical studies that human being itself is the constructor of the culture. In brief, my argument is why you would go for the artefact when you have access to the original sources. Therefore, in this research instead of looking into 'the text' I would rely on the interviews with the respondents to investigate the articulation of power.

The second reason is due to the fact that sports public relation is an entirely new field to be explored in the context of PR research in Malaysia. Since, very little known about this, interpretative approach is the most suitable. By employing interpretative approach it will serve as the foundation for further research in exploring the field of sports public relations in the context of Malaysia. (In the final chapter need to have this as the suggestion for further research)

To answer the stated research questions, a semi-structured interview was employed and this was triangulated with archives / document check, as well as by cross checking the respondents' answers with another respondents. This type of triangulation is what Creswell (2003) termed as Concurrent triangulation strategy. Creswell (2003) argued that a researcher who attempts to

confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate findings within a single study will choose this method of data gathering (p.217).

Interviews have been chosen as a main method of data collection for this research because it allows for gathering "descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena" (Kvale, 1983, p.174; cited from Opdenakker, 2006). The choice of interview as the main data gathering method was motivated by the fact that it offers flexibility. Daymon & Holloway (2002) argued that 'Key features of interviews are that they are flexible and allow you to understand the perspective of interviewees. Since the aims of this research project were to uncover the dynamics of communication, interviews were seen as the most appropriate tools to examine the perception and views of the people that were involved inside the sport organizations as well as with the stakeholders.

There are three main types of interview. However the structured interview was out of contention as it was more suitable for quantitative research rather than qualitative because structured interviews eliminate the elements of flexibility that are so essential in an interview. The unstructured type of interview, whilst offering more flexibility to "generate the richest data and often uncover surprising evidence (but) they also have the highest 'dross rate' (the amount of material that of no particular use for your study), particularly if you are inexperienced at interviewing" (Daymon and Holloway, 2002, p.170). Based on the above limitations it was decided that for this research project, the semi-structured interview was the most appropriate approach. Semi-structured interviews not only allow more room for flexibility, but at the same time help the researcher to stay focus on the issues or topic to be covered.

The semi-structured interview was chosen as the most suitable approach due to the varied background of respondents. This is confirmed by Barribal and While (1994), who argues that "the varied professional, educational and personal histories of the sample group precluded the use of standardised interview schedule" (p.330).

Not only were the respondents' backgrounds varied, the LSA chosen for this study were operating under different conditions and targeting of different audiences. Thus, the flexibility offered by semi-structured interviews played a very important role in helping me to adapt the questions. The use of semi-structured interviews was also suitable for "the exploration of the perceptions and opinions of respondents regarding complex and sometimes sensitive issues and enable probing for more information and clarification of answers" (Barribal and While, 1994, p.330). This is indeed proven in this research. For example, I had the opportunity to do a follow up interview with one respondent from MALGA to double check with her on the transcript of the first interview. It was during this second interview that she revealed another fact which she was a bit reluctant to

reveal during the first interview. Barribal and While (1994, p.331) further argued that probing, in particular can be an invaluable tool for ensuring the reliability of the data as it is. For example, it:

i.    Allows for the clarification of interesting and relevant issues raised by the respondents,

ii.   Provides opportunities to explore sensitive issues,

iii.  Can elicit valuable and complete information,

iv.   Enables the interviewer to explore and clarify inconsistencies within respondents' accounts,

v.    Can help respondents recall information for questions involving memory.

Semi-structured interviews mean that I have to prepare sets of questions that I would like to ask. Thus, for this research, a set of questions have been prepared in advance. The questions were formed based on the main research questions. However, this is only serving as a general guide, not a rigid one.

Archive and document analysis was the secondary data gathering method employed in this research. The sole purpose of employing and integrating this data gathering technique in this research was none other than providing information that "may differ from or may not be available in spoken terms, and because documents endure over time, therefore providing historical insights" (Hodder, 2000 cited from Daymon and Holloway, 2002, p.216). Daymon and Holloway (2002) further argued that "the messages and corporate identity that companies wish to convey to key audiences are revealed in documents that are intended for external audiences, such as annual reports, press releases, briefing documents, newsletters, corporate videos, websites, advertisements and corporate mission statements" (p.217). However, only MALGA has proper record keeping practices; the SAFA did not have proper record keeping practices. Thus, the initial plan to use document analysis to cross-validate the interview was abandoned. However, document analysis is still being used in this research to provide necessary information, especially on writing about the background of sport in Malaysia as shown in chapter 3.

## 2.7    Sampling

Purposive sampling was employed in this research. This was due to the fact as argued by Marshall (1996, p.523),

> "Qualitative researchers recognise that some informants are richer than others and that these people are more likely to provide insight and understanding for the researcher. Choosing someone at random to answer a qualitative question would be analogous to randomly asking a passer-by how to repair a broken down car, rather than asking a garage mechanic-the former might have a good stab, but asking the latter is likely to be more productive".

Thus, in this study, the respondents have been chosen based on the criteria that they can provide me with the required response. This type of sampling procedure is what Marshall (1996) termed as Judgment sample. Under this procedure, Marshall (1996, p.523) explained that, "the researcher actively selects the most productive sample to answer the research question. This can involve developing a framework of the variables that might influence an individual's contribution and will be based on the researcher's practical knowledge of the research area, the available literature and evidence from the study itself."

Therefore, the respondents were chosen based on the framework of this study, which is about power, relationships and dynamics of communication. Based on this framework, the sampling procedure was divided into two different stages. The first stage was to find suitable local sports organizations as a subject of study. This was needed due to the fact that this study seeks to explore how power could affect dynamics of communication. Hence, two local sports associations (LSA) in Sabah have been chosen because all two of them were involved in some public relations activities. In brief, Sabah Football Association was promoting new images for the state football team and MALGA was promoting golf to rural school girls. Their (LSA) quests to promoting new brand of the team as well as campaigning to have more girls to play golf are certainly fit the framework of this study. For instance, SAFA re-branding process has tick the box of some dynamic relationship with the group of fans. The same thing goes to MALGA, because their campaign is certainly inviting criticism in terms of gender bias. Fans relationship and gender bias were main topics covered in sports power literature as shown in chapter 1. This is further explains in the following table.

**Table 2.1: Sport organization and the scenarios**

| Name of Organization | Scenario |
| --- | --- |
| Sabah Football Association (Sabah FA) | The new management team under the leadership of Sabah' Chief Minister trying to revive the image of the once power house in national football arena. |
| Malaysian Ladies Golfers Association (MALGA) | Promoting golf to women, particularly to young rural schoolgirls in Sabah. |

After identifying the above LSA, the next stage in sampling procedure was to identify the appropriate individual/respondent that was capable of providing the required response. The following table shows the list of respondents that have been chosen for this study.

**Table 2.2: Sampling of Respondents (Interviewee)**

| A. Respondent from the case of SAFA | Position |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Datuk Osman Jamal | Vice President 1 |
| 2. Alijus Sipil | Secretary General |

| | |
|---|---|
| 3. Shahriman Abdullah | Honorary Treasurer |
| 4. Hasbullah Yahya | Executive Secretary |
| 5. Adzhar Mohammed | Executive Officer / Media Officer |
| 6. Jeffery Michael | Owner/ Founder, Sabahrhinos.com |
| 7. Shahrin Said | Moderator, Sabahrhinos.com |
| 8. Edrief | Moderator, Sabahrhinos.com |
| **B. Respondent from the case of MALGA** | **Position** |
| 1. Datin Jeannette Tambakau | Vice President, MALGA |
| 2. Datuk Rabeahtul Aloyah Abbas | Executive Director, MALGA |
| 3. Datuk Robin Loh | President of MGA |
| 4. George Bandusena | President of SGA |
| 5. Zurah Zulfikar | Teacher / Golf coach |
| 6. Salimiah Jamili | Teacher / Golf coach |
| 7. Benedict Bototol | Teacher / Golf coach |

In the above table, respondents Datuk Osman Jamal, Shahriman Abdullah and Alijus Sipil were chosen as interviewees due to two main reasons. First, it was this trio who initiate the move to take over the management of SAFA. Second, Datuk Osman Jamal even though just a vice president but he is one of the closest to the Chief Minister of Sabah cum President of SAFA. Shahriman Abdullah being a former state player himself and a successful managing partner of an architecture firm in the state was instrumental in using his own money to initially funding the state football team. Alijus Sipil is the president of a local football club in the city of Kota Kinabalu as well as politically connected to the chief minister. Thus, they are more than appropriate to be interviewed.

Mr Hasbullah Yahya was a retired custom officer. He was handpicked by the president of SAFA to be the executive secretary. Being an executive secretary he is one of the most resource persons within the new organization of SAFA. Mr Adzhar Mohammed is the full time staff of SAFA. Being a full time staff he is an important respondent in giving me the necessary information about the long history of SAFA.

Jeffrey Michael, Shahrin Said and Edrief were respondents representing the online forum-SabahRhinos.Com. This group was chosen because they were the first and active unofficial group of fans. During the period of the old management of SAFA, SabahRhinos.com has a very good relationship with them. However, when the new management of SAFA takes over, the relationship was not as cordial as with the previous management. Thus their views are essential in establishing the nature of relationship between the management of SAFA with their fans.

For the case of MALGA, basically there were three main groups of respondents. The first group represents MALGA. Jeannette Tambakau is the vice president of MALGA, a successful businesswoman in Sabah and the person-in charge of the women golf development program in the state. Rabeahtul Aloyah Abbas, being the Executive Director of MALGA is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the association. In short, she is the heart of the association.

The case of MALGA is an obvious example of gender struggle relations in sports. In a patriarchal society of Malaysia golf is always seen as a game exclusive to man. During the first interview with Jeannette I was made to understand that there is some 'misunderstanding' between MALGA and MGA which is the governing body of golf in Malaysia. I was lucky enough that Robin Loh, the president of MGA was a Sabahan (a person who live in Sabah) hence I managed to interview him. George Bandusena, the president of Sabah Golf Association (SGA) came into equation because I was made to understand by a sports journalist who is a friend of mine that George is the middle man between MGA and MALGA particularly in Sabah.

The three teachers cum golf coach were chosen as respondent due to their participation in the golf for girls programme. The teachers are the important actors in MALGA quest of promoting golf to the rural school girls. The decision to include the teachers was vindicated when it was later found that the teachers do exercise their own capital in implementing the programme on behalf of MALGA.

In sport studies literature, media was one of the important stakeholders apart from sponsors, hence, the need to include local print media practitioners as respondents. The sampling of media personnel in this study concentrated on the sports desk editors of three local newspapers. This is because the three local newspapers were the bestselling (high number of readers and circulation) in Sabah, which surpasses the readership and circulation numbers of the national newspapers. The discussion on the media situation in Sabah has been explored in chapter one. The sports desk editors are also responsible for which news to be published as well as acting as a gatekeeper for the news reported by the on-field journalists. However, during the field work/ data gathering process, only two editors agreed to be interviewed. Apart from these two local print media sports editors, another media practitioner was included in the sampling. He is the current President of Sabah Journalist Association, currently holding the post as bureau chief for a national newspaper. Nonetheless, what makes him more important was the fact that he used to be a sports journalist and once rocked the country with his investigative reporting on the issue of match-fixing scandal in national football. Another important respondent that was included in the sampling was a representative from the government's point of view. And, for this purpose I managed to obtain an

interview with the former State Minister of Youth and Sports. The following table summarise the profile of these respondents.

**Table 2.3: Profile of additional respondents**

| Respondent from Media / Government | Position |
|---|---|
| 1.  Situl Mintow | Sports Editor, The Borneo Post |
| 2.  Michael De Laharpe | Sports Editor, The New Sabah Times |
| 3.  Joniston Bangkuai | Bureau Chief, The NST Group / President of Sabah Journalist Association |
| 4.  Masidi Manjun | Former State Minister of Youth and Sport / Current State Minister of Tourism |

## 2.8 Data Analysis / Analytical Process

Burnard et.al (2008) explained that in qualitative research there are two fundamental approaches to analysing qualitative data, the deductive approach and the inductive approach. For this study, the inductive approach has been used. This was because, nothing is known in the study about sports, public relations, and power and discourse transformation, particularly in the local context of Sabah. This was consistent with what Burnard et.al (2008) argued: that the inductive approach in analysing data for qualitative study was most suitable when "little or nothing is known about the study phenomenon" (p.429). For this study, thematic content analysis was the method used to analyse the data, which was in the form of the interview transcript. Burnard et.al (2008) argued that:

> "This method arose out of the approach known as grounded theory, although the method can be used in a range of other types of qualitative works. Indeed, the process of thematic content analysis is often very similar in all types of qualitative research, in that the process involves analysing transcripts, identifying themes within those data and gathering together examples of those themes from the text" (p.429).

Therefore, for this study, the first step in analysing the data began with transcribing the recorded interviews. After the transcribing process was done the next step of the analysis was to make some notes, or assigning labels to "sum up what is being said in the text" (Burnard et.al (2008, p.430). This is usually known as the open coding. This process is shown in the following table;

**Table 2.4: Initial Coding framework – the open coding**

| Excerpt  from Interviews | Open coding |
|---|---|
| "Sponsor, of course there are other party give their (italic, own word added, translated from Malay language) sponsor but mostly the government link company This task to get the government link to sponsor is the chief minister, the presidentlah" (Shahriman Abdullah, Honorary Treasurer) | Power of chief minister to get private sponsors |

| | |
|---|---|
| "So the only different is one have money and the other doesn't have that much money, meaning to say ah, it's easier under CM (Chief Minister) to get sponsors compare to Datuk Anifah. So the handicapped is there" (interview with Osman Jamal, Vice President 1) | Chief minister capable of pulling in sponsors |
| "it was agreeable by the president, branding after fifteen years kan its high time for branding, re-branding its happening everywhere … err chief minister he want branding, something different, new thinking" (Shahriman Abdullah, Honorary Treasurer) | Chief minister position to back up decision |
| "We have identified one person – Joe- to lead the fans club of SAFA, the Sepanggar UMNO Youth Chief and also at the same time he works as the media officer for the Chief Minister of Sabah, also the president of SAFA. One of the reasons we choose Joe because he is answerable to the Chief Minister, so it is easy to monitor the fan club" (Alijus Sipil, Secretary General – translated from Malay language). | Control & answerable to chief minister |
| "We decided to get a politician to head the fans club because he has the influence, he has the followers...he can bring his followers to the stadium to support or cheer up the team" ( Hasbullah Yahya, Executive Secretary – translated from Malay language) | Influence and followers |
| "The current management line-up could be said as stable and rock-solid, what I mean by this is when we look at the President of SAFA he is also the Honourable Chief Minister, he is the Chief Minister of Sabah" (Alijus Sipil, Secretary General – *translated from Malay language)* | Political credibility of the chief minister |
| "first I would like to talk about the appointment of the Chief Minister which is a good thing because with his name on it, more sponsors would want to inject some funds into the team, ermm which I think really help the team this year, because previous years we will always hear from the players themselves that they don't get their salaries for one or two months and I know even myself if I don't get my salary its like ermm you have to pay the bank you have to pay credit card, so from what I hear this year there is a lot of finance available so its kind of improving the morale of the team" (Jeffery Michael, Sabahrhinos.com founder) | power of chief minister of pulling in sponsors |

The next stage involved 'a refining process' by which the list of categories in the open coding will be reduced. This can be worked out by crossing out all the duplicated open coding. By doing this, the final coding framework will emerge. This final coding framework then forms the basis for the emerging theme. This is shown in the following table.

**Table 2.5: Final coding framework**

| Final Coding | Initial Coding / Open Coding |
|---|---|
| 1. Patronage | • Chief minister position to back up decision<br>• Control & answerable to chief minister<br>• Influence and followers<br>• Political credibility of the chief minister<br>• Power of chief minister of pulling in sponsors |

The next stage in this process was to define the theme that has emerged from the final coding framework. This was being done by weaving the theme with the existing literature or theoretical framework to give the theme a solid and more subtle meaning. This weaving process is shown in the following table;

**Table 2.6: Description of themes: Patronage**

The Oxford dictionary defined patronage as the support given by the patron and the power to control the appointment to office or the right to privileges. In this case, the Chief Minister of Sabah is the patron. This dictionary definition certainly reflects this theme because of the obvious elements of support, control and privileges are present. The element of support can be seen clearly from the capability of the Chief Minister who is also the President of SAFA to get private sectors especially the Government Link Companies to sponsor the state football team as illustrated in the following quote:

> "Sponsor ermmm of course there are other party give their (*italic, own word added, translated from Malay language*) sponsor but mostly the government link company This task to get the government link to sponsor is the chief minister, the presidentlah" (Shahriman Abdullah, Honorary Treasurer)

As a Chief Minister who is also currently holding the post of state Minister of Finance he is in direct control of the affairs of all Government Link Companies (GLC) in the state. In other words, the CEOs and the Board of Directors of the state GLCs will have to report and responsible to the state Ministry of Finance.

The element of control in this theme can be seen from the action taken by the management of SAFA to appoint a new president of the newly formed fan club. This new president was chosen because he is at the same time assuming the duty as the press secretary to the Chief Minister. This appointment implied that the new management of SAFA wanted to have good control of the fans' affairs as indicated in the following quote:

> "We have identified one person – Joe- to lead the fans club of SAFA, the Sepanggar UMNO Youth Chief and also at the same time he works as the media officer for the Chief Minister of Sabah, also the president of SAFA. One of the reasons we choose Joe because he is answerable to the Chief Minister, so it is easy to monitor the fan club" (Alijus Sipil, Secretary General – translated from Malay language).

UMNO (United Malay National Organization) in the above quote refers to the main party, which makes up the ruling coalition known as the National Front (Barisan Nasional). The Chief Minister of Sabah is the current state Chairman of this ruling coalition. At the national level, UMNO is also the major party in the National Front coalition. Sepanggar is one of the areas located near to the capital city of Sabah, Kota Kinabalu. With this background it is apparent that political patronage indeed exists in sports. This is consistent with the widely accepted definition of patronage. Sorauf (1960, cited from Bearfiled, 2009) defined patronage as "an incentive system – a political currency with which to purchase political activity and political responses". Thus, the appointment of Joe as the new president for the newly formed fan club serves two purposes. One, SAFA will have control of the fan club activities; the second and the most important meaning is that the President of SAFA is using his political position (Chief Minister) to reward his own political supporters using sports. Joe on the other hand will reap the benefits of increasing his own political mileage by riding on the popularity of football.

To sum up, the theme of patronage refers to the support, control and access to privileges. Support, control and privileges are given by the patron, who is the Chief Minister of Sabah. The access to support, control and privileges are made possible by the political power held by the Chief Minister himself who is holding the highest executive power and position in the state.

Altogether, there are 7 themes that have emerged from the interviews. The summary of these themes is shown in the following table. The full discussion of each individual theme is shown in the appendix A.

**Table 2.7: Themes and Description**

| Theme | Description |
|---|---|
| 1. Patronage | Refers to the support, control and access to the privileges. This support, control and privileges are given by the patron, who is the Chief Minister of Sabah. The access to these supports, control and privileges made possible due to the political power held by the Chief Minister himself who is holding the highest executive power and position in the state |
| 2. Gender | This theme highlights how males perceived females' increasing participation in male dominated sports. Males, perceived that females incursion into male-associated sports as a threat to their dominance and a challenge to their masculinity. Hence stereotyping views of women's involvement in golf by MGA was maintained. |
| 3. Government Direct Involvement | To sum up, the theme of Government Direct Involvement can be divided into two equally important conceptions. First the notion that the state government is just being responsible by providing all the necessary support either financial or logistic to local sport associations. This could probably be due to the absence or limited involvement of the private sector in sports development. The second notion indicates abuse of power by the government. This is due to the fact that the state government prefers the elite few (in the case of golf development) rather than the public. |
| 4. Networking | Networking in this research refers to the effort of garnering support and help for the local sport associations. It is also worth noting that through networking, it implies the hierarchical society of Malaysia. This is something that needs to be taken into consideration because networking only happens within the same level of class. For instance, business people will find it easy to get the support from its own business networking; the royalty will find it easier to get the higher level politicians for their help. This led to a question of, does networking is the extended version of dominant coalition? This will be further discussed in the concluding chapter. |
| 5. Source – media relations | The source-media relations theme tells us about the dependency relationship between these two. However, due to the dependency on media, the LSA has come out with two notable ways of getting the media to support them. One is through engagement whilst the other practice is to embark on a more personalised relationship with the reporters. Through these, the LSA has actually managed to maintain its role as a primary definer by manipulating their relationship with the media. |
| 6. Strong-arm-tactics | This theme is a clear manifestation of 'power over' as practiced by SAFA and MGA to assert their authority. This has been achieved through ignoring their stakeholders by having no consultation on the process of changing the state football team identity. Threatening the golf players on their future is the tactic use by MGA. |
| 7. Self-interest | Self-interest could be considered as a small amount of power that belongs to some significant minority stakeholder. This small amount of power enables the individual concerned to further their self-interest. This self-interest does to a certain degree affect the relationship between LSA and its stakeholders and often will push the LSA to renegotiate its own power. |

(*For the full discussion and description refer to Appendix A*)

## 2.9    Credibility, Dependability, and Confirmability

Zyzanski et.al (1992, p.234) argued that "the equivalent terms for reliability and validity for qualitative data are credibility, dependability, and confirmability. These are generally verified by using triangulation, reflexivity, and independent audits". Brody (1992, p.177) argued that in triangulation, "the naturalistic investigator seeks trustworthiness in data collection by trying wherever possible to use multiple methods and divergent data sources". In this research, triangulation was done by collecting data from different sources. For instance, the data from the interviews with respondents from SAFA were triangulated with the views of the fans. During my first interview with the Secretary General of SAFA he claims that SAFA has a good relationship with the fans. However, after interviewing the owner/founder of Sabahrhinos.com, an online forum for the fans of Sabah FA, it was revealed that the new management of SAFA has a cold attitude towards them (the Sabahrhinos.com group). Thus, during the follow up interview with the Secretary General of SAFA, only at this time did he admit that the new management of SAFA did not 'recognise' this group of fans. Moreover he also admitted that their decision to change the previous mascot, logo and nickname of the state football team was done without consulting the fans.

Through this kind of triangulation, I have also discovered that the idea of changing the mascot, logo and nick name of the team was not that of the Chief Minister/President himself but from the council members. Initially, I was given the impression by the Vice President of SAFA that it was the Chief Minister who wanted to change the logo/mascot to give the team a new image. However, during my interview with the executive secretary, I discovered the idea to change the mascot/logo of the team was mooted by one council member during the council meeting. My personal feeling was to believe the executive secretary because he was the one who write the minutes of the meeting.

Another procedure being taken to increase the credibility, dependability and confirmability of this study was through 'participant validation'. Burnard et.al (2008, p.431) explains that "participant validation involves returning to respondents and asking them to carefully read through their interview transcripts and/or data analysis for them to validate, or refute the researcher's interpretation of the data". In this research, participant validation was carried out with the main respondents from each LSA. For instance, I had the opportunity to do a follow up interview with the Vice President of MALGA, Datin Jeannette Tambakau who was responsible for the Youth Development Programme in Sabah and, with Alijus Sipil, the Secretary General of SAFA.

To increase reliability, the sample should be less homogeneous, as Zyzanski et.al (1992; p.235) argued that "as one makes samples more homogeneous, the reduced variability generally tends to reduce reliability". That is why, for this research, the samples are purposely varied due to

the need to get more varied input that could increase the reliability of this study. The sampling procedure has been discussed before.

To sum up, every necessary step has been taken to ensure the validity and reliability of this study as mentioned above. However as argued by Burnard (2008; p.431), "despite perpetual debate, there is no definitive answer to the issue of validity in qualitative analysis". Thus, a qualitative researcher should be as explicit as possible to help the reader critically assess the value of the study (Burnard, 2008). Therefore, to present a broader picture for the reader to critically assess the value of this study, the following section of reflexivity has been added.

## 2.10    Reflexivity

Pillow (2003; p.179) argued that "reflexivity becomes important to demonstrate one's awareness of the research problematic and is often used to potentially validate and legitimise the research precisely by raising questions about the research process". Charlotte Davies (1999; p.4, as quoted from Pillow, 2003; p.178) states that "reflexivity, broadly defined, means a turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference. In the context of social research, reflexivity at its most immediately obvious level refers to the way in which the products of research are affected by the personnel and process of doing research"

Therefore, in this reflexivity section I will try to question as well as explain my role in this research. To do this, I will focus my reflexivity on four issues which I personally think have the main influence on this research. The first issue is the transition of my research paradigm from functionalist to critical paradigm. Second issue concerns the relationship between me as a researcher with the respondent, as the subject of my research. Third issue is my personal interest in the subject of study. Finally is my over dependence on the western theoretical framework in analysing the data.

For years, my world view about public relations was largely dominated by functionalist paradigm. This was due to my background back home, teaching public relations for undergraduate, which heavily depended on US public relations textbooks, such as Cutlip et.al.  However, for this research, a critical paradigm has been employed to suit the qualitative research approach. The point here was the transition process from the functionalist to critical paradigm had somehow influenced my thought on how to analyse the data, particularly during the process of uncovering the theme. Initially, my mind and eyes were always looking for some pragmatic topics in the transcript of the interviews. This was due to my inclination to the functionalist paradigm. For instance, at one point, if not pointed out by my supervisor, I was not aware that I had included a functionalism perspective in the conclusion of one of the analysis chapters. The changes of paradigm, also led to the discussion of meaning being altered several times, until the obvious elements of functionalism were eliminated.

However, I will not entirely dismiss the possibility that some functionalist perspective might creep into the discussion in this thesis. This is because it was a painful experience to make such a paradigm transition.

Another matter worth questioning in this reflexivity was my relationship with the subject or respondents. Does my role as a researcher influence the way those respondents responded to my questions? Or does the respondents' 'power' and 'position' in society influence the way I asked them? There were instances where the subjects influenced the way I posed questions to them. For instance, one of the respondents is a senior, high-ranking state official, where protocol must be observed at all times. I've found that this was a very unpleasant experience. I had to limit myself from further probing my questions.

This kind of power dynamics between me as a researcher and my informant has certainly affected the data for this study. In one of the interview this high-ranking state officer has claimed that the idea to do the re-branding exercise came from the president cum the Chief Minister of Sabah. This indirectly implying a vertical top-down order from the higher up and it was stopping me from further asking, why. However during my interview with the executive secretary of SAFA, he confessed that the initial idea of re-branding actually came from the honorary treasurer as well as the vice president which I have interviewed earlier and claimed that the re-branding idea was from the president. So, obviously it has forced me to re-think on how to treat the data from these interviews especially regarding the conflicting answer about the idea of re-branding.

The dynamic of relationship between me and my informants was built over time. There were two cases that I would like to highlight here. First refers to the vice-president of MALGA. We have met several times. The first time I have met her, the kind of conversation was very formal. After I have finished transcribing the first interview with her, she agreed to meet once more to check on the transcript of interview. It was during this second meeting that she revealed more and more stories about MALGA strain relationship with MGA. Another example is my relationship with the Executive secretary of SAFA. Like, the vice-president of MALGA, I have also met the executive secretary of SAFA several times.

Of course, I have to admit that by having the opportunity to meet and built the relationship with the informants of this research it somehow do affect the data as well as the outcome of this study. For instance, in the case of finding who actually mooted the idea of re-branding SAFA, I am more inclined to believe with the executive secretary of SAFA. First, due to the fact that he is the record keeper of the association and second, perhaps due to the good, less formal relationship built over time with him. The second example is with the Vice-President of MALGA perhaps due to the less formal relationship, she was more willing to reveal more stories.

All these plays an essential aspect in the way I've interpret as well as presented the data that shape the analysis as well as discussion of the research findings. This dynamics of relationship with my informant has certainly affected my bias, thus ultimately influence and shape the way I treated the analysis of the data.

On another occasion, what was supposed to be a one-to-one interview with the respondent, turned out to be a briefing meeting where the respondent seemed unprepared to be interviewed. He even called in his two officers to help him to answer my questions. Therefore, whatever resulted from that meeting, it had to be treated as just supporting data.

The third issue that may have influenced my findings was the overdependence on western theoretical frameworks for my data analysis. For instance, as discussed in chapter 1, for the data analysis I'll be relying on Bourdieu (1991)' conception of capital as well as Berger (2005) dimension of power relationship. The concern here was how accurate the representation would be, because the theoretical framework was a result of observing a western society setting, as opposed to the eastern society setting in this study. On another note, I should consider that by doing this (using the western theoretical framework, to analyse eastern society setting) I am actually contributing to the current body of knowledge. The contribution was in the form of expanding the usage of these theoretical frameworks to analyse data from different settings of society.

Another factor that needs to be included in this reflexivity is the question of why I choose to investigate sports and public relations, moreover on the choice of subject of study such as football and golf. I must admit, the choice to investigate sports and public relations is due to my work background. Being a lecturer, or members of the academia, it means that I have to upgrade my knowledge in public relations. And, I see sports as an interesting discipline where public relations can play essential role as well as opening up new boundaries for the role of public relations, at least in the context of sports in Malaysia. Apart from fulfilling my academic ambitions, the choice of doing my study in sports and public relations is encourage by my interest in sports especially on football and golf. This interest has indirectly influenced my connection and access to the local sports organizations chosen for this study. My access to these organizations was made easy due to my existing networking.

Whilst acknowledging that my overdependence on western theoretical frameworks to analyse data obtained from an eastern society setting may have influenced the meaning generated from the data, it is worth noting that this also helps to enrich the data by providing different meaning— thus opening up possibilities for future debate.

**2.11    Conclusion**

This chapter has described the approach being employed in this study. It is also worth noting here about the fact that, qualitative study is and always will be subject to the question of its validity. To answer this question, it has been shown in this chapter, as explicitly as possible, that all the necessary steps have been taken to ensure that the reader can critically assess the value of this study.

**Chapter 3**
**Public Relations, Media and Sport Landscape in Malaysia**

**3.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to provide essential background to put the research in context, by providing a clear understanding of public relations, media and sports in Malaysia. The discussions in this chapter are divided into three main parts. First, there will be a discussion of the media system in Malaysia. The discussion will touch on the evolution of media from the colonial period right into the emergence of new media, i.e. the Internet in Malaysia. Media and political connections will also be included in the discussion; due to the fact that political influence and media operations in Malaysia are inseparable.

The second part of this chapter will deal with the evolution of public relations in Malaysia. The discussion of public relations' evolution will be drawn largely from the analysis by Syed Arabi Idid (2004). The decision to rely on Syed Arabi Idid (2004) is due to the fact that his work is considered as the most comprehensive work on public relations evolution in Malaysia. Apart from Syed Arabi (2004), there were another two local scholars who discuss about the evolution of public relation in Malaysia such as Hamdan Adnan (1986) and Nordin Sopiee (1986). This will be followed by discussions on the current status and practice of public relations in Malaysia and finally, the analysis will touch on the past and current public relations research paradigms in Malaysia. The understanding of the tendencies of public relations research paradigms in Malaysia will help to uncover the gaps in research, and to point out the need for a more diverse paradigms and scope of research, in order to enrich the body of knowledge for the profession, as well as the industry.

The third part in this chapter will be on the sporting landscape in Malaysia. Unlike literature on media and public relations, there is a lack of previous research concerning the sports landscape in Malaysia. Therefore, to fill in the gaps, the discussion will be based on archive material, news reports and interviews with respondents. Therefore this thesis genuinely breaks new ground. The discussion will focus on the role of government and politics in the evolution of sport in Malaysia. It will demonstrate how the Malaysian government has been the driving force in taking the initiative to lead the development of sports in the absence of private sector involvement.  One of the important milestones in the evolution of sports in Malaysia was the formation of the National Sport Policy, initiated by the federal government. This will be the focal point of discussion concerning the role of the federal government in developing sports in Malaysia. Then, it will be followed by a discussion on

the issue of the Sports Development Act's 1997 extension to the state of Sabah and Sarawak. It is worth noting this issue as it will mark the demarcation line in the role of sports development between the federal and the state governments— particularly in the context of this research, the state government of Sabah. Since politics has been the backbone of sports evolution in Malaysia, the tension in sports also mirrors the local and national political tension. The final part of this chapter will be on the background of the two local sports organizations that have been chosen as the subject of study in this research. This draws on empirical data collected for the study to provide a clear story-line and context for the thesis.

## 3.2    Mass media system

Malaysian mass media have a long history going back to the colonial period, and the number and circulation of print media has increased since independence. There are newspapers in Chinese, Tamil, Malay, English and even newspapers in local language as can be found in Sabah and Sarawak, the two east Malaysia states. English language newspapers have grown in number despite the emphasis given to Bahasa Malaysia as the national language. There are 53 newspapers but most are concentrated in the Klang Valley where the federal capital, Kuala Lumpur, is situated. In general, print media are privately owned; however, there are cases where some newspapers are politically linked, and some are directly owned by political parties (Syed Arabi Idid, 2004).

Based on the data obtained from the Audit Bureau of Circulation Malaysia the total newspaper circulation in Peninsular Malaysia alone is about 2.5 million in 2008 with 30% of that total belonging to the Sin Chew Media Group that own the four main Chinese language newspapers. This is followed by the NSTP group that own two Malay language newspapers, *Berita Harian* and *Harian Metro*, and one English language newspaper, *The New Straits Times*. The following table explains more about the daily newspaper circulation groupings by company in Peninsular Malaysia (West Malaysia).

**Table 3.1: Daily Newspaper Circulation Grouping by Company (Peninsular Malaysia) July 2007 – June 2008**

| Newspaper | Language | Group | Percentage of total circulation | Total Circulation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sin Chew | Chinese | Sin Chew Media Group | 30% | 2,495,565 |
| China Press | | | | |
| Nanyang | | | | |
| Guang Ming | | | | |
| Berita Harian | Malay | NSTP Group | 26% | |
| Harian Metro | | | | |
| New Straits Times | English | | | |
| Utusan Malaysia | Malay | Utusan Media Sales | 13% | |
| Kosmo | | | | |
| The Star | English | Star Publication | 12% | |
| The Sun | English | Nexnews Group | 12% | |
| The Edge | | | | |
| Kwong Wah | Chinese | Others | 7% | |
| Oriental Daily News | | | | |

Sabah, the Malaysian state, located on the northern part of the Borneo Island, also has its own local newspapers, apart from the other national newspapers. There are three main local newspapers in Sabah with English being the main language, plus Malay and Kadazan (local dialects) language in the same newspapers. These newspapers are *Daily Express, New Sabah Times* and *Borneo Post*. As shown in the table 1.2, *Daily Express* is the most circulated local newspaper in Sabah surpassing the circulation numbers of national newspapers such as *The New Straits Times* and *The Star*. The lowest circulation of the national newspapers, regardless of language, in Sabah is due to geographical constraints. The national newspapers were printed in Kuala Lumpur, which is two and

half hours by flight to reach Kota Kinabalu, the state capital of Sabah. Whilst the local newspapers can reach news racks in the early morning, the national newspapers are only available on news racks as early as mid-morning. In some places, like the eastern town of Sabah, the national newspapers will only become available on news racks the day after.

**Table 3.2: Daily newspapers circulation grouping by language, (Sabah) 2008**

| Language | Newspaper | Circulation |
|---|---|---|
| English | Daily Express | 30,748 |
| | New Sabah Times | 23,017 |
| | Borneo Post | 21,522 |
| | New Straits Times * | 1,883 |
| | The Star * | 2,329 |
| Chinese | Overseas Chinese Daily News | 17,295 |
| | Morning Post | 9,300 |
| | Asia Times | 19,354 |
| | See Hua Daily News | 22,936 |
| | Merdeka Daily News | 6,948 |
| Malay | Utusan Borneo | 8,756 |
| | Berita Harian * | 5,953 |
| | Utusan Malaysia * | 1,392 |
| Total Circulation | | 171,433 |

*National newspapers

Source: (www.abcm.org.my, accessed on 04/02/2010)

The electronic media on the other hand have been owned by the government since they were established in 1937 (Radio) and 1963 (TV). It was only in 1984 that the government permitted a third TV station, called TV3, to be owned by the private sector (Syed Arabi Idid, 2004). Currently there are three main players in electronic media ownership in Malaysia; these are the government

itself, the Media Prima group and the ASTRO. The government own two TV stations, namely TV1 and TV2 with a number of state radio networks and regional radio networks. The Media Prima group own TV3, NTV7, 8TV and TV9 as well as three radio stations with national coverage. The media prima group also own 43% of equity interest in NSTP, one of the largest print media publications that publish mainstream newspapers such as *The New Straits Times*, *Berita Harian* and *Harian Metro* which they claim to be the number one daily newspaper in Malaysia (Media Prima 2008 Annual Report).

All Asia Networks plc (ASTRO) on the other hand is the satellite TV provider and currently have around 2.6 million subscribers (ASTRO 2009 Annual Report). Apart from providing access to satellite TV channels, ASTRO, through its sister company AMP Radio Network, also provides a number of radio stations with 11 million listeners; that was equivalent to 51.2% of the total listeners share in 2009 (ASTRO 2009 Annual Report). In the context of sports broadcasting, ASTRO is the biggest provider; they have the right to broadcast live international sporting events such as football matches from the English Premier League and a number of world sporting events.

The media in Malaysia is governed by rules and regulations. There are numerous laws regulating the operation of mass media in Malaysia. For example, operators have to apply annually for a license to operate a newspaper; this was made mandatory by the Print and Presses Act 1984. The media must also contend with the Official Secret Act, The Internal Security Act (which allow for detention without trial), and the Libel Act. Several incidents have caused operators to be cautious in writing about politically sensitive news. There have been cases in the past when newspapers, including the popular daily *The Star* and *Sin Chew Jit Poh*, had their publishing licenses suspended for a while without any reason being given. The Print and Presses Act does not require reasons to be provided (Syed Arabi Idid, 2004).

There is a close relationship between members of the media and politicians in Malaysia, as in other countries. Early journalists in Malaysia were close to politicians who were their main sources of news, but in later years, seeing the importance of journalism to political development, politicians began to own or control (directly or otherwise) various publications. The *New Straits Times* and *Utusan Malaysia* are owned by a group of persons who are closely allied with UMNO (United Malays National Organization), the dominant coalition of the *Barisan Nasional*, the party that has ruled the country for over two decades. *The Star* and many other newspapers are also closely affiliated with the political world. The Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), an important component of the ruling *Barisan Nasional*, acquired a 67.35 per cent share of *The Star* through its investment arm, Huaren Holdings Sdn. Bhd in 1979. In 1981, the MCA acquired the Chinese daily, *Malaya Tung Pao* and

renamed it *Tong Pao*. There are also party newspapers such as *Harakah* that are owned by the opposition party PAS (Parti Islam se Malaysia) (Syed Arabi Idid, 2004).

Changes in the media ownership landscape of Malaysia have resulted in the formation of bigger conglomerates, thus making the relationship between media and politicians even closer. For instance the Media Prima groups which controlling the major daily newspapers in the country, four TV stations and three radio stations are closely linked to UMNO. It is obvious that media under the Media Prima group will give favorable news coverage for UMNO and will likely portray a negative image of the opposition. An analysis of media content by Syed Arabi Idid during the 1990, 1995 and 1999 general elections revealed that the mainstream media (print and broadcast) gave more coverage to the Barisan Nasional, the party in power, than to the opposition party (Syed Arabi Idid, 2004); the same trends continued during the 2004 and 2008 general elections.

The internet as a new media has been given priority by the government. The formation of the National Information Technology Agenda (NITA) launched in December 1996 by the National IT Council (NITC) provides the foundation and framework for the utilisation of information and communication technology to transform Malaysia into a developed nation by 2020 (www.nitc.org.my, accessed on 05/02/2010). It has proposed a national top-down approach, with the government providing incentives and support to enable Malaysia to leap into technological development. The policy framework has been spelt out in the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth (added) Malaysian Plan. The Malaysian Plan is a 5 year development plan (added). Campaigns and various incentives have been provided by the government to increase the level of Internet penetration among Malaysians (Syed Arabi Idid, 2004). From just 15 percent penetration of Internet facilities among Malaysians in 1996 (Syed Arabi Ididi, 2004), the level of Internet penetration has increased to 65%, as shown in the following table (and Malaysia is the 2nd highest in terms of internet penetration compared to the other ASEAN countries).

**Table 3.3: Comparison of Internet penetration among ASEAN countries**

| Country | No. of population | No. of Internet users | Internet penetration |
|---------|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Singapore | 4.5 million | 3,370,00 | 72.4% |
| Malaysia | 25.7 million | 16,902,600 | 65.7% |
| Brunei | 388,190 | 217,000 | 55.9% |
| Vietnam | 88.5 million | 21,963,117 | 24.8% |

| Philippines | 97.9 million | 24,000,000 | 24.5% |
|---|---|---|---|
| Thailand | 65.9 million | 16,100,000 | 24.4% |
| Indonesia | 240 million | 30,000,000 | 12.5% |
| Laos | 6.8 million | 130,000 | 1.9% |
| Cambodia | 14 million | 74,000 | 0.5% |
| Myanmar | 48 million | 108,000 | 0.2% |

Source: www.internetworldstats.com/asia.htm#vn, a

## 3.3     The evolution of public relations practice in Malaysia

There are not many scholars who venture into studying the evolution of public relations in Malaysia. Currently, there are only three local scholars who have studied the evolution of public relations. These scholars are Hamdan Adnan, Noordin Sopiee and Syed Arabi Idid. However, these three scholars offer different interpretations about the evolution of public relations practices in Malaysia. The most obvious differences among them are their ideas concerning the origin of public relations practices in Malaysia.

Hamdan (1986; as cited from Syed Arabi Idid, 2004) argued that public relations in Malaysia begin as early as the 15th century during the Malacca sultanate; however, Nordin (1986; as cited from Syed Arabi Idid, 2004) claims that the real practice of public relations in Malaysia began after the 2nd world war when the locals began their struggle to fight for independence from the British. Nordin (1986) made this claim based on the effort taken by the British to form the department of Publicity and Printing. Syed Arabi Idid (1986) on the other hand offered another different claim. Syed Arabi Idid (1986) argued that the modern public relations practice in Malaysia began well before the 2nd world war. This argument was based on several indicators such as the existence of the local mass media system, and the fact that the British appointed G.L Peet, a senior journalist with *The Straits Times* in Singapore, as the director of information. In order not to add further confusion regarding the origin of public relations (as well as its development), the following discussion will be based on highlighting how the roles of public relations practices have developed over the years by using historical facts as evidence. This will be drawn from the discussion laid by Syed Arabi Idid (2004).

i.      Public relations as a tool for propaganda

Propaganda was a term that was heavily associated with public relations practices in the early years of PR practice in the United States. Propaganda is regarded as making an important contribution to the mobilization of public opinion (Weaver, Motion & Roper, 2006). The same applied to the development of public relations in Malaysia. Syed Arabi Idid (2004) claims that the initial stage of public relations practice in Malaya was marked by the involvement of the British in the war in Europe in 1939. Malaya at that time was under the rule of the British; therefore, the Britain wanted its citizen to be well informed about the war whilst supporting British involvement in the war. Therefore, to disseminate and manage information in favour of the British, an Information department was formed with G.L Peet, a former senior journalist with *The Straits Times*, appointed as the first director. Another British colony such as the North Borneo also had an information officer as a newspaper agent for the government.

However the British government in Malaya found out that the Information department was unable to cope with the demand; thus, in 1941 a new department was formed, named the department of information and publicity. Dr. Victor Purcell was appointed as a general director of this new department whilst G.L Peet continued his role as director of the information department. The inclusion of publicity tasks in this newly formed department was to focus more on disseminating information to the public by other means apart from relying on the mass media alone, especially newspapers. This department had four main tasks: (i) keeping the local people aware of the war in Europe; (ii) disseminating formal information; (iii) disseminating news through government department; and, (iv)Working closely with the ministry of information in London as well as with the Far eastern bureau, an agency under the ministry of information in Singapore. However, the functions of this department were forced to stop when the Japanese army invaded Malaya on December 1941.

Public relations linked with the mobilization of public opinion or propaganda was evident in the formation of the department of public relations after the 2nd world war when the British came back to Malaya and decided to form a Malayan Union. The British needed the support of the people of Malaya to make the proposed Malayan Union a reality. Therefore, the formation of department of public relations under its first director Mubin Sheppard was tasked to:

i)      Instill in the minds of Malayans that the British were not defeated during the 2nd World War but instead withdrew to New Delhi, India, to prepare for a counter-attack. This declaration was made to restore the loss in reputation the British had suffered when they were seen to have been defeated by an Asian power.

ii)     Restore law and order in the country, as civil order had broken down when the Japanese were defeated and there were racial riots in the country. The police had been disbanded when the Japanese took control of Malaya.

iii)    Organise campaigns to urge the people to grow rice and vegetables to overcome shortages in food. It was one of the early campaigns organised by the government, and a public relations department was made responsible for it. The methods of conducting campaigns laid down before the war were carried out in later years also.

The proposed Malayan Union however failed to materialise due to stiff objection by the people of Malaya. However the department of public relations was the stepping-stone in the formation of the department of information, which was later renamed department of information services in 1952. This new department played a very important role in the fight against the communists during the insurgency from 1948 to 1960. This department helped in conducting campaigns to win the support of the people to fight against the communists. The government campaign to fight against the communists was seen as a very successful public relations campaign. The government sent out messages to the public to stop supporting the members of the communists. At the same time messages were conveyed to the communists who stayed in the jungle urging them to surrender. The leader of the communists, Chen Ping, finally agreed to call of the struggle and agreed to negotiate with the government.

Public relations as propaganda were also evident in Malaysia during the confrontation with Indonesia and the Philippines in 1963. Syed Arabi Idid (2004) concluded that this confrontation event was the beginning of international public relations practices in Malaysia. At this time the propaganda hadn't only happened internally but also externally. The first prime minister of Malaya, Tunku Abdul Rahman proposed to form the federation of Malaysia, which would constitute the Malaya, Singapore, Brunei, Sarawak and Sabah. Brunei, Sarawak and Sabah were a British colony in the Borneo Island. However, this proposal was objected to by Indonesia because when Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei joined the proposed federation, Indonesia had ambitions to form Indonesia Raya constituting the whole of Borneo Island. The Philippines on the other hand claimed that Sabah - the most northern states in Borneo belonged to the Sulu Sultanate from the Mindanao - the southern province of the Philippines. The government then formed an External Information Office under its Foreign Ministry which was tasked to make sure Malaysians' views about the confrontation with Indonesia were known to other countries and at the same time to gain foreign support to the proposed federation of Malaysia. "The government realised the importance of communicating its

views to other countries. The External Information Office was able to make several strategic moves that helped win the fight with Indonesia (Syed Arabi Idid, 2004: p 214).

ii.      Public relations and information management

Besides mobilizing public opinion, public relations also involved in managing information to ensure sufficient information was disseminated to the target audience. Failures in disseminating sufficient and appropriate information to the intended audiences would often cause major problems in a multi-racial country like Malaysia. The Malay, Chinese, Indian, Iban and Kadazan are the main ethnic groups. Every ethnic group has its own characteristics, culture, language and even faith. This multi-racial situation proved to be a problem in the early years of Malaysia. The bloodiest racial riot that took place on 13th May 1969 between the Chinese and the Malay prove of the vulnerability of ethnic relations in Malaysia. A commission formed by the government to examine the cause of this racial riot found that one of the reasons was that people were inadequately informed of its policies. The commission who conducted the study led by Tun Sambathan suggested that every ministry be provided with a press liaison officer tasked with disseminating information about the ministry to the media. Initially, the government followed the suggestion from the Tun Sambathan report by appointing press secretaries to the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister. Eventually every ministry is given their own press secretary.

iii.     Public relations and corporations

Before 1980 public relations was seen to serve government affairs purposes. Public relations offices in government departments were known as press agencies and would provide information to the public. However, Syed Arabi Idid (2004) argued that the role of public relations in Malaysia changed when the fourth and longest serving Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad took office in 1980. Mahathir Mohamad introduced several new policies that indirectly affected the practice of public relations in Malaysia. The Privatization policy means that several government agencies were to be privatised. The objective of this policy was to reduce the burden on the government, as well as to ensure better services to the people. At the beginning three frontline utility agencies had been privatised; these were the Department of Telegraph and Telephone, which became the Telekom Malaysia, providing telephone services; the Department of Electricity, which became the Tenaga Nasional Berhad, providing electricity; and the Department of Post, which became the POS Malaysia to provide postal services. The privatisation policy certainly changed the practice of public relations. Apparently it was obvious that the early part of public relations practices in Malaysia were more government oriented and related more to propaganda and publicity activities. It was argued by Kaur (2002) that public relations as a formally recognise practice in Malaysia has its roots in the

government sector. As the country became more developed and attracted more interest from foreign investors the roles and practice of public relations changed. Public relations are now needed not only for publicity purposes but also in managing identity and image of an organization. Malaysia has seen a definite growth and an increase in the sophistication of the public relations practice in the past two decades, especially since privatization (Kaur & Halimahton, 2006; p.12). However, the evolution of public relations practices in Malaysia did not sail as smoothly as the aforementioned explanation. Public relations faced issues and challenges as the following discussion aims to highlight.

## 3.4     Issues and challenges of public relations

Most professions have their own governing body to represent as well as to promote the profession. In Malaysia the Institute of Public Relations Malaysia (IPRM) is the governing body for the public relations profession. The IPRM was formed in March 1962 and was seen by Hamdan (2009) as a significant milestone in the growth of its modern and professional practice in the country. IPRM is to promote the interest of public relations practitioners and enhancing its practice in the country. IPRM formation enabled public relations practitioners to have a unified voice, which enhanced their influence and reputation (Hamdan, 2009; p.5). However, the IPRM struggled to meet its objectives due to several issues and challenges faced by the IPRM and the profession as well as the public relations fraternity in general.

The question of image and professionalization of the profession have become the main issues of public relations. Whilst public relations is accepted as a strategic partner in management and is integrated within organizations, it faces challenges such as being identified with karaoke singers and social escorts (Syed Arabi Idid, 2004).  Shameem (2009; p.48) past president of the Institute of Public Relations Malaysia (IPRM) has been championing the issues of getting the right recognition for public relations by continually urging practitioners, especially the young graduates, to join the IPRM. She strongly believes that with one strong voice through IPRM will be able to erase the negative stigma surrounding the profession such as it being associated with the work of club hostesses.

> "The aim for fresh graduates and young practitioners is to want to belong to a fraternity body, network with professionals with similar interests and champion their cause. They should support our national fraternity body so that we have an active national body for public relations in the country" (Shameem, 2009: p. 48).

Public relations also suffer from the lack of recognition by the management of an organization. Most corporations in Malaysia see public relations as the supporting actor for sales-

marketing-HR function or it is relegated to a technician role. The inability of public relations to gain proper recognition is due to the lack of a recognised industry standard (Doris, 2009a; p.9). Therefore, to overcome this problem the IPRM has taken the initiative in communicating to the public that public relations is indeed a serious business by launching an accreditation programme for the public relations practitioner.

The IPRM accreditation programme is a voluntary certification for the public relations practitioners as an ongoing effort to put the public relations profession on par with other professional profession such as lawyers, accountants and doctors (Hamdan, 2009). The accreditation's main objective is to recognise prominent and experienced public relations professionals and to allow other practitioners to attain professional standing. This accreditation process also aims to raise the level of professionalism of the public relations as a practice. It is a measure of the public relations practitioner's experience and competency in the field, and the last objective of the accreditation programme is to provide a formal certification among the public relations practitioners (Hamdan, 2009). Doris Lim (2009a) argued that, the accreditation programme is to separate the bona fide practitioners from the wannabes. Following the model used by the CIPR UK for accreditation a total of 47 Public Relations practitioners were awarded the accreditation status which carries the prefix APR for the first time (Shameem, 2009).

Whilst the IPRM continues to struggles to portray the good image of the profession by lobbying the government for the chartered status of the profession, as has happened in countries such United Kingdom, Nigeria, Panama and Brazil (Doris, 2009a; p.10) it still must face problems within the public relations fraternity itself. Some practitioners are wary of the chartered status by pointing out that it is rather elitist, and have a strong academic slant, which throws the qualifications of every Public Relations professional into the limelight for public scrutiny (Doris, 2009b; p.2). Another long unsettled problem faced by the public relations profession is regarding the definition of the profession. To date there is no one definition of public relations that has a universal acceptance. Any effort to do so seems to be futile. Some public relations practitioners are even making fun of efforts by their own professional bodies to come up with a universal definition. How public relations are defined will greatly depend on what emphasis is given to its roles and responsibilities and its specific practices (Hamdan, 2009).

Malaysian public relations practitioners' response to IPRM is also in a very sad state. Hamdan (2009) argued that public relations professional bodies are finding it hard to attract all those practicing to be members, and to be governed in the manner of other traditional and recognised professions. Shameem (2009) estimated that the number of Public Relations

practitioners in Malaysia covering both East and West Malaysia stands at around 10,000 people. However, there are only 950 public relations practitioners are the registered members of IPRM and this number represents 45 percent of Public Relations practitioners working in the capital city of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur (Shameem, 2009). Whilst the IPRM doing its part in promoting the profession, the institutions of higher learning also play its part in promoting public relations through offering courses as well as conducting academic research to contribute to the development of the body of public relations knowledge in Malaysia. Therefore, the following discussion aims to highlight the roles and contributions made by the universities in Malaysia towards the development of public relations practices and the profession.

## 3.5    Public relations education and research

The number of education institution offering public relations courses is increasing at the steady rate. Universiti Sains Malaysia was the first public university offering degrees in public relations courses in 1971 followed by the Universiti Teknologi MARA in 1972. Currently, most public universities in Malaysia offering public relations courses, for instance Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, offered them under the School of Media and Communication; Universiti Putra Malaysia offered them under the Faculty of modern language and communication; Universiti Utara Malaysia offered them under the Faculty of Modern Language and Communication; and, Universiti Malaysia Sabah offered them through the School of Social Sciences. Public relations courses have become a magnet because they have managed to attract more students. Thus, most private universities also offer public relations courses, such as LimKokWing University, Taylor College and many more.

The public relations courses offered in Malaysia basically are modeled after those offered in the United States or United Kingdom. The approach to public relations education by Malaysian academics is similar to that of scholars in the US/UK. The orientation seems western with Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000) being the main text book. International public relations journals such as *Public Relations Review* and *Public Relations Quarterly* are available in most of the universities' libraries (Syed Arabi, 2004).

The current state of public relations in Malaysia can be argued to be more related to business and politics. Most studies about public relations conducted in Malaysia, especially when looking at the profile of its practitioners; concentrate on the public relations people from the business-industries sector as well as the people from a political background. The focus of public relations towards the business sector is not surprising when we look at the background of the council member of IPRM. Almost all the previous council members of IPRM were from the business-

industry sector, for instance Shameem Abd. Jalil (past-president) is the head of public relations at Public Bank, one of the leading banks in Malaysia, whilst Doris Lim the vice president owns a consultancy com company specializing in investor relations. This fact indicates that public relations in Malaysia are now more related to the business sector compared to the early years of its practice where public relations was more related to the political aspect, i.e. Government relations.

The tendency to align the practice of public relations in Malaysia with business affairs becomes clearer when we look, for example, into the paper presented at the International Public Relations Conference 2007 held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia organised by the Institute of Public Relations Malaysia. Most of the discussion focused solely on the business world with topics ranging from investor relations to media relations and to corporate social responsibility.

From the local academic point of view, there is an extreme shortage of public relations academics teaching and conducting research specifically in public relations in Malaysia (Khattab, 2000 in Zulhamri 2007). This argument is certainly worth noting because the study of public relations in Malaysia are rather limited to a few topics such as: the study of professionalism of the profession; ethics and relationships with media; roles of public relations; as well as the history or evolution of public relations in Malaysia. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, there were only three studies being conducted to ascertain the evolution of public relations development in Malaysia.

There were quite a number of studies on professionalism conducted in Malaysia. Syed Arabi Idid (1994) leads the trend when he conducted nationwide studies on the function, responsibilities, and the profile of public relations practitioners in 1977 and 1992. Idid's first study (1978) found that the majority of public relations professionals were certificate and diploma holders. Of these, 23 per cent had an undergraduate degree and 4 per cent a master's degree. Idid's second study (1994) found that 44 per cent had an undergraduate and 10 per cent a master's degree, reflecting an almost doubling of degree holders (Syed Arabi Idid, 2004).

Kaur (2002) conducted a study of the profile of heads of public relations departments, limiting the analysis to the Klang Valley consisting of Kuala Lumpur – Petaling Jaya areas. She found that 72% of the 123 department heads she interviewed had less than 10 years of experience working in the public relations field. Several came into public relations from other fields, including journalism and administrative careers. She also found out that even more graduates had ventured into public relations because 80 percent of her respondents had university degrees whilst 17% had a diploma in public relations. Roziyaton (2004) in Kaur (2006) found that there was a decreasing trend among

practitioners joining any media organizations prior to joining the public relations industry (29.9%) compared to Idid's (1992) earlier study which stand at 34%.

Another study on professionalism was conducted by Zulhamri Abdullah (20070. His study titled 'Towards the Professionalization of Public Relations in Malaysia: Perception Management and Strategy Development' explored the status and standard of public relations as a profession as perceived by three main groups involved in public relation: academics, practitioners and business leaders. Zulhamri employed qualitative in-depth interview and policy document review as his methodology. His interview was targeted to the academician who involved in public relations, practitioners as well as CEOs of companies ranging from oil to banking, property to gaming to automobiles. One of his findings suggests that public relations is a good profession but still cannot be equal to other professional professions such as doctors and accountant.

Apart from professionalism studies, there was also a study about ethics and the relationship between PR practitioners and journalists. Such a study, conducted by Kaur and Halimahton, (2006) aims to examine the differences and similarities in perception held by public relations practitioners and journalists in terms of: satisfaction with contributions made to each other; their interdependence; ethical practices; and levels of trust one group has for the other. The data from this study suggest that public relations practitioners believe more strongly that the information they provide to the journalists enables the latter to perform more satisfactorily compared to the journalists who think less strongly about the contribution made by the former. The public relations practitioners also seem to think that there is more of a symbiotic relationship between the two groups than the journalists.

The roles of public relations practitioners also become the topic of choice among public relations academician in Malaysia. Kaur (2005) conducted a study on the managerial role of public relations practitioners of 16 organizations in Malaysia. She found that media relations were one of the programmes that practitioners managed the most. The public relations heads also thought that the planned activities resulted in positive media coverage and publicity. Kaur (2005) further concluded that working with the media is a priority task among practitioners; thus some employers think a journalism background will assist in ensuring a more effective outcome of the dealings with the media.

All the above studies were conducted under the functional, positivist paradigm which is expected given that most of the public relations academicians were trained in the US/UK and Cutlip, Center and Broom has become the main text book in public relations courses in universities (Syed

Arabi Idid, 2004). However, it does not mean that there are no studies from the cultural, critical paradigm being conducted. One such study was conducted by Khattab (2002). She analyzed how the control of media by the elite leads to the failure of public campaigns due to the inability of public relations practitioners to understand its public because of over-reliance on the data generated from a positivist research. Khattab (2002) further argued that new methods of reality construction should emerge since technological tools for public relations become more sophisticated— as well as the fact that today's society is far more complex.

From my personal observation, the research from the critical and cultural perspective on public relations in Malaysia was not well received by the public relations fraternity. This observation was made based on my personal experience as an academician attending several academic conferences. Any presentation that employed critical perspectives will meet with sceptics view by scholars from positivist group. Often they (positivist scholars) will question the validity and reliability of such argument. Critical scholars also perceived as anti-establishment group. Again, as mentioned before, this is due to the educational background received by the researcher as well as the pressure from the industry that wanted more focus on the applicability of the research on public relations to the practitioners. Thus it will not be easy to convinced the public relations fraternity in Malaysia that were used to the functionalist perspective to read critical works in public relations.

## 3.6     The evolution of sports in Malaysia.

The main document that serves as the focal point of reference in drawing the evolution of sports in Malaysia was the *Final Report: Study and review of the National Sports Policy Malaysia for the Ministry of Youth and Sports*. This report was commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports and it was prepared by a sports management consultant, Leonard De Vries (2006). It was implied in this report that the Malaysian government was and is the driver for the development of sports in Malaysia. It was noted that government involvement in sports begun way back in 15 May 1964 where a dedicated Ministry of Youth and Sports was formed in conjunction with the National Youth Day. There is no concrete answer as to why only in 1964 a dedicated Ministry of Youth and Sports was formed seven years after Malaysia achieved its independence from the British in 1957. Boyce & Smith (2009) argue that the members of the British government believed in the view that there is a potential use of sport as a tool for social cohesion and promoting national prestige (p. 30); thus, in the context of Malaysia as a young, newly independent nation with mixed race population of Malay, Chinese and Indian, and a legacy from the British, sport was seen as a tool to promote unity in the society. Under this new ministry all the sporting affairs in the country were under the

coordination/purview of the sporting division. However, there is a need for more efficient coordination, organization and monitoring purposes; hence, in 1971 under the newly formed National Sport Acts, the National Sport Council was established to organise as well as assisting sports associations that are involved in high performance sports (De Vries, 2006). The National Sport Council (NSC) was officially launched on 21st February 1972 by the then Prime Minister of Malaysia Tun Abdul Razak Hussin (http://www.nsc.gov.my/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=15&Itemid=29; access on 21st October 2011).

De Vries (2006) argued that from the years of the 1970s to 1980s sport leaders and the sport communities have expressed views at seminars and in the mass media on the need for a change of direction and improvement for sports in the country. Thus, the then Minister of Youth and Sports Najib Tun Razak, who is the current Prime Minister of Malaysia, had organised a National Sport Convention in 1986 and the most significant outcome was the mandate given to the government to develop the National Sport Policy. This further reaffirms the notion that sports in Malaysia are very much dependent on government intervention. Coghlan (1990, p. 7-8, cited from Boyce & Smith, 2009) argue that most sports administrators welcome the involvement of government 'because of the financial gains that could be made from political support for sport'. In the context of this thesis, this shows how essential the roles of government and politicians are in sports, and serves as the focal point of the relationship between sports associations and other stakeholders.

The involvement of government in the evolution of sports in Malaysia became more visible when a working committee of 18 members was formed to propose the establishment of the National Sport Policy (NSP). The committee began their work in February 1987 and completed the work in September 1987 and it was approved by the Malaysian government on the 20th January 1988. This working committee was formed as a consequence of the National Sport Convention in 1986. De Vries (2006) argued that through the NSP, the Malaysian government has made a total commitment to sport. De Vries (2006) further argued that:

> "The National sports policy has been founded on the rationale that sport activities form an integral part of the overall development effort of the government directed towards the entire populations. Sport deserves the same recognition, respect and encouragement as are accorded to the other basic social programmes, such as education, transport, housing, health services, so as to enable the government to achieve national development, unity and continued stability"(De Vries, 2006).

The aim of NSP is to develop an active, healthy lifestyle through sports and physical recreational activities in line with the overall efforts of the government in nation building. To help in achieving this aim, there are about seven organizations that were identified to help in materializing the NSP, these organizations are the Ministry of Youth and Sports; the National Sports Council (NSC);

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the Ministry of Education; State governments; Olympic Council of Malaysia; National Sport Associations (NSA); and the Council for welfare and sports for government servant (MAKSAK). In the context of this thesis, there is a need to understand the structure of sports in Malaysia, thus the following will explain the role of each of the above-mentioned organizations.

The role of the (federal) Ministry of Youth and Sports is to coordinate all organizations involved in sport for all, to play a leadership role in promoting and developing "Malaysia Cergas" (or literally translated as Active Malaysian), play a leadership role in planning the 20 year blueprint for sport facilities in Malaysia and to develop standards for sport facilities. Sports for all in this context refer to the involvement in sports for every people in Malaysia. De Vries (2006) argues that in 1988, the major emphasis (on sport in Malaysia) was on 'high performance sport' through the Olympic Council of Malaysia and National Sport Associations, and funding from the government. There was little emphasis on 'sport for all'. Thus, under the National Sport Policy it was underlined that all institutions both private and government, sport and non-sport to help all Malaysians irrespective of age, sex, occupation, religious beliefs or means to understand the value of 'sport for all' and engage in it throughout their lives. The primary objective is to develop a sport culture, for the physical health, happiness, economic well-being and national unity of the Malaysian people. (De Vries, 2006, p.23).

For example, one of the efforts taken by the Government, particularly the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sport, to encourage 'sports for all' among Malaysian, was to establish the people gymnasium (Gym Rakyat). The idea to establish the people gymnasium was mooted by the then Federal Minister of Youth and Sport, Dato Seri Najib Tun Razak in 1988. It was his aim of having a people gymnasium at every district (de Vries, 2006, p.36). The establishment of the people gymnasium implies that government is providing as much as possible, access to the best facilities to be enjoyed by most people, especially for those who cannot afford to go to the expensive, privately run gymnasium.

At the elite level, the National Sports Council (NSC), under the National Sport Policy, was given the responsibility to coordinate and assist all organizations involved in 'high performance sport'. De Vries (2006, p. 57) explains that in order for NSC to coordinate and assist organizations that are involved, they should form five standing committees to fulfill their role in coordinating and providing support, these are; (i) NSC and other Ministries such as Defenses, Education, Police, Housing and, Higher Education; (ii) NSC and the State Sports Council; (iii) NSC and Olympic Council of Malaysia; (iv) NSC and the National Sports Association (NSA/NGB), and, (v) NSC and private sectors who are involved in high performance sport. NSC, in his capacity to assist especially the National sport

association, will provide assistance in the form of expertise and financial. Thus, for high performance sport, NSC is the most 'powerful' body in the country.

Apart from the above mentioned entities, De Vries (2006) also mentioned that there are other equally important entities to ensure the successfulness of the National Sport Policy. The Ministry of Education is required to provide physical education for all pupils and to ensure that appropriate time is given to the subject, provide quality teacher training programmes in physical education for the study of physical education as an academic discipline at universities and colleges and to seek assistance from outside organizations involved in 'sport for all' and 'high performance sport'.

The state government role in the implementation of the NSP is to be responsible for the provision of sport facilities at the state and district levels and to provide for the balanced distribution between urban, rural and disadvantaged groups. The Olympic Council of Malaysia's role' is to promote the aims of the Olympic movement and to select and train athletes for international competition recognised by the International Olympic Committee and to work closely with the National Sports Council. The National Sports Association (NSA) or the National Governing Body (NGB) role is to promote, develop and provide opportunities for competitions at national and international levels for that particular sport in conjunction with the NSC and other relevant government agencies. It was estimated that there are about 1.2 million civil servants in Malaysia who form the backbone of the government system and help it to function effectively. Thus, the MAKSAK were roped into the NSP to encourage and coordinate all sports activities in the various public services.

It is also worth noting that after the implementation of NSP there are several big achievements in the sporting landscape of Malaysia. Among others was the establishment of the National Sport Institute in 1996 to undertake research on sport sciences, to train athletes, coaches, administrators and other related sports personnel and serve as a sports resource center (de Vries, 2006, p. 71). Malaysia also hosted the Commonwealth Games in 1998, staged the cycling event Ala tour de France in 2001, and the F1 Motorsport in 2002, thus bringing international sports to Malaysia. The government's commitment towards the development of sports in the country was also visible in terms of financial support, as shown in the following table:

Table 3.4: Expenditure and Allocation for Sports Programme Development, 2001 - 2010

| Programme | 8th Malaysian Plan (Expenditure) | 9th Malaysian Plan (Allocation) |
|---|---|---|
| Building of multi-purpose sports complexes | RM188 million | RM299.9 million |
| Upgrading and Maintenance of existing sporting facilities | RM113.2 million | RM280.9 million |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Athletes development programme | RM6.0 million | RM40.0 million |
| Total | RM307.2 million | RM620.8 million |

Source: Economic Planning Unit

The Malaysian Plan as shown in the above table is a five-year development plan by the government. The above table shows the commitment given by the federal government in terms of promoting and developing sports in Malaysia. The commitment in sports development can be seen from the amount spent and allocated for the 8th and 9th Malaysian Plan. It shows a 100% increase. This again reaffirms the notion that the government of Malaysia, especially through the Ministry of Youth and Sports are leading the way in sports development in the country. Not only have they come out with policies, such as the National Sport Policy, but they have also provided financial support.

Up to this point, it shows that the government is taking the initiative and leading the way in sports development in Malaysia. The involvement of the private sector in sports development is almost non-existent. Thus, in the study and review of the National Sports Policy, it was noted that there is a need for the sports industry to be developed in Malaysia. This is needed so that industry can contribute to the economy and provide jobs for Malaysians. The review further suggested that sport retail, sport services, recreation as well as sport tourism are among the sectors that needed to be developed. A robust sports industry will result in favourable outcomes, such as: the contribution to the national GDP; increased levels of consumer expenditure; as well as the generation of new employment. Aminuddin Yusof and Parilah Mohd Shah (2008, p. 133) conducted a study to find out the characteristics of the Sport Industry in Malaysia. They found that; (i) the sport industry is considered a young and emerging industry. For example, in Malaysia, sport has only been considered as an industry in the last 10 years, being (ii) comprised mainly of small to medium-sized businesses engaged in a diversity of activities, including: the manufacturing of sport goods; sport tourism; media; and the construction of venues. (iii) Most companies that are involved with sport products do not see themselves as part of a broader sport industry. Most companies tend to identify with narrower sectors such as manufacturing, construction or tourism.

Again, it was the government through the Ministry of Youth and Sport who took the initiative to get this sports industry moving forward by organising a convention in the sports industry, first in 2009 where among other topics discussed were sports marketing and media strategies. Again there was another convention held in 2010 organised by the National Sports Institute; the peak of efforts to develop the sports industry was evident in 2011 when the Ministry of Youth and Sports declared that 2011 was to be the Sport Industry Year. Under this initiative, the Ministry of Youth and Sports will collaborate with seven industry players (local companies) for the successful implementation of 365 events of the sport industry year (SIY) 2011/2012 (BERNAMA, 04/05/2011). The current Minister of Youth and Sports says that the Ministry will create awareness through campaigns and

programmes such as Malaysia Sport Trade and Golf Expo and Malaysia Sports Industry Convention from 27-30 Oct 2011. This hopefully will increase awareness among young entrepreneurs. (http://isnmediawatch.blogspot.com/ accessed on 24th November 2011)

After the introduction and implementation of the National Sport Policy, another important milestone in the evolution of sports in Malaysia is the introduction of the Sports Development Act 1997. The inclusion of this act in this discussion not only represents a milestone in the evolution of sport in Malaysia, but also important because of its significance to the two states of Malaysia on the Borneo island-Sabah and Sarawak. When Sabah and Sarawak decided to join and formed the Federation of Malaysia in 1963 it was agreed that these two states would enjoy some sort of autonomy within the federation and these include the autonomy in sporting affairs. The implementation of the Sports Development Act 1997, even though it was passed through the parliament of Malaysia, it cannot be extended to Sabah and Sarawak unless these two state governments agreed to ratify the act. As of May 2011, the Sports Development Act was still not accepted by both Sabah and Sarawak due to the fact that the Act did not include the roles of the State Ministry of Youth and Sport, thus these two states have signed a joint resolution on their proposed amendments to be submitted to the Federal Youth and Sports Ministry for consideration. Sabah and Sarawak have proposed that the amendments should include the roles of the state ministry of youth and sports. The reason given to proposing for the amendments of the act, as said by the Sarawak Ministry of Social Development and Urbanization, "we want to participate in youth and sports development but our roles are not there. If the acts are extended here we will have no say and things could bypass us but when they go wrong, we could be taken to task" (The Star, 27 May 2011).  This shows that whilst the federal government of Malaysia has taken all the initiative to promote sports in the country it could not be taken as a blanket to cover the whole nation from the legal and political point of views. Thus it is an interesting and worthy point to stress that the investigation on the sports in Sabah is indeed important to create a more holistic picture of the sporting landscape in Malaysia, particularly from the sports communication point of view, therefore the following will attempt to outline the landscape of sport in Sabah.


### 3.7    Background of sport in Sabah

Separation of power between federal and state government is the reason why the analysis of sports in Malaysia must be framed under the federal-state relationship. Sabah, Sarawak, Singapore and Malaya came together to form the federation of Malaysia in 09th August 1963, however Singapore later pulls out in 1965 (Jayum A. Jawan, 2003). Through this federation and as provided by the federal constitution there is an additional separation of power between the federal and state

government. In brief, the federal government prevails in matters of national interest such as education, defense, foreign affairs, internal security, citizenship, health, commerce and industry; the state government has autonomy over the administration of public services and the power to enact laws regarding Islamic affairs, land, agriculture and forestry, local government and local services. The Federal government and the State governments are required to work together in areas that involve common interests such as social welfare, village planning, national parks and wildlife, drainage and irrigation, scholarships and public health (Jayum A. Jawan, 2003), sports are one of the areas where both federal and state government can work together.

Therefore, Sabah and Sarawak has the added advantage over other states in the Peninsular Malaysia (West Malaysia) because it has two ministries that look after sports affairs in the state; one is the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports where its presence in the state is through the Department of Youth and Sports (federal) and the other one is the state Ministry of Youth and Sports. Thus, it is safe to say that government involvement and commitment towards sports development in the state is very strong, and this will be further discussed later in this section.

The material or data in this section was drawn from the meeting and interview with officials from the state agencies responsible for the sports development, senior sports editors from the local and national newspapers as well as from the interview with the former state Minister of Youth and Sports, Masidi Manjun. It should be noted that research data is drawn on at this point purely in order to provide important background details that contextualize the study; naturally, the core data and analytic workings follows in the major empirical chapters later in the thesis. I deliberately chose to interview the former minister because of his knowledge and background. Before entering politics, he was a former permanent secretary to the state Ministry of Youth and Sports, and was selected to be one of the 18 panel members of the working committee drafted in by the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports to prepare the National Sports Policy. When he entered politics, he was appointed State Minister of Youth and Sports. Thus, in terms of experience, background and knowledge of the state sports landscape, Masidi Manjun was the most appropriate respondent.

The state government of Sabah involvement in sport can be seen from the roles and functions of its two agencies; Sabah Sports Board and the Sabah Sports Council. Apart from the government, the Local Sports Associations (LSA) and the local print media are the important actors in the landscape of sport in Sabah. The discussion on state government involvement in sports development is to show that like the federal government, in Sabah, the state government also takes the leading role in sports development.

Obviously the hand of government in developing the sports in the state is very visible. The fact that there are two different levels of ministry of youth and sports involved in developing sports

in Sabah speaks volumes of the government's involvement in sports. Government involvement can be seen in provision of sporting facilities as well as providing financial assistance and expertise to the local sporting associations. Maintenance of sporting facilities throughout the states was given to the Sabah Sports Board (SSB). SSB has to look after several sport complexes in almost every district in Sabah. So far there are Likas Sport Complex in Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan Sport Complex, Keningau Sport Complex, Kudat Sport complex, Tenom Sport complex and Ranau Sport Complex all these complexes were built by the state government with only one exception, the Tawau Sport Complex— which was funded by the federal government, but the management of the complex was given to the Sabah Sports Board.  Even though Sabah Sport Board is a state government agency, financially it was encouraged to generate its own income, so parts of the agency's activities are to rent out the facilities to the local sports associations as well as to the public. For example, the biggest renter for the Likas Sport Complex is the Sabah Football Association (SAFA) where SAFA will use the football stadium not only as a home venue but also as a training ground for the teams competing in the national super league. (Interview with Timmy Thomas, Head of Corporate Division, Sabah Sports Board; 29/11/2010).

Meanwhile, the Sabah Sports Council (SSC), mirrors the National Sports Council at the federal level. SSC will help the Local Sports Associations in terms of governance, financial assistance as well as providing expertise by helping LSA to hire qualified coaches. Sabah Sports Council (SSC) was formed initially as a forum and it was registered with the registrar of society in 1966, however in 1972 it was formed as a council and in 1979 it's became the affiliate of the National Sports Council through the National Sports Council Acts 1979. Sabah Sports Council's responsibility is to prepare athletes (state athletes) to compete in national competitions such as the bi-annual Malaysian Sports (SUKMA) a kind of mini Olympic competition. SSC also responsible for monitoring the local sports organization as well as providing assistance such as yearly grants, coaching courses/seminars, as well as giving advice on the development of the sports (Interview with Abd Rhaman Laman, Director of Sabah Sport Council, 29/11/2010).

In summing up the role of government in sports development in the state, the former Minister of Youth and Sports of Sabah said this;

> "Well the role of the government number one is they are the facilitator or the provision of facilities, and I think we have quite a number of the stadium [sic], sports complex in Sabah. The state government has been very accommodating to the needs of the sporting fraternity and if you look at the, all the complexes that the government has built only one was built by the federal government which is Tawau sports complex; the rest are all built by the state government. That shows itself that the state government is very committed to the development of sports in Sabah" (Interview with Masidi Manjun, former State Minister of Youth and sports, 09/12/2010).

It is not too much to claim that private involvement in developing sports in the state is very limited. As the above explanations show, most of the initiatives in developing sporting facilities were taken by the government. The private sector generally doesn't really contribute to the sports development in the state due to the very small economic scale of Sabah; this is due to the fact that most of the industry and the main players in the private sector are based in Peninsular Malaysia, particularly in the Klang Valley. Getting the involvement of the private sector in sport is not easy because "there are not many big companies in Sabah; we are talking about the same company that people were banging their door everyday" (Masidi Manjun, former State Minister of Youth and Sports). The limited involvement of private companies in sports development in the state is one of the obstacles faced by the Local Sports Association, especially in getting private funding and sponsorship.

Sports in Sabah are normally run as and by volunteer associations. These associations are registered as affiliate members with the Sabah Sports Council. Their affiliation with the SSC means that these associations will receive grants as well as technical support from the government. The general objectives of the local sports association (LSA) normally lie in: developing sports, by identifying new talent; providing 'spaces' for training; acting as the local governing body of the sports; and preparing athletes for the state to compete in the annual Malaysia games. As the affiliate member of SSC, the LSA will receive grants from the government; however, in most cases it is far from enough. Therefore, most LSA will have to generate their own funding either from getting private companies as sponsors or other means of getting funded. However in most cases it will be very hard to get the private companies to sponsor these LSA. What typically happens is, most of the big companies will sponsor the National Sports Association/National governing body (NSA/NGB) and the NSA/NGB will have to distribute these limited funds to its affiliate members; so, the LSA normally will get a very small amount of funding. Thus, funding is one of the biggest obstacles faced by the LSA. This fact was confirmed by Masidi Manjun, the former State Minister of Youth and Sports when he said:

> "That's one of the challenges, because there is limited fund available from the private sectors and you really can't blame the private sector because they have their own other commitment and they are the same companies that other association, non-sport association, voluntary associations, school, who keep on knocking their door for donation". (Masidi Manjun, 09/12/2010).

The limited funding available from the private sector, coupled with limited grants from the government has forced the LSA to look for other alternatives. Getting the help from politicians,

especially those with senior cabinet positions, was one of the most viable alternatives. This was the case of the Sabah Football Association (SAFA). It is public knowledge that to run the football association, especially when the state team is competing in the Malaysian League, is a very expensive business (professional football league). That is why, for SAFA they have to ask the Chief Minister of Sabah, Musa Aman to be the president, because it will be easier to get the private companies to sponsor the association. The tendency to get the ruling government politicians to head sporting associations was nicely summed up by Arifin Gadait the chairperson of the K4MC, "the politicians, they have [to be] sweet while me I only have sweat" (Arifin Gadait, Chairman of K4MC, 26/10/2010); he said this when the researcher asked him about the problem of getting more private companies to sponsor his event. Masidi Manjun, the former State Minister of Youth and Sports, argued that it takes huge responsibility to lead local sport associations in Sabah, particularly football;

> "Managing football in Sabah is not cheap; in fact I take off my hat to those people who agree to helm SAFA because it's a hell of a big job. Number one you have to pull in financial resources through what you called this, through endorsement, and through probably donors and to get them to do that is not easy" (Masidi Manjun, 09/12/2010).

Apart from financial constraints, LSA also has to deal with the sheer size of the state to organise its activities. Logistic and domestic issues have caused the imbalance of sporting development, especially in unearthing new talent. Most of the LSA is headquartered in Kota Kinabalu the capital city of the state of Sabah. Thus to manage LSA in Sabah requires passion because it's such a big state;

> "You see (in) comparison, the state of Malacca is somewhere smaller than my district of Ranau. But the state of Sabah as I was telling you all the state put together, all the state in western peninsular puts together so when I said you need money, number one you need transport, if you sportsman have to fly you have to provide airfare, unlike in Malacca I can practically shout at the other end of the state". (Masidi Manjun, former State Minister of Youth and Sports, 09/12/2010)

LSA in Sabah also have a problem when it comes to communicating to the public. Whilst it is understandable that since the association is run voluntarily with a shoe-string budget, most of these LSA would not be able to hire full time staff, let alone to have dedicated staff looking after their communication affairs. The normal practice by LSA in communicating their message to the wider public was to call for a press conference. The press conference will be organized with the help of their (LSA) 'favorite' local reporters; this was an accepted practice with the local papers. The communication problem faced by the LSA were also acknowledged by the president of the Sabah Journalist Association, who claims that the LSA "can come up with press releases that we hardly

understand, and it is difficult for us" (Joniston Bangkuai, President of Sabah Journalist Association, 18/12/2010). This implies that communication was not being given priority by most of the LSA in Sabah.

It is apparent that government has been the main pillars in the evolution of sports in Malaysia. Whilst the federal and state government efforts in driving the development of sport in Malaysia are commendable there are aspects that require further consideration. First, the initiative to defined sports by High Performance Sport, Sport for All and Sport Industry could lead to the imbalance of sports development as the study shows that 'in every country, there is constant competition for resources for local recreational (mass) sport/ Sport for All and elite sport (Collins, 2002). More than 10 years ago, Kamphorst and Roberts (1989), collating data from 17 countries from four continents, thought they could detect a move by national governments away from funding 'Sport for All' toward support for elite sport, and leaving the former to lower tiers of administration (Cited from Collins and Buller, 2003, p. 420). This is certainly true in the case of sport in Malaysia where most resources are given to the 'High Performance Sport' whilst the 'Sport for All' was given second-class treatment. This is the case of sport in Sabah where for the 'High Performance Sport', both federal and state government, are working together; this means that more resources are allocated here, whilst in the case of 'sport for all', it is the full and sole responsibility of the federal department of Youth and Sport which tells that less resources are given to this. The competition for resources leads to the second critique of the government effort in sport development in Malaysia.

Attempts by government to use sport as a powerful tool in social intervention, part of the spirit behind the formulation of the national sport policy, are at risk of "mission drift" as the programme must let slip their social intervention component to focus on simply justifying their sport programmes in order to maintain a consistent participation base (Coalter, 2010; Hartmann & Wheelock, 2002; Kidd, 2008, cited in Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011, p. 286). Under the National Sport Policy, the government wants people to develop an active, healthy lifestyle through sports and physical recreational activities in line with the overall efforts of the government in nation building. However, as shown in this research, at least from the perspective of the LSA' chosen for this study, positive results were the utmost aim not social intervention. This is certainly reaffirmed Coalter, 2010; Hartmann & Wheelock, 2002; and, Kiss, 2008 in the argument above.

## 3.8    Background of Study

The aim of this section is to give clear background on the LSA, which has been chosen as a subject in this research. The explanation will begin with the background of the Sabah Football Association (SAFA). It will describe the image changing exercise taken by the new management of SAFA. The

second background will describe the promotional effort taken by the Malaysian Ladies Golf Association (MALGA) to promote and bring golf closer to the society beyond the exclusivity of golf club members.

Before we further describe the activity of these two associations, I would like to stress here how the activities conducted by SAFA and MALGA can be considered as a public relations effort. This need to be highlighted because as previously mentioned, sports public relations in Malaysia is very limited. SAFA did not have its own full time public relations personnel, the same goes to MALGA. Most public relations works were carried out by the secretary general for SAFA and the vice president for MALGA. Most of their so called public relations works are in media relations. The media relations were mostly based on personal relationship with the media practitioners. So, one might question me, how could this research investigate the dynamic of power relationship in the context of sports public relations if the public relations works of the chosen associations were very limited?

There were indeed lots of definitions of what public relations is all about. However, for the sake of this research I would go with the definition of public relations by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) which says "Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics." I have chosen this definition because it is perfectly fits the nature of this research which is to uncover the dynamics of power relationship between the actors. This definition also stress on the 'communication process' that build 'relationship' between organizations and their publics which is exactly what was happening in the sports associations chosen for this study.

The new management of SAFA first strategic decision was to disassociate themselves, from the eyes of the fans, from the old management. To do that, they (SAFA) came out with the re-branding process. It was the process of re-branding that becomes the focus of this research because during the process of re-branding, which is part of public relations work to build better relationship with the football fans, that the dynamics of power struggle was happening. The same thing goes to MALGA. MALGA' golf for women programme was a two-fold programme. The first aim was to create bigger pool of talents among women golfers and the second aim was to break the barrier that golf is for man only game. Along the process, MALGA do came across with different types of public that are directly or indirectly involves with their programme. It was during this process that dynamics of power relationship was happening between MALGA and its very own public.

Given the above background, it is indeed appropriate to incorporate Bourdieu' conception of habitus, field and capital together with Berger' conception of 'power over', 'power with' and 'power to' to frame the analysis later on. It was because as shown in the next chapter that along the process of re-branding by SAFA as well as the golf for women programme by MALGA there were indeed obvious examples on how the actors involved were capitalising on their capital to negotiate or re-negotiate their position within the field which at the same time tells us which type of power the actors were exercising.

### 3.8.1    SAFA: From Rhinos to Hawks

Sabah Football Association (SAFA) was previously known as the North Borneo Football Club before it was changed to SAFA in 1977 prior to joining the Malaysian League. SAFA is an affiliate member of Football Association of Malaysia (FAM). As an affiliate member of FAM, SAFA was responsible for looking after the football affairs in the state. This includes acting as the governing body at the state level, as well as planning and implementing the development of sports in the state (Souvenir Book, SAFA Fund Raising Dinner, 20th April 2010). However, one aspect which has been deemed the core business of the association is managing the state football team, who are competing in the national football league.   This is evident in a souvenir book published in conjunction for SAFA Fund Raising Dinner on the 20th April 2010 whereby the story of how well the state football team had fared in the national league was given high priority. This implies the importance of the state team performance in the national football league.

Sabah FA has had its ups and downs in the history of Malaysian football. At its highest point, Sabah FA was once the most feared teams in Malaysian football during the 80's in the era of semi-professional Malaysian football. During this period Sabah FA has produced three legendary players in Malaysian football. They are James Wong, Hassan Sani and Peter Rajah. When professional football was introduced by the Football Association of Malaysia, Sabah also garnered a reputation for being one of the Malaysian League's most competitive teams. Quality professional players were produced from the ranks during the 1990s, most notably, Matlan Marjan who helped Sabah finish as runners-up during the 1993 and 1994 Malaysia FA Cup, and who at one time was appointed as the national team captain by the then Malaysian national team coach Claude LeRoy. The success story of the Sabah FA was halted by the match-fixing scandal that rocked Malaysian football in 1994. The scandal almost destroyed Sabah and Malaysian football in general. Matlan Marjan was involved in this scandal together with a few other players and was found guilty and was banned for life by FIFA from being involved in football. (Souvenir book SAFA fundraising dinner, 20th April 2010).

However, Sabah regained its reputation as one of the powerhouses in Malaysian football by winning their first professional trophy, the Malaysia FA Cup in 1995. The match-fixing scandal was easily forgotten because the following season in 1996, Sabah won their first league title and played in their first final of the Malaysia Cup, which they lost to Selangor. From the 2000 to 2003 sessions Sabah's performance had its ups and downs; it became worse when the FAM introduce the Malaysian Super League and Sabah struggled to put on good performances. They managed to stay in the super league for two seasons only; they were relegated to the Malaysian Premier League (second tier league) for the 2005/2006 session and were playing in this second league for 5 years until recently in 2010/2011 when Sabah managed to get promoted back to the super league after finishing second in the Malaysian Premier League (Souvenir book, SAFA fundraising dinner, 20<sup>th</sup> April 2010).

Playing in the second tier of the Malaysian League was one of the lowest points in the history of Sabah FA, apart from the match-fixing scandal; hence, most of the local supporters have shied away from the stadium whenever Sabah is playing their home matches. The lacks of supporters' attendance at the stadium meant that the management has lost out in terms of gate revenue. Therefore SAFA faced financial difficulties that led to delayed in salary payment to players which eventually affect the morale of players. As confirmed by the owner and moderator of Sabahrhinos.com; "because previous years (*referring to the period where SAFA was under the old management*) we will always hear from the players themselves that they don't get their salaries for one or two months" (Jeffery Michael, founder & moderator of Sabahrhinos.com, 09/12/2010). The financial problem was one of the biggest problems inherited by the new management of SAFA as shown in the following quotes:

> "We hold a fundraising dinner and we managed to collect over 1 million Ringgit (equivalent to £200,000) and this amount was empty from our bank account less than three days to pay out all the outstanding debt from the previous management of Sabah FA" (Hasbullah Yahya, SAFA Executive Secretary, 10/12/2010).

> "When we took over the management of Sabah FA I have to make advance payment from my own pocket to the amount of 4 million Ringgit (equivalent to £800,000) to pay for all the outstanding debt especially the players' overdue salaries" (Shahriman Abdullah, SAFA Honorary Treasurer, 08/12/2010)

SAFA was also in leadership crisis when the former President, Anifah Aman had to relinquished his post in the association due to his new commitment as the Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia. It is also in the 'rules' made by the former Prime Minister of Malaysia-Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to limit the involvement of its cabinet members in leading any sporting

associations. Thus, some of the former state players as well as some of the former officials of SAFA gathered to try and 'salvage' the association and to bring back the past glory of the Sabah football team. In the words of the current Vice President of Sabah FA:

> "..From there onwards there is a group of people who love football so much try to gather all the former officers of SAFA which they thought that really love football in Sabah and which thought they also can bring up the image of football in Sabah to have a discussion" (Osman Jamal, Vice President of SAFA, 20/10/2010).

It was from this group discussion, which according to Osman Jamal, was initiated by the current Honorary Treasurer Shahriman Abdullah, a former state player himself, that they have asked the Chief Minister of Sabah, Musa Aman, who coincidentally is the elder brother of Anifah Aman, the previous president, to take over the presidency of Sabah FA. When Musa Aman accepted the invitation to be the president of Sabah FA he chose his man to be in the new line up for the Sabah FA management; these included replacing the Executive Secretary with a retired customs officer, installing three new vice presidents and retaining the former Deputy President in his post. The reasons for this were clearly laid out by Osman Jamal;

> "The President selects certain people including myself, Datuk Yusof Kassim (former Permanent Secretary in the Finance Ministry of Sabah) and KH Tan. Because KH Tan's performance (sic) in rugby the image of Sabah' rugby in Malaysia is number one so he thought of inviting KH Tan maybe he can improve on discipline" (Osman Jamal, Vice President of SAFA, 20/10/2010).

The new management had introduced several new steps in order to revive the fate of the team. Among these was the step of settling all outstanding debt, especially the players' salaries. They also appointed a new coach; and most relevant to this study, they undertook a rebranding process. The rebranding process was evident in their action to replace the decade old nickname and mascot of the team from Rhinos to Hawks. According to the vice president of Sabah FA they undertook this rebranding process to tell the public that they (the new management) were serious about restoring the team to its past glory:

> "One of the reasons is rebranding; rebranded so that people know that we want to change— people know that we really mean it to change; if you use the same colour, the image will still be there. We need new coach; if we maintained the old coach people will say that we are not serious" (Osman Jamal, vice president of SAFA, 20/10/2010).

The secretary general also echoes the same thing about the need to do rebranding of the association:

> "When we took over the association and during our meeting with the honourable chief minister we did discuss the need to do rebranding; we are the new management so there should be new changes in the association. One thing that

came into mind was the changes from rhinos to hawk. When we discussed why rhinos was no longer suitable as a mascot for the team we argued that rhinos was strong and big however rhinos has no clear vision unlike the hawk which have better and clear vision. It was a collective decision to do re-branding, to give a new image for the team" (Alijus Sipil, Secretary General, 28/12/2010).

However, the decision to replace the old nickname and mascot of the team from Rhinos to Hawks was not going down well with a group of supporters who are the members of the online forum 'Sabahrhinos.com'. Sabahrhinos.com history started in 1997 when a programmer name Jeffery Michael was looking for info about the team on the net and found one website about the team but it was really outdated so he contacted the webmaster who is a Sabahan that lives in the United State. The webmaster was asked by one official from Sabah FA to build a website for them. Since the website was really outdated, Jeffery started his own website and registered the Sabahrhinos.com domain using his own pocket money and it grew from there. When the team was playing in the super league there were about five to six thousand registered members with sabahrhinos.com. When the team started losing matches and was eventually relegated there were only around four thousand members. However, the active ones that were always posting numbered around 50 – 60; these members were considered the die-hard fans who relied information from Sabahrhinos.com because there was not much media exposure of the team (Interview with Jeffery Michael, founder of Sabahrhinos.com, 09/12/2010).

Sabahrhinos.com has become very prominent and serves as the 'unofficial' website for the fans of the Sabah team. They were very vocal in voicing their opinions, especially during the term of Anifah Aman as the president of Sabah FA. There were a few occasions where Anifah Aman personally invited the members of Sabahrhinos.com to have discussions with him regarding the fate of the team; they were even given special recognition by the previous management of Sabah FA as the group representing the fans.

> "Actually when Datuk Anifah was the president, Datuk would invite us, he even paid for a table during the signing ceremony for the players, new players, whenever the new season starts. So we will, I will call up my moderators and any members who are interested and they would attend the dinner. So that's one the most, for me, the most important event because for me we can mix with the players and talk to them" (Interview with Jeffery Michael, founder of Sabahrhinos.com, 09/12/2010).

Sabahrhinos.com also serves as the point-of-information for fans, especially during the period when the team was playing in the premier league. Moreover, when the team plays away and there was no live media coverage, it is the duty of the moderator of sabahrhinos.com to update the results of the match so that other members can keep up to date with the latest team results. The

moderators are able to do this due to their connection with the management of Sabah FA, as they have direct access and can get the latest information from the team manager.

The above are examples of how important the online forum of sabahrhinos.com has been to the modern history of football development in Sabah. It represents the younger generation of fans who rely on cyberspace as their preferred medium for voicing opinions— without going through traditional media such as newspapers. Thus, when the new management changes the image of the team, sabahrhinos.com was the most vocal opposition. Hence, it is an interesting study to look into the dynamic of communication and power relations.

*3.8.2 Malaysian Ladies Golf Association (MALGA) promotion of golf for women*

Malaysian Ladies Golf Association (MALGA) was formed on 15 March 1983 ([www.malga.org.my](www.malga.org.my), accessed 02/06/2011). As the name implied, this association caters to promote golf among Malaysian women. MALGA is the umbrella body for all the women golfers in Malaysia. MALGA is an affiliate member with the Malaysian Golf Association (MGA), the national governing body of golf in Malaysia. As the umbrella body, MALGA has been actively promoting golf to Malaysian women. However one point worth noting here is the power and relationship struggle between MALGA and MGA when a new team of leadership took over MGA. According to the current President of MGA, Datuk Robin Loh;

> "MGA is a governing body; the rest is affiliated. They are like a club. They are like club level. First is MGA, then the states association; then come to club level. So MALGA is like club level. You see the differences between the governing body and clubs is different. We manage the national handicapping system; we manage the national amateur status. We manage competition and rule. What are the differences? The clubs don't manage amateur status; the clubs don't manage the handicapping system. The clubs don't manage competition and rules. And if you are promoting something which you think is good you are in arms to us, you are supporting us, we give you the support and to say, to come and claim that SGCC players can represent the country. I think that's wrong, to say SGCC needs state funding. I think that's wrong. SGCC is a social club; how can you have state funding, to claim that SGCC player is the best player in the country and they must represent the country? That is wrong. I say this because MALGA had said this." (Interview with Robin Loh President of MGA 27/12/2010).

The conflict between MALGA and MGA started when MALGA was omitted from the team selection committee. Under the previous leadership of MGA, a representative from MALGA was included in the committee.

> "(Previously) MALGA is also part of the committee in fact I personally was part of the committee so during the committee meetings what we do is while MALGA report what the ladies have been through and so on and then MGA got the boys

and then if there are areas that we can train together or participate in whatever then you know that kind of relationship, but now there is no representative in the MGA committee at all." (Interview with Rabeahtul Aloyah Abbas MALGA Executive Director 08/01/2011).

The love-hate relationship between MALGA and MGA is worth investigating in this thesis as it involves gender relations and power struggle. These have certainly affected MALGA's promotional efforts to encourage more women to take up golf as a sport in Malaysia. Due to the limited number of women golfers in the country, MALGA was unable to select the best women golfers to represent the country in any regional or international tournament. MALGA found out that one of the factors contributing to the small number of good women golfers to compete in any international tournament was due to the exclusivity of the sport, according to Jeannette Tambakau the Vice President:

> "When we did our junior development programme is all only confined to club members because if you are club members you get to play in the golf course if you are not you cannot play; right so over that 20 years the margin of players are so small because there are not many girls around. So every time MALGA want to select national players to play into national tournament or Asian tournament they don't have much choice you know because the numbers of girls playing golf is so limited" (Interview with Jeannette Tambakau, Vice President of MALGA, 03/11/2010).

The consequences of this exclusivity have hampered the development of women's golf in Malaysia and this has been proven by Malaysian golfers always coming last in any international tournament they participate in (Jeannette Tambakau, 03/11/2010). Furthermore, the gap between men and women golfers is huge; it is estimated that for every ten men there is only one woman playing golf in Malaysia (Jeannette Tambakau, 03/11/2010).

Thus, MALGA came out with the idea of reaching out to schools, going beyond the boundary of golf member exclusivity so that they will be able to have a bigger pool of talent. To carry out this massive task that no other sports organization had ever done before, MALGA needed the cooperation and support from the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Education. In brief, this youth development programme was designed to discover girls as young as seven years old. Since it involves lots of schools; MALGA needed a very good support system. Hence, the idea to train teachers from selected schools to teach students the fundamental of golf. MALGA first hired one national coach, who was in turn tasked to conduct several seminars and workshops to train teachers. Once the teachers went back to their respective schools the teachers would select 20 students to be trained. MALGA and the national coach will, from time to time visit these schools. Whilst evaluating the teachers and conducting a golf clinic they also will ask the teacher to name the best five students to be given further training.

The second stage of this programme is to further groom the selected girls from every school where they will be given proper training by a professional golf coach at least twice a month. This group of girls will be divided into three groups according to their level of skills, namely the beginner, intermediate and advanced group. The advanced groups are those who play with single handicap and will be given enough exposure to compete in national and international tournaments. The beginners group will gradually improve their skills and moved to the intermediate group; they are given chances and exposure to compete in local competition.

The teachers who were selected to teach the students had no background in golf whatsoever. This was purposely done as it turns out that this non-golfer teachers were better coach in giving the right fundamentals of golf to the students. In the case of Sabah, which this study was based on, this programme was started in 2006 and MALGA have managed to recruit about 500 girls throughout the state and half of them are from the rural schools.

> "In 2006 we started this programme in Sabah and we have about 500 girls started that programme, we have about 20 over schools to started that programme as well. So the system is the same. We recruit the teachers; we gave them coaching seminars. Then the teachers go back, recruit the girls and they start teaching the girls. So, every month we go to all the schools, we visit to all the schools and from there we identified the talented one; we can see because after, you can see who can hit well and all that" (Interview with Jeannette Tambakau, Vice President of MALGA, 03/11/2010).

After about four years, the programme in Sabah started to bear fruit with two or three women golfers in the country coming from Sabah— and these are all the product of the MALGA youth development programme. This success did not come from MALGA efforts alone. There are several parties involved as a supporting actor in this programme and these parties involved gave their full support to MALGA. First was the federal Ministry of Youth and Sports under the leadership of the then Minister of Youth and Sports, Datuk Azalina Othman Said who was also the first women minister to be appointed to the post. In fact, it was through Datuk Azalina that MALGA got their first grant from the government amounting to Malaysian Ringgit 500,000 (equivalent to GBP100, 000) to kick-start the programme.

> "At that time we threw in the concept paper to the minister of youth and sport. That time was Datuk Azalina; she was the minister of sports and when we brought forward to her. She studied the concept paper and she liked the idea and because of her, we actually got a grant from the government, alright, a 500,000 Ringgit grant..." (Interview with Jeannette Tambakau, Vice President of MALGA, 03/11/2010)

Since the youth development programme involved the schools, permission from the Ministry of Education was essential. The Ministry of Education then suggested which schools the

MALGA could approach because even though permission was granted by the ministry of education, MALGA still needed to talk to the principal. It was the prerogative of the principal whether to allow MALGA to conduct their youth development programme in the school or not. Because there were cases where some of the principals did not really support the programme to bring golf to their schools. This is explained by Jeannette:

> "We meet the principal and we also must get the principal to understand the games; the concept of golf and all that. Some principal, they don't actually really support this programme because they don't, to them, they can't see that, you know the school can bring, can make the game as a curriculum, for golf you see; but, there a lots of other schools who really support it and they also very pleased that they can get, you know they can bring golf to schools.." (Interview with Jeannette Tambakau, Vice President of MALGA, 03/11/2010).

Apart from schools' cooperation, this programme is also getting support from the corporate sector as well as individuals. In the case of corporate support, particularly in Sabah, this programme has received tremendous support from the Sutera Harbour Golf and Country Club, a 5 star 27-hole golf resort. Sutera provided free use of the golfing facilities, such as its 5 star driving range facilities, putting green and sometimes even let them book practice rounds. This is where talented students from each school undergo further training under a professional coach hired by MALGA. This kind of support from Sutera is possible due to the position of Jeannette the Vice President of MALGA cum the programme coordinator for Sabah, as the ladies captain of Sutera Harbour Golf and Country Club. According to Jeannette the support from Sutera Harbour was partly because of her position as the ladies captain of the club, and partly because of the optimism of the President of Sutera Harbour Golf and Country Club who believes in what MALGA is doing and wanted to see the development of the juniors as well.

Individual support and help is also crucial to making sure this youth development programme runs smoothly. One of them was the owner of YTL technology, one of the biggest companies in Malaysia, helping MALGA to source corporate sponsorship from the banks. Another one was the Prime Minister himself giving some personal contribution. MALGA also received support from the Royal & Ancient Club, St. Andrew's or widely known as the R&A, the world governing body for golf. R&A support MALGA by giving them an annual grant amounting to £5000 the first year, and now MALGA receive £10,000 pound a year. Apart from financial grants, the R&A also donate around 50 used junior golf sets to MALGA every year.

However, it was not all plain sailing. This programme faced obstacles in the course of achieving its objective of promoting golf to women in Malaysia. The relationship between MALGA and Malaysian Golf Association (MGA) which is the national governing body was the most noticeable obstacle. The 'cold war' relationship between MALGA and MGA began when the new president of

MGA takes office and coincidentally when the youth development programme of MALGA started to bear fruit.

Initially, MALGA received very good support from the Ministry of Youth and Sport where in the second year of the programme, MALGA did received an increased amount of grant amounting to one million ringgit. However, in the third year of the programme, the Ministry of Youth and Sport has stopped giving out the grant leaving MALGA with a very limited budget, and the youth development programme suffered a setback. They must now run the programme on a small scale and without the professional national coach.

A bad economic situation and changes of Minister at the Ministry of Youth and Sport were the reasons why the annual grant from the government to MALGA was discontinued. However, after the interview ended, Jeannette admitted that the main reason for the grant's discontinuance was due to 'objections' from the Malaysian Golf Association (MGA). Initially, MGA had a skeptical view of MALGA' youth development programme. However, once the programme started producing good results, the MGA started to talk to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, questioning the ministry decision in giving out the grant to MALGA. MGA believes that the grant should be given out to them who are the rightful governing body of golf in Malaysia.

MGA also insists that the selection of ladies golf players to represent the country must be done by them not MALGA. This was not the case with the previous president of MGA, Datuk Thomas Lee who did not interfere with the MALGA programme, even to the extent of selecting ladies players to represent the country. The rift between these two associations not only caused problem to MALGA in achieving their objectives. At the same time it created uneasiness among the parents of the girls that were involved in the MALGA Youth Development programme, knowing that the future of their daughters in golf was very much in the hands of MGA— even if they were being groomed by MALGA. This love-hate relationship between MALGA and MGA and how it affects MALGA was best summed up by MALGA Executive Director, Rabeahtul Alowiyah:

> "It affect in a way it has caused lots of problems, coordinating problems; it has affected in a way you know some girls feels loyal to us and then some girls they are threaten, you know, in a way, they felt that they being threatened because MGA is the governing body. So it causes some kinds of uneasiness among the players and the parents" (Interview with Rabeahtul Alowiyah, MALGA Executive Director, 08/01/2011).

The relationship between MALGA and MGA is in fact one of the most important aspects in the promotion of golf to women, especially in Sabah that is worth investigating. There are however other parties involved in this effort such as the relationship between MALGA and the media, the

schools, teachers and parents. These are the scope that will be investigated in this study to look into how power affects the dynamic of communication and relationship. In this case, MALGA are trying to promote an elite and male-dominated sport into a people's sport with equal treatment for women.

## 3.9 Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, I would like to draw on the obvious influence of government/politics on media and sports in Malaysia. This is certainly could help in justifying the study of power and the relationship between sports organizations and its stakeholders. Another important point in this conclusion is the fact that there lack of cultural, critical studies of public relations being conducted in Malaysia. As shown in this chapter, public relations studies in Malaysia are largely dominated by the functionalist paradigm. Hence, the motivation to carry out this study from the cultural and critical perspectives hoping that it will fill some of the gaps in public relations research at least in the context of Malaysian public relations.

**Chapter 4**
**Power and Relationship analysis in Malaysia Sport: A case of Local Sport Associations in Sabah**


**4.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to highlight how power could affect the dynamic of communication and relationship between actors in Local Sport Association (LSA) in Sabah. To uncover how power would affect the dynamic of communication and relationship, I am using Bourdieu's (1991) conception of capital, i.e economic capital (financial), social capital (resources derived from one's social network) and cultural capital (educational & cultural background) along with the dimension of power relations by Berger (2005).

Bourdieu (1991) argued that all fields are homologous with the overarching field of power. That is, those who enjoy a privileged position in the field of power (who are well educated, enjoy extensive social and cultural capital, and determine the criteria for symbolic capital) tend to have a similar position in the economic field. These individuals also dominate specific field of production. (Edwards, 2009, p.256)

The ultimate aim of this chapter is to answer the research questions of (i) how power affect the dynamic of communications, and (ii) how power being exercise by the actors involved. To answer these research questions I will demonstrate how of the three capitals by Bourdieu are making an actor to be dominant over other actors in the relationship. Dominant in this case is measured by looking into the context and the end-benefit of the relationship. In other words, which actors are dominant and which are dominated. The relationships between the actors will then be position under the label of power over, power to or power with.

'Power over' dimension is a vertical, top-down relationship. The 'power to' on the other hand is a vertical, bottom-up relationship while the 'power with' is a horizontal relationship between the actors. I must admit that mapping of power relationship is not as straight forward and as simple as this, moreover when Bourdieu himself argued that the fields are all homologous with overarching of power. But, by deconstructing the complex and dynamic relations between actors based on the capitals they possessed and later re-constructing them with the dimension of power relations developed by Berger (2005) I would be able to answer the two research questions outlined earlier.

Bourdieu (1991) and Berger (2005) will form as the main analytical framework to frame the pattern of dynamism of communication and relationship. However, since the case study chosen for this research are from the sports organization, along the way in the discussion I'll be using the theory of hegemony by Antonio Gramsci. This is because, Hargreaves and McDonald (2000) argued that hegemony is a tool for explaining how ideas and practices which seem against the interests of subordinate groups are believed in and carried out by them so as to become common sense. The

symbolic power which is derived from symbolic capital by Bourdieu does share the same premise as the hegemony theory. Another important aspect in analyzing the data is the need to examine the social structure because Bourdieu (1991) argued that power especially the symbolic power can only be understood by looking into the structure and the class of the society. This is in line with Maguire (2011) who argued, 'sport worlds are contested terrain. Sociologists of sport must examine the coexistence of cooperation and confrontation; power and control, in order to understand the struggles that shape sport worlds and their permeable boundaries' (p.861). Maguire (2011) further argued that sport also is a form of collective action that involves a host of different people, connected in particular networks, and creating particular forms of sport products and performance. Thus, emphasis must be placed on exploring the networks, or interdependencies involved in sport worlds (p.860). Hence, dynamism and complex relationship between actors need to be de-constructed and re-construct.

The process of de-constructing and re-constructing the complex and dynamic of relationship between actors will be done in two local sports association as shown in the following table.

**Table 4.1 Local Sport Associations, Issues and Stakeholders**

| Local Sport Associations/LSA | Issue | Stakeholders / Actors |
|---|---|---|
| Sabah Football Association (SAFA) | New management take over, promoting new identity for the team | Fans, media, government |
| Malaysian Ladies Golf Association (MALGA) | Promoting golf to women, specifically targeting rural young, schools girls | MGA/SGA, school teachers, Media/government |

The discussion on power and relationship analysis in this chapter was based on the emerging themes from the interviews conducted with respondents. As shown in the methodology chapter, there are 7 emerging themes from the interviews. These themes are shown in the following table:

**Table 4.2 Themes, Power and Stakeholders**

| Theme | Description | Dimension of Power & Capital | Actors / Stakeholders |
|---|---|---|---|
| Patronage | The theme of patronage refers to the support, control and access to privileges. Support, control and privileges are given by the patron, which is the Chief Minister of Sabah. The access to these supports, control and privileges were made possible due to the political power held by the Chief Minister himself who is holding the highest executive | Power over / Social capital | SAFA<br><br>Fans |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | power and position in the state. | | |
| Gender | This theme highlights how males perceived females' increasing participation in male dominated sports. Males, perceived that females' incursion into male-associated sports as a threat to their dominance and a challenge to their masculinity. Hence stereotyping views of women's involvement in golf by MGA was maintained. | Power over / cultural capital | MALGA<br><br>MGA |
| Government Direct Involvement | Government Direct Involvement can be divided into two equally important conceptions. First, the notion that the state government is just being responsible by providing all the necessary support either financial or logistic to local sport associations. This could probably due to the absence or limited private sector involvement in sports development. The second notion indicating abuse of power by the government. This is due to the fact that the state government prefers the elite few (in the case of golf development) rather than the public. | Power over / economic & social capital | SAFA<br><br>SGA<br><br>MGA<br><br>Government |
| Networking | Networking in this research refers to the effort of garnering support and help for the local sport associations. It is also worth noting that through networking, it implies the hierarchical society of Malaysia. This is something that needs to be taken into consideration because networking only happens within the same level of class. For instance, business people will find it easy to get the support from its own business networking; the royalty will find it easier to get the higher level politicians for their help. Thus a question of, does networking is the extended version of dominant coalition? | Power with / Social capital | MALGA<br><br>Private sector sponsors |
| Source-Media Relation | The source-media relations theme tells us about the dependency relationship between these two. However, due to the dependency on media, the LSA has come out with two notable ways of getting the media to support them. One is through engagement whilst the other practice is to embark on more personalise relationship with the reporters. Through these, the LSA actually manages to maintain its role as a primary definer by manipulating their relationship with the media. | Power with / Social capital | K4MC<br><br>SAFA<br><br>Media |
| Strong-arm-Tactics | This theme is a clear manifestation of 'power over' as practice by SAFA and MGA to assert their authority. This has been achieved through ignoring their stakeholders by | Power over / Social & Cultural | SAFA Vs. The Fans |

| | | capital | MGA Vs. MALGA |
|---|---|---|---|
| Self-interest | Self-interest refers to the small amount of power that belongs to some significant minority stakeholder. This small amount of power enables the individual concern to further their self-interest. This self-interest does, to a certain degree affecting the relationship between LSA and its Stakeholders and often will push the LSA to renegotiate its own power. | Power to / Neither economic / social nor cultural capital | MALGA Schools' teacher |

*(For a full description of the above themes, refer to Appendix A)*

The first column (the left hand side) in the above table refer to the theme that emerged from the interviews, the second column is the description of the themes. The third column represents the dimension of power as well as the type of capitals that best suit the each individual theme.

## 4.2 Power over and vertical relationship

'Power over' is and always will be a focal point of analysis about power. Lukes (2005) argued that 'much writing and thinking about power, is more specific and it concerns 'power over' another or others and, more specifically still, power as domination' (p.12). 'Power over' refers to power as domination and the use of a strategic capacity to achieve goals. Berger (2005) defined 'power over' from the public relations perspective as "a traditional dominance model where decision making is characterised by control, instrumentalism, and self-interest" (p.6). Domination, control, and Instrumentalism are indeed implying hegemony. Hargreaves and McDonald (2000) argued that hegemony is a tool for explaining how ideas and practices which seem against the interests of subordinate groups are believed in and carried out by them so as to become common sense.

It was no coincidence that the themes such as Patronage, Government Direct Involvement, Gender, and Strong-arm-Tactics were all implying hegemony. This is because the dominant actors involved were using domination and strategic capacity to achieve their aims. In Bourdieu' concept of capital, all the above criteria are best described as symbolic capital which leads to symbolic power. Symbolic power is a combination of attributes from the economic, social and cultural capital. Symbolic power is a power of constructing reality to establish the immediate meaning of the world (Bourdieu, 1991). The question is how could this symbolic power affect the relationship between the LSA and its stakeholders? To answer this question I need to show how the capital in each individual theme affects the relationship between the LSA and its stakeholders.

The theme of patronage was a clear example of social capital in the relationship between SAFA and the fans, as well as with the sponsors. Social capital is resources derived from one's social

network. The ability of the dominant actor to assert control, domination and instrumentalism is due to the social network he or she currently enjoys.

Elements of instrumentalism were evidence in the utilisation of the 'Chief Minister institution' to secure private companies' sponsorship for the state football team. As explained in the appendix A1, the Chief Minister who is also the President of SAFA also holds the position of the State Minister of Finance; thus, he has the direct access to all the state's Government Link Companies (GLC). Therefore, it is easier for him, as well as for SAFA, to get these GLCs to sponsor the state football team. I have to admit that there was no clear indicator such as the amount of money these GLCs have given the state football team or any other written proof, to support this claim. However, the following quotes were deemed appropriate to support the above claims:

> "So the only different is one have money and the other doesn't have that much money, meaning to say ah, it's easier under CM (*Chief Minister)* to get sponsors compare to Datuk Anifah. So the handicapped is there" (interview with Osman Jamal, Vice President 1).

> "Sponsor, of course *there are other party give their (italic, own word added, translated from Malay language)* sponsor but mostly the government link company. *This task to get the* government link *to sponsor* is the chief minister, the president" (sic) (interview with Shahriman Abdullah, Honorary Treasurer)

In the first quote above, Osman Jamal has the opportunity to sit on the committee of SAFA under two different presidents. First, as honorary treasurer under the leadership of Anifah Aman (the previous president, who is also the younger brother of the current president), and currently serving as a Vice President 1. When he mentioned the word 'handicapped' it is referring to the difficulty for SAFA to get private sponsors during the term of Anifah Aman's presidency of SAFA. This was because, at that particular time, Anifah Aman was just a normal politician. I've used the term normal politician because Anifah Aman was just about to climb his political ladder. So, it was no surprise when the interviewee claims it was much easier for SAFA to get private sponsors under the Chief Minister, because a chief minister enjoys the highest executive power in the state. Due to this reason, private companies such as the state owned GLCs, were willing to sponsor the state football team. It was a case of top-down relationship. In the term of Bourdieu' capital, this is an obvious example of social capital where the main actor which is the president of SAFA is utilizing his extensive social network to get the private companies to sponsors the state football team.

The appointment of Joe, the press secretary, to the office of Chief Minister (refer to appendix A1) is a clear example of control as well as a manifestation of social capital. This can be seen as an attempt by the new management of SAFA to have control over the fans' affairs. This was probably due to the bad experience SAFA has had with another influential group of fans under the banner of Sabahrhinos.com. Sabahrhinos.com was the most vocal opposition to the changes of mascot, nickname and logo of the state football team initiated by the new management of SAFA.

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The symbolic power enjoyed by the new management of SAFA allows them to practice what Bourdieu (1991) call as 'dominant culture' which contributes to the real integration of the dominant class (facilitating communication between all its members and by distinguishing them from other classes). This implies that the new management of SAFA is exercising its 'power over' in controlling their relationship with the fans. It's a clear vertical, top – down relationship.

Sports, 'power over', sponsors and patronage were not a new phenomenon. In Britain, Martin Polley (1998, quoted from Boyles & Haynes, 2009, p.45) argued that sporting activity has always had a contact of sorts with commercial sponsors. Initially this took the form of aristocratic patronage. By the nineteenth century it involved members of the landowning classes becoming involved in popular recreation through forms of patronage. This was perceived as a means of promoting the social order as well as providing opportunity to increase the standing of the landowners among the lower classes. Whilst the setting was different in Sabah, the substance was similar. By being a patron as well as President for SAFA, the Chief Minister was actually 'riding' on the popularity of football as the number one sport in the state. These had certainly increased and enhanced his political profile, especially among his own supporters. As shown in the discussion, the enhancement was achieved in the form of rewarding his loyal political supporters a position in SAFA, as in the case of Joe.

The theme of strong-arm-tactics is represents the cultural and social capital.   (Appendix A8). This theme also act as a continuation of the 'patronage theme' as discussed above, especially in the context of managing the football fans as one of SAFA ' stakeholders. As shown in this theme, ignoring the fans, conducting no consultation with them was the approached taken by the new management of SAFA. SAFA was capable to ignore the fans because they are the dominant actors. And, they are dominant because of the symbolic power they possessed having access to the economic, social and cultural capital. This domination is clearly shown in the following quote;

> "We did not hold any consultation with the fans regarding the decision to change the nickname and mascot of the team. We did not." (Alijus Sipil, Secretary General, translated from Malay language).

Lukes, (2005) argued that power is all about domination; there is no escaping domination. Thus, by being dominant SAFA can afford to ignore the fans, who are the minority. In this case, it shows how the actor becomes dominant due to them enjoying 'symbolic power'. The dominant actor derived their symbolic power based on the cultural and social capital. In this context, the relationship between SAFA and the fans can be described as a vertical, top-down relationship of 'power over'.

Whilst SAFA chose to ignore their own stakeholders to show its 'power over', MGA on the other hand was using 'threat' to assert its own power as the National Governing Body of Golf, to MALGA and the young girl golfers. This is shown in the following quote:

"It affect in a way it has caused lots of problems, coordinating problems, it has affected in a way you know some girls feels err loyal to us and then some girls they are threaten you know in a way they feel that they being threatened because MGA is the governing body, so it causes some kinds of uneasiness among the players and the parents" (Rabeahtul Aloyah Abbas, Executive Director, MALGA).

MGA, due to its status as the powerful National Governing Body, is the dominant actor, and is thus capable of producing threats to its less dominant stakeholders. The MGA become the dominant actor due to the cultural capital it possessed. Bourdieu (1991) defined cultural capital based on the education and cultural background possessed by the actor. In the context of MGA – MALGA relationship it was obvious that MGA was using its cultural capital to assert their dominance over MALGA. This can be seen from the themes of 'strong-arms-tactics' and even clearer in the themes of gender.

The Gender theme (Appendix A2) shows how men feel threatened by the increasing inclusion of women in male dominated sports. In this case, golf is a male dominated sport. Moreover, Malaysian generally is a patriarchal society. Thus, it was not a surprise to discover that some men have a cynical, stereotyped view of women's involvement in golf, as shown in the following quote:

"In terms of golfing numbers ah, the girls is err one is to five lah, one is to five, I think because **girls spend quite a lot of money on cosmetic, beautification, so they tend not to** lah. But, the juniors of girls er growing up, **if you can catch them before puberty on the interest of golf they don't care about cosmetic and all these things it doesn't matter**, is a very interesting, Malaysian err, I think worldwide the golfing fraternity is one to five. And, err some of the golfers when they get married they introduce golf to their wife, that what at later stage lah, **but really really to entice and bring up good players is better before puberty lah, when they don't learn to go to see beautician lah**" (Robin Loh, President of MGA).

Up to this point, it shows how the capital possessed by the actors affect the nature of relationship between actors. The cultural and social capitals which lead to the formation of symbolic capital have clearly shows the dominant actor dominated the relationship in a dimension of 'power over'. It was a top-down, vertical, one-sided relationship. In terms of communication, it is obvious that it involves only one way, top-down communication.

Another point worth noting here is the question of domination. Domination means there are parties who dominate the relationship. This, I would argue made the relationship between actors less dynamic because of the symbolic power possessed by the dominant actor has 'closed down' all the dynamism in the relationship. The dominated actors have just to accept the fact that he is being dominated. However, as shown in the literature review, there are indeed worthy argument about the need to look into the alternatives power. Thus, the following discussion will look into how actors on certain condition use their own capital to make a relationship even more dynamic.

**4.3 Power with and Horizontal Relationship**

In the discussion of alternative views of power, there are two different terms being used to explain the alternatives to 'power over'. These two terms are, 'power with' and 'power to'. The term 'power to' was used by political sociologists such Stewart, (2001) and Lukes (2005). Lukes (2005) defined 'power to' as a capacity, facility and the ability of the group of people to act and decide. On the other hand, Berger (2005) defined 'power to' as a form of resistance that public relations practitioners may use to try to counter a dominance model. However, Berger (2005) with his definition of 'power with' offers a similar definition of 'power to' as defined by Lukes (2005). Berger (2005, p.6) defined 'Power with' "as an empowerment model where dialogue, inclusion, negotiation, and shared power guide decision making". Power with are promoting dialogue and negotiation. In terms of dimension, 'power with' was more linear, even though in the end there will be a winner, but the process of emerging victorious involved lots of give and take, thus it is considered as linear relationship as opposed to the uni-dimensional, top-down 'power over'.

Based on the definition of 'power with' as offered by Berger (2005), Stewart (2001) and Lukes (2005), there are two themes that have emerged from the interviews which fit the description of 'power with'. Both themes are networking and source-media relationship. These two themes is a clear representation of the social capital as proposed by Bourdieu (1991). Both themes show how actors using their extensive social networking are able to position themselves in the field.

The first case that I am going to analyse is the case of MALGA. As shown in the discussion of 'power over' dimension, MALGA was the dominated actor in their relations with MGA. At one point, MGA has used its power as the governing body of golf to stop any government assistance given directly to MALGA. Thus, MALGA has to find their way of funding the golf development programme. This was achieved by using the social capital (extensive social-network) possessed by the actors within MALGA. This social capital is clearly represented in the theme of networking.

In the networking theme, it was shown that the LSA was seeking support from other stakeholders by building a new network of support, as well as from its own existing networks. To garner the needed support, MALGA has resorted to networking with higher up politicians, with corporate people and with the world governing body of golf. The effort of networking can be seen from the following quotes:

> "Last year, our President Tuanku Puteri (*Royal Princess)* approach him (prime minister) and we wrote a letter to him and he actually supported the junior programme and he actually gave us a grant of Malaysian ringgit RM200,000  (equivalent to GBP50,000) to continue the programme because he could see the result because we give him all the result of what we've been doing so he give 200,000". (Jeannette Tambakau, Vice President, MALGA)

> "We have some who are very supportive for example like Sutera, the president Datuk Edward Ong, he is always very supportive from day one so I've got to use the facilities free for the girls, you know the driving range balls are free, to play in the golf course are free, this is important you see because it doesn't cost us anything. And, at the same time I also get members to donate old clubs for me, you know like golf attire or equipment or whatever if they don't want it they just send it to me and I can donate it to the school. These are small things that actually can help us as well for example like The Mines Resort, Tan Sri Lee Kim Yeoh, he also supports us you know in the junior development programme and because of his connection with all the corporate bodies like with the CIMB bank and all those things you know so he help us to garner a little bit here and there so these are the things that you know, if people are seeing you, you know doing a good deed you know there will be people who support us". (Jeannette Tambakau, Vice President, MALGA)

However, one obvious point beneath this networking process was the fact that the networking only happened within the same class or level of people. For instance, it needs the influence and royal status of the MALGA President, a royal princess, to build up the networking and an easy access with the Prime Minister of Malaysia. Just to put it in context, in Malaysian society, the higher up politician, especially from the government side are having good relationship with the family of the royalties. Thus, it is easier for the MALGA President to have access to the Prime Minister.

Another example to enhance the point that networking only happened within the same class of the society is evident in the effort taken by Jeannette. Being a successful businesswoman in Sabah, she uses her own business networking to garnered necessary support from the private and corporate sector (Appendix A5). This bring the question of does social capital especially the usage of extensive social-network would only happened within the same class of people? If this is the case then it will be appropriate to say that social capital does affect the dimension of relationship in the shape of horizontal relationship.

The second themes that represent the dimension of 'power with' can be seen in the 'source-media relationship' theme. This theme explains the relationship between the LSA and the media. One interesting criteria about this theme is the dependency relationship between the LSA as the source and the local media outlet (refer to appendix B – Source-Media Relationship). The dependency on media coverage makes the LSA to come out with mechanism to secure support from the local media. As shown in the appendix A, 'engagement' and 'informal relationship' were the practice employed by the LSA to get the needed support from the local media outlet. Again, based on Bourdieu' conception of capital, this practice can be explain by utilizing the social capital especially on using the extensive social-network. This can be seen in the following quote:

> "The (local) media knows my style, I've got Francis at the Sabah Times, Vitalis with the Borneo Post and Afandi from the Daily Express, these three reporters knows when I has a statement to make all I did is to send them text messages and they will do the rest" (Alijus Sipil, Secretary General, translated from Malays language)

Even though I've said earlier that the LSA are dependence on the media, but on further analysis shows that both parties are dependent to each other. The LSA are dependent on the local media for media exposure. However the 'informal relationship' employed by SAFA in their relationship with the local print media outlet through its Secretary General, has maintained the status quo of source as primary definer. As in the quotation above it shows how the secretary general of SAFA has the upper hand over the local sports journalist. This is also possible due to the fact that the size of media fraternity in Sabah is very small. Moreover, Alijus Sipil as mentioned before is having a close relationship with the chief minister of Sabah cum the president of SAFA. The previous chapter has outlined in detail the media landscape in Malaysia, particularly in the state of Sabah.

The above discussion shows that the 'power with' dimension is more linear in nature due to the dependency relationship between the actors involved and this is further enhanced with the utilization of the social capital (extensive social-network). However, there is a point worth discussion here. Is the relationship not a manipulative one? The answer for this is Yes and No. From the very surface, it is not a manipulative relationship because both the media and SAFA are dependent on each other. On the other hand it is a manipulative relationship because in the end, it was SAFA who were enjoying more benefits than the media.  This is due to the fact that SAFA remain the source of primary definer. To support this 'manipulative' argument, I would draw on the definition of stakeholder engagement. Theoretically, there are two different interpretations of engagement. The first interpretation was more extreme as pointed out by Foster & Jonker (2005) that 'many organisations have interpreted engagement as a form of management (read: control) where there is an attempt to organise, structure and thus 'manipulate' the relationship in the belief that this will best serve their needs. Organisations adopting this approach tend to make decisions on their own, and then inform interested parties or stakeholders of that decision via a variety of monologues. This leads to a one-sided-form of 'engagement' in which the organisation setting the boundaries remains firmly in control of the communication' (p.51)

The second interpretation of engagement was more liberal. Foster & Jonker (2005) argued that organisations 'attempted to become more involved in a two-way relationship in which the interests and concerns of both parties are taken into consideration and decisions are made in the light of those – often conflicting – interests and concerns. This does not mean that the interests of the focal organisation are ignored or over-ridden. Rather, in the process of determining how to achieve various objectives, these organisations acknowledge the existence of alternative perspective and may even modify their behaviour to help accommodate them. Viewed from the long-term perspective of the firm, this creates a solid basis for continuity' (p.51-52). It seems, at this point,

SAFA were practising engagement from the perspective of this second definition. They acknowledged the existence of alternative perspectives and modified their behaviour to help accommodate them. This was evident in the way SAFA engaged with local print media. However, what transpired in this study shows that the nature of engagement practised by SAFA was a mixture of both definitions above.

The second points worth highlighting can be seen from the 'network and support' practised by MALGA. It was shown here that networking only happened within the same class of society. In other words, it takes business people to open up networking with business people. This led me to a question: does networking represent an extended version of the dominant coalition? This will be further discussed in the concluding chapter.

To conclude this section, I would like to argue that social capital particularly the usage of 'extensive social-network' under the themes of 'networking' and 'source-media relationship' does affect the dynamic of relationship between the actors. Unlike the 'power over' dimension of top-down relationship, the 'power with' dimension, which empowered inclusion, dialogue, negotiation etc., create a more horizontal dimension and was more dynamic in terms of the relationship between the actors involved, as shown in the case of SAFA – Media relations. In terms of communication, this horizontal relationship provides for more dialogic communication, even though in the end there is always one party that emerges victorious from this relationship.

## 4.4 'Power to' and vertical relationship

In this section, the aim was to show how the capital either economic social or cultural will affect the dynamics of another horizontal, bottom-up dimension of power relationship under the label of 'power to'. The analysis will depart from the definition of 'power to' by Lukes (2005) who defined 'power to' as a capacity, facility and ability of the group of people to act and decide. On the other hand, Berger (2005) defined 'power to' as a form of resistance that public relations practitioners may use to try to counter a dominance model. Lukes (2005) in his definition did not specify which group of people he was referring to, was it the dominance group or the minority. Thus, in the absence of a definition of this 'specific group of people', I will refer to 'this group of people' as the less dominance actors. In the context of this thesis, the LSA are the dominant group, whilst the stakeholder concerns are the less dominance.

To make things more interesting, 'power to' as defined by Berger (2005) was a form of resistance to try to counter a dominance model. Even though, Berger (2005) had specified his definition of 'power to' to be used by public relations practitioners, I did not see it as strictly limited to PR practitioners only. This was because, in the context of Berger (2005) definition' above, PR

practitioners were the less dominance actors in the organization, thus there was a similarity with the less dominance actors in relations with the LSA as the dominance actor.

Therefore, for the context of this thesis, 'power to' refers to a small amount of power belong to the less dominance stakeholders to resist or to counter the dominance LSA. Based on this contextual of 'power to', one theme has emerged that represent the struggle of less dominance actors to counter the dominance of LSA. This theme is 'Self-interest'. Self-interest theme refers to the small amount of power that belongs to some significant minority stakeholder. This small amount of power enables the individual concern to further their self-interest. This self-interest does, to a certain degree affecting the relationship between LSA and its stakeholders and often will push the LSA to renegotiate its own power (refer to Appendix A11). This theme involves the relationship between the school teachers, who were given the responsibility to teach golf at their respective school and MALGA, the 'promoter' of the golf for girls programme. The teachers were the less dominant actors because they have to follow instruction given to them by MALGA, this put MALGA as the

To show how the teachers were able to use 'power to' it is essential to first understand the requirements set out by MALGA for their golfing programme to be implemented in the school. MALGA has outlined that the schools need to enroll as many as possible young girls, from as young as seven years old. The girls also must come from a family with no golf background whatsoever. However, what transpired was the teachers made their own decision that were totally against the outlines set out by MALGA. This is what I mean by the teachers being the less dominant actors practicing their 'self-interest' so that they can execute the golf for girls programme in their own school to suit their own preferences. This is shown in the following quote:

> "We make a written announcement (to open the golf club at school) stating that first the student must be willing to pay the fees; the second condition is their parent must be a golfer. This will make it easier for us to teach the student who already know or familiar about golf through their golfing parent" (Salimiah Jamili, Teacher, *Translated from Malay language).*

> "We are told by MALGA to open up this opportunity for less fortunate students but showing high interest to learn and play golf, that is what we were told initially by MALGA" (Salimiah Jamili, Teacher, *Translated from Malay language)*.

The above quotes show how the teachers are doing it their own way to make it easier for them to teach golf to students who were already having some basic about golf rather than teaching students who were entirely new to golf. This however has indirectly forcing MALGA to renegotiate their own position, i.e. to accept whatever decision taken by the teachers because the last thing MALGA did want to happen was the school to pull out from the programme.

Another form of 'self-interest' that also affected MALGA ways' of managing the relationship with the schools was evident in the school headmasters' preferences. School headmasters' preferences or priority is shown in the following quotes;

> "The principal has decided that the golf programme in the school can only be carried out in the afternoon session, thus she chooses only teachers from the afternoon session to handle the programme" (Salimiah Jamili, Teacher, *translated from Malay language*).

> "There is a case of one parent wanted to enroll her seven years old daughters in the programme but we refuse. The reason we gave to the parent is that we don't want the student (in the afternoon session) to feel tired after the golf session and will disturbed the teaching and learning process; the policy of our school is to preserve its excellence in achieving good result in terms of academic performance by its student so we don't want just because of the golf session it will affect the overall academic performances of that particular student, worst case scenario we will be answerable to the principal and we don't want this to happened. The principal also has stressed that the golf session in the school would not interfere with the teaching and learning process of the student, which is why she decided to have the golf session in the afternoon so the morning session student can participate after their class" (Salimiah Jamili, Teacher, *translated from Malay language*).

Most of the time, MALGA has to agree with whatever decision is taken by the schools' administration, as long as the Youth development programme can stay in the school. This is what I mean by, MALGA, as the dominant actor, has to renegotiate its own position to accommodate the demand made by the teachers and the schools.

Unlike the previous 'power over' and 'power with' dimension, for this 'power to' dimension I was not able to locate whether 'self-interest' is in the form of economic, social or cultural capital as defined by Bourdieu (1991) nor it was a symbolic capital.

However, this phenomenon can be explain by looking into what Mann (1993, cited from Whitmeyer 1997) called as the fallacy of monocratic bureaucracy. Mann (1993) through his analysis of political power observed that, the central elite do not have the tremendous ability to achieve their interest even if they have control over the state penetration and the amount of infrastructural power. In the context of this research, the central elite refer to MALGA. This was because, MALGA have all the backing and strong support from another dominant actor, such as the Ministry of Education to use and to choose schools as their base to unearth new talents. MALGA also has the necessary resources, such as financial support to train the teachers, who subsequently will be responsible to run the youth development programme in their respective schools. Despite all these resources, the teachers and schools still have the final say.

Probably Whitmeyer (1997) argument about the missing power that leads to his conception of 'the fallacy of monocratic bureaucracy' could explain this. Whitmeyer (1997) argued that Mann's analysis of political power is partially correct in noting that the central elite do not have tremendous ability to achieve their interests even the power of the common people and local actors does not

make up the difference because there seems to be 'missing power'. "The 'missing power' is in the middle, in the bureaucratic structure, in the system. It is not serving the interests of any small elite. Rather, it is the unintended and often popularly disliked emergent effect of many individuals using their own small amount of power in part to further their own interests" (p.217). However, what lacks in Whitmeyer's (1997) argument is that his reference to a 'small amount of power' is rather general. Thus, this research would like to suggest as evidenced in the above analysis, that it is 'power to' in the form of 'self-interest' is indeed the type of power that is missing in Whitmeyer's (1997) argument.

On another note, the self-interest has contributes to the dynamics of relationship between actors. It has affected the dimension or the shape of relationship between the actors in a vertical, bottom-up relationship. By exercising self-interest, the less dominant actors have successfully pushed the dominant actor to renegotiate their position. In fact, 'self-interest' has caused the relationship between actors even more dynamics as compared to the dimension of 'power over' and 'power with' relationship. As previously mentioned, the dimension of 'power over' left no rooms for the dominated actors to position themselves in the field. There is a more dynamic relationship in the dimension of 'power with' compared to 'power over' but not as dynamic as the relationship in the form of 'power to'.


**4.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the aim was to show how power could affect the dynamic of relationship between the actors involved. This analysis was needed to answer the research questions of the thesis. In this chapter, it was shown that power or specifically as Bourdieu (1991) called it as capital do affect the dynamics of relationship between the actors. It shows how the actors either the dominant or the dominated are exercising their own capital to position themselves in the field. It was the process of positioning in the field that produced the dynamic of communication and relationship. This chapter also shows that the dynamic of communication and relationship between the actors could be mapped using the dimension of power relations proposed by Berger (2005).

To recap, the symbolic power enjoyed by the dominant actors which they derived from having access to the economic, social and cultural capital resulted in the dimension of 'power over' relationship with almost no room for any dynamism in terms of relationship between the actors. The social capital especially the usage of 'extensive social-network' dominated the formation of linear, horizontal dimension of relationship between the actors. This 'power with' relationship reveals more dynamics in the relationship between the actors. This is due to the nature of dependency between

the actors. The final dimension of power relations which is the 'power with' reveals more dynamism in terms of relationship between the actors.

However, to conclude this chapter, I would like to highlight three important points that have emerged from the above discussion. The first point to be highlighted is the process of de-constructing and re-constructing of relationship. The second point is concern with the limitation of Bourdieu' (1991) conception of capital and finally the point of survival ability among the local sports association in Sabah.

It seems from the above discussion that power relations can be describe as simple as it was presented in this chapter. This chapter also has made an impression that full hegemony is achieveable. However, I would like to stress here that in reality, power relationships remain as complex as ever, the constant renegotiation of position by the actors involved as presented in this chapter confirming this point. The impression that power relationship is simple, and hegemony is achieveable is due to the need to de-construct and re-construct the complexity of power relationship. This de-construction process is needed to understand how power could affect the relationship between actors, especially in the context of sports and the practice (if any) of public relations in the context of Malaysian society. This chapter has shown that it is possible to de-construct and re-construct the complex relationship between actors. The process of de-construction was done using the conceptual of capital by Bourdieu (1991) and the re-construction of that complex relationship was done using the dimension of power by Berger (2005). This process has enabled me to explain how power affects the dynamic of relationship between actors. However, I would like to stress again that power relationship is remain as complex as ever.

The second point worth highlighting is concern with the limitation of the concept of capital as proposed by Bourdieu (1991). From the above analysis, it shows that the concept of capital do not able to explain all dimension of power relationship. In brief, symbolic power are able to explain the dimension of 'power over' relationship, the same thing goes to social capital that are able to explain the dimension of 'power with' relationship. However, there is no type of capital proposed by Bourdieu (1991) that were able to explain the dimension of 'power to' relationship. 'Power to' relationship explains how the dominated actors counter or resist the dominant actor. This shows that the concept of capital by Bourdieu (1991) can only explain the dominant 'power over' relationship. This confirm my early argument that Bourdieu' (1991) conception of power share the same premise as Antonio Gramsci' theory of hegemony.

The final point from the above discussion concern the understanding of the shape of the sports world, in this case, it refers to the LSA in Sabah. Sports organizations in Sabah were run as volunteer organizations. As a volunteer organization, the ability to survive is the fundamental

matter. It can be drawn from the analysis that in order to survive (financially), the LSA in Sabah need to have the dominant the 'symbolic power' at their disposal. It was shown especially in the case of SAFA where 'symbolic power' in the form of having a Chief Minister as a President was essential to their ability to survive. However, not all LSA are as fortunate as SAFA to have the Chief Minister of the state as the President. Thus, in order to survive, these LSA constantly renegotiated their position especially when faced with some resistance, as shown in the analysis of 'power with' and 'power to'.

This chapter proves that power is essential and the central elements in any relationship. Moreover, the shape of dynamism of relationship and communication between actors is determined by power or capital.

## Chapter 5
## Discussion, Implications and Conclusion

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together the implications, contribution and conclusion of the thesis. The point for implications will discuss on the methodology implications which is to re-look the usual approach taken by cultural/critical studies in relying mostly on the text to trace the traces of power. There are two points to be discussed for the contribution of the thesis. First it concern with the state of public relations practice in sports in Sabah which are not yet fully developed. This has certainly affected the research approach. The second contribution of the thesis is concern with enhancing the concept of capital by Bourdieu (1991) as well as concern with the limitation of the conception of capital. I believe this was possible due to the approach of de-constructing and re-constructing the complex power relations as shown in the previous chapter.

### 5.2 Methodology implications

As mention in chapter 2 Research methodology, this research were employing the cultural/critical approach because this approach allows room for interpretation as well as examining the structure of the society as an essential element. This is also in line with the main theoretical framework of the thesis which is Bourdieu' (1991) language and symbolic power especially concern with the conception of capital. Bourdieu (1991) himself argued that an act of speech must be vested with power that are institutionalize. In other words, in analyzing language and power, one cannot separate the speech from the social condition that made up the speech. Throughout the study, I have no problem with this approach. In fact, by looking into the structure of the society it helps me to better understanding the transcript of the interviews.

My concern with the cultural/critical approach is the reliance on the text especially to trace the traces of power. The cultural/critical studies researchers believe that the text is the artefact of the cultural producer (Mickey, 2003). In cultural studies, texts are considered as a form of oppression. However, as shown in this thesis the relationship between actors (the cultural producer) remain dynamics, moreover I've shown that the dynamic and dimension in relationship between the actors is depending on the type of capital possessed by the actors involved. In other words, relationship between actors is a dynamic process. The relationship become dynamic due to the capital possessed by the actors involved.

Since, relationship is dynamics I did not see why cultural/critical approach relied mostly on text to trace the traces of power. Because, the traces of power can only reveals a unidimensional relationships. It can only show how the dominant actors assert their power over the dominated actors. This approach denying the fact that relationship is a dynamic process. Edwards (2009)

argued that to understand power in public relations 'it must approach practice in context so that its daily logic and dynamic can be observed.' (p.253) This clearly support the need to diversified the sources of data to be analysed, not to relied heavily on the text produced the cultural producers. As I have argued in chapter 2 that if the original sources, the cultural producers are available why would we go for the artefact.

This does not meant that conducting interview and observing the daily practice are more than enough to look into how power could affect the dynamic of relationship. In fact, initially a wide range of documents check has been considered for analysis (as mention in chapter 2), however this was not possible in the context of this research due to the bad record keeping practice of the chosen LSA. Not only they (LSA) are miserable in their record keeping practice, they do see public relations practice is not integral to their operation. This will be shown in the following discussion.

## 5.3 Sport Public Relations in Sabah

This section as part of contribution of this thesis aims to highlight the current practice of public relations in sports industry especially in Sabah. There are two points worth discussion in regards to sports public relations in Sabah. First is the lacked of expertise in public relations which lead to the second concern about the relationship between the LSA and the media.

Throughout my research, I have found out that these two organizations are lacks in understanding about the role of public relations which lead to the lacked of necessary arrangement to have someone with expertise in public relations. The most obvious evidence was the statement given by Joniston Bangkuai, the president of Sabah Journalist Association. He said that almost all local sports associations sending them press releases that they hardly understand. The lackadaisical attitude by the LSA towards the proper practice of public relations is due to the fact that the LSA are running on shoestring budget. This has been discussing thoroughly in chapter 3. This has indirectly forced the LSA to focus on getting enough funding. Moreover in the case of SAFA as admitted by Osman Jamal that their focus is on getting the state football team ready to compete in the Malaysian league, not so much on public relations practice. Further check found out that the designated 'media officer' in the office of SAFA did nothing relates to public relations. In fact his job is more on video-recording on any home matches. Similarly to MALGA, Jeannette who is the vice president of MALGA is the one who doing the entire job in relations to the media.

As shown in the previous chapter, in terms of media relations the LSA are depending on their extensive social network plus their own social capital (background) to do public relations work on behalf of the organizations. However, a more pressing issue here is the fact that the LSA were

not able to have proper record keeping practices due to the lack of proper public relations staff. This has hampered my initial plan to do document analysis to supplement the interviews.

On the other hand, the research has uncovered one of the problems faced by the LSA. In this case it concern with the LSA understanding of proper public relations practice. Thus, it is not too much to suggest to the state ministry of youth and sports about the need to include a module on effective public relations practice to the LSA in Sabah.


**5.4 Enhancement and limitation on the concept of capital.**

This section is one of the contributions of this thesis to the body of knowledge specifically as a critique to the conception of capital by Bourdieu. There are two contradicting main points in this section that are worth highlighting. First it relates to how this research has enhanced the concept of capital by Bourdieu. The second one is to show how this research somehow shows the limitation of the concept of capital.

Bourdieu (1991) argued that before we could understand the symbolic power which is derived from the economic, social & cultural capital (Edwards, 2009) first we need to understand the social condition. Because Bourdieu (1991) argues that act of speech must be vested with power that are institutionalized, in other words, power that are recognizes. This implies the need to look into the structure, the class of society to understand how the capitals are being utilized by the actors. As shown in the previous chapter that this is possible by de-constructing and re-constructing the power relations between the actors.

The de-construction process involved the process of identifying the themes that match the concept of capitals as proposed by Bourdieu. For instance, in the relationship between SAFA and the fans, the theme such as patronage which implies how the new management of SAFA which are mostly politician is using their social capitals (extensive social-network) to asserts their power over the fans. This process has helps to expand the definition of capital by Bourdieu.

For instance, Bourdieu defined Cultural capital as education or cultural background of the actor. In the context of this research, the term cultural background can be further defined to represent the nature of patriarchal society of Malaysia. This is in the context of relationship between MGA and MALGA. It refers to how men (MGA) view the involvement of women (MALGA) in golf which is seen as men dominated sports.

Another example of how this research has helps to expand the definition of capital is shown in the theme of 'networking'. This theme, in brief shows how the actors are building up their network to their benefits. For instance, in the case of MALGA the actors within MALGA are using their extensive social network to help them (MALGA) to run the golf development programme. In

the case of SAFA it was shown how Alijus Sipil was using his own social network with the local media fraternity to get media exposure for SAFA. The usage of one' social network is how Bourdieu conceptualised social capital. This is no differences with the theme of networking. However, what transpired in the networking theme is the fact that the process of networking only happened with the same class of society, this is especially true in the context of MALGA. A royal princess status has made it easier for the president of MALGA to have an easy access with the Prime Minister of Malaysia. Am not suggesting that this would be the same in any other part of the world, but in the context of Malaysian society this is possible.

Thus, I would like to stress here as part of the contribution of this thesis that social capital by Bourdieu especially the usage of one' extensive social-network is merit further investigations. Future investigation should focus on the question whether networking could only happened within the same class of a society.

The next discussion is concern the limitation of the concept of capital by Bourdieu. Again, to begin the discussion I will mention again that power or capital according to Bourdieu (1991) must be 'recognize and therefore more a less sanctioned socially' (p.75). This means that power must be institutionalized. From the data analysis especially the 'power over' dimension, the definition of power as institutionalized is clearly represented. The power over dimension caused by the symbolic power enhanced the above conception of power. The same thing goes to the 'power with' dimension which was caused by the social and cultural capital.

The limitation on the concept of capital by Bourdieu is very obvious in the 'power to' dimension as discussed in detail in the previous chapter. To recap, the 'power to' dimension represents a vertical, bottom-up relationship. It involves the relationship between MALGA as the dominant actor and the teachers cum golf coaches as the dominated actor. In this relationship, the teachers were using their self-interest in their relationship with MALGA. The self-interest in this case refers to the action by the teachers to modify the instruction given to them by MALGA. MALGA on the other hand have no choice but to accept whatever modification done on their instruction by the teachers.

The limitation on the concept of capital by Bourdieu is based on one obvious point. As discussed in chapter 4, I was unable to match any of the capitals, i.e economic, cultural or social capital to the self-interest theme. This is because the self-interest theme unlike the other themes did not represent any institutionalized power, i.e not a recognize power according to Bourdieu (1991) conception of power.

Bourdieu' conception on power however is able to re-affirm the theory of hegemony by Antonio Gramsci. This is possible because both Bourdieu' symbolic power and Gramsci' theory of hegemony share the same premise of dominant relationship. Thus, it was no surprise as to why

Bourdieu' conception of capital was unable to explain the 'power to' dimension as discussed above. And this is also contradict his (Bourdieu) own assumption that actors will negotiate and re-negotiate their own position within the field. This implies that Bourdieu' conception of power can only partially useful in explaining how power could affect the dynamic of relationship.


**5.5 Sports Network Model: West vs. East**

In this section, I will highlight the differences in sports network models between the west and east. In other words, the differences that have emerged between the sports network model that I've borrowed from Wolfe, Meenaghan & O'Sullivan (2002) in the process of constructing the study framework, with what has emerged from the data.

Wolfe, Meenaghan & O'Sullivan (2002) aim to look into how the power relationships between the main actors in sports, (which they identified as: sports networks; National Governing Bodies (NGB); Media owners; and Corporate sponsors) shifted between these main actors. Their study shows that the power of sports has shifted from the NGB to the media and corporate sponsors due to the economic power held by the media and the corporate sector.

It was shown in this study that there are some power struggles between the sports networks in Sabah. However, unlike the finding of Wolfe, Meenaghan & O'Sullivan (2002), the shifting balance of power in the sports network in Sabah was not commercially driven; instead it was driven by fights over who would be the dominant actors; it had nothing to do with commercial interests. For instance, the theme of 'strong-arm-tactics' and 'patronage' employed by SAFA in relations with the fans shows that it was done to show who the dominant actor was. Furthermore, as shown in the theme of 'source-media relations' (Appendix A7), the Secretary General of SAFA had been engaging with the local daily reporters to preserve his role as the primary definer of the event.

Whilst Wolfe, Meenaghan & O'Sullivan (2002), would cite economic power as the main reason for the shift in the balance of power from NGB to the media and corporate sectors, economic power was largely absent in the case of the sports networks in Sabah. The absence of economic power was due to the fact that private or commercial sponsors' involvement in sport, particularly in Sabah, was not that encouraging. As shown in this study, if there are any private sponsors, those private companies normally are government-linked companies. As shown in the theme of 'patronage' (Appendix A1), SAFA was lucky to secure funding from private companies that were also state-linked, and government-linked companies; again, this was due to having the State Chief Minister as President of SAFA.

The most important point here is that the sports networks offered by Wolfe, Meenaghan & Sullivan (2002) would only be a useful framework of analysis in more advanced sporting countries where sport has become an industry, or a sector that has helped the economy of that particular country. In the case of sports in Malaysia, particularly in Sabah, this sport network would need to be re-drawn due to the above factors. Sports networks in Malaysia should be constructed based on the analysis of political power not on economic power. This is because, as shown in this study, particularly in the theme of 'patronage', sports have been heavily linked to politics.

On further analysis, this implication led to the debate of the roles of economic power and political power in drawing the future landscape of sports in Malaysia. As shown in chapter 1, the government has been championing the cause to encourage the industry (read: private sectors) involvement in sports. This effort could be seen as pushing the sports landscape in Malaysia into a new direction whereby the private sectors will be the main player in Malaysian sports. This will reduce the burden of government in leading the development of sports in Malaysia. However, on the other hand it led to the shifting balance of power as demonstrated in the argument put forward by Wolfe, Meenaghan and Sullivan (2002). Economic factors will be the integral part in determining the future of sports landscape in Malaysia. Due to this, the balance of power will shift from the NGB/ Government (politics) to the private sectors/industry. In another words, commercial interest will prevail over sporting interest.

On the other hand, staying with the status quo - government (politics) as the main player in sports – will also affect the future of sporting landscape in Malaysia. The positive notes of keeping 'politics as shown in this study', as the major actors in sporting networks will preserve the amateurism in sports. Amateur in this context should be seen as people participation in sports is solely motivated by sports, not a commercial interest. This is possible because, as shown in this study, lacks of private involvement (sponsors) in sports has 'forced' the LSA to depends on government funds/grants as well as cooperation from other entities without any commercial interest.

However, developing sports required huge investment. This is something that no government in the world, particularly in the less developed countries will prepare to spend a huge portion of the tax payer money on providing sports facilities. For instance, in the recently concluded Olympic games 2012, the Malaysian government has spent Malaysian Ringgit 20 Million (equivalent to £5 million pound) for the last four years in preparing the athletes but could only managed to bring home one silver and one bronze medal (The Star, 13 August 2012).Thus, it is understandable, why the government of Malaysia, especially the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports are so eager to promote and encourage private sectors involvement in Sports. At this moment, it seems that

sports in Malaysia are still dominated by government/politics, but given the fact that there are pressure to increase the needs of capability to 'participate' and 'competing' at the highest level (global), sports in Malaysia will eventually falls under the control of commercial interests.

**5.6 Limitation and Conclusion**

In this study, as shown in chapter 4 it has managed to answer the research questions. It was shown how power has affected the dynamic of relationship and communication between actors. It was also shown how the actors involved are exercising their power/capital in the relationship with other actors. In brief, power relationship is not a unidimensional process. It is a dynamic relationship depending on the type of capitals possessed by the actors.

By successfully proving that power does affect the dynamics of communication and relationship, its affirmed Jahansoozi (2006) argument that mutual / perfect understanding is only achievable if the elements of power are taken out. This further supporting the arguments that reject the symmetrical public relations proposed by Grunig (Curtin & Gaither, 2005).

Beside, this thesis also affected the model of sports networks. In the western model of sports networks it was the economic factors that caused the shifting balance of power from the NGB to the media and corporate sectors. However, as shown in this study, particularly in the context of Malaysian sports, it was the power of politics that determined the shifting balance of power in the sports networks.

Finally, it is my personal hope that this research will help to add more colours to the existing landscape of PR research in Malaysia; the hope is that it might bring in different paradigms, as opposed to the dominant functional paradigm. However, the findings presented in this thesis are limited in the sense that they are derived from two organizations in one cultural context. The only positive thing is that I was able to apply western theoretical framework into eastern cultural context, which however limited it is still managed to show some weaknesses of the theory concern.

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**APPENDIX A - Description of Themes**

**APPENDIX A1 - Patronage**

| Final Coding | Initial Coding / Open Coding |
|---|---|
| Patronage | Power of chief minister to get private sponsors |
| | Chief minister capable of pulling in sponsors |
| | Chief minister position to back up decision |
| | Control & answerable to chief minister |
| | Influence and followers |
| | Political credibility of the chief minister |
| | Power of chief minister of pulling in sponsors |

The oxford dictionary defined patronage as the support given by the patron and the power to control appointment to office or the right to privileges. In this case, the Chief Minister of Sabah is the patron. This dictionary definition certainly reflects this theme because the obvious elements of support, control and privileges are present. The element of support can be seen clearly from the ability of the Chief Minister, who is also the President of SAFA, to get the private sector, especially the government linked companies to sponsor the state football team as illustrated in the following quote:

> "Sponsor ermmm of course there are other party give their (*italic, own word added, translated from Malay language*) sponsor but mostly the government link company. This task to get the government link to sponsor is the chief minister, the presidentlah" (Shahriman Abdullah, Honorary Treasurer).

As a Chief Minister who is also currently holding the post of state Minister of Finance he is in direct control of the affairs of all Government Link Companies (GLC) in the state. In other words, the CEOs and the Board of Directors of the state GLCs will have to report and be responsible to the state Ministry of Finance.

The element of control in this theme can be seen from the action taken by the management of SAFA to appoint a new president for the newly formed fan club. This new president was chosen because he is also the press secretary to the Chief Minister. This appointment implied that the new management of SAFA wanted to have good control of the fans affairs as indicated in the following quote:

> "We have identified one person – Joe- to lead the fans club of SAFA, the Sepanggar UMNO Youth Chief and also at the same time he works as the media officer for the Chief Minister of Sabah, also the president of SAFA. One of the reasons we choose Joe because he is answerable to the Chief Minister, so it is easy to monitor the fan club" (Alijus Sipil, Secretary General – translated from Malay language).

UMNO (United Malay National Organization) in the above quote refers to the main party that makes up the ruling coalition known as the National Front (Barisan Nasional). The Chief Minister of Sabah is the current state Chairman of this ruling coalition. In the national level, UMNO is also the major party in the National Front coalition. Sepanggar is one of the areas located near to the capital city of Sabah, Kota Kinabalu. With this background it is apparent that political patronage indeed exists in sports. This is consistent with the widely accepted definition of patronage. Sorauf (1960, cited from Bearfiled, 2009) defined patronage as "an incentive system – a political currency with which to purchase political activity and political responses". Thus, the appointment of Joe as the new president for the newly formed fans club serves two purposes. One, SAFA will have control to the fans club activities; second and the most important meaning is that the President of SAFA is using his

political position (Chief Minister) to reward his own political supporters using sports. Joe on the other hand will reap the benefits of increasing his own political mileage by riding on the popularity of football.

To sum up, the theme of patronage refers to the supports, control and access to the privileges. This support, control and privilege is given by the patron, which is the Chief Minister of Sabah. The access to support, control and privileges is made possible by the political power held by the Chief Minister himself who holds the highest executive power and position in the state.

**APPENDIX A2 - GENDER**

| Theme: Gender | • Different needs between male and female golfers |
| | • Gap of number between male and female golfers |
| | • Cynical and stereotyping views on female golfers |

This theme indicates three important matters in the question of gender in golf. In the context of golf development and promotion, serious attention is required in attending to the different needs between male and female golfers. These needs are either biological needs or logistical needs. In this research, it was evident that only women know how to handle women, especially in attending to the biological needs of young female golfers as illustrated in the following quote:

> "last year I had one of my committee to be the team captain to take care of this junior in Kuching for the Sarawak Chief Minister cup, the girls are ages ten to twelve, okay, during the event three girls got their period for the first time you know so they come to my committee and auntie, auntie asking for help, so simple thing like that, if there is no lady chaperon or team captain would the girls dare to go to uncle and said you know, so it's a simple thing with all these biological needs of the girls, so we are just stressing that because we feel that MALGA should be given the sole responsibility to be in charge of the ladies golf and also to work together with MGA in terms of the whole development" (Rabeahtul Aloyah Abbas, Executive Director, MALGA).

Taking off from attending the biological needs of the young female golfers is the need to give more room to MALGA in charting the future of women golfers in Malaysia. As it is, MALGA was not part of the development committee in MGA, even though MALGA is an affiliate member of MGA. By excluding MALGA from the committee in MGA its only adds problems to the logistical needs. As shown in the following quotes:

> "(Previously) MALGA is also part of the committee in fact I personally was part of the committee so during the committee meetings what we do is while MALGA report what ladies have been through and so on and then MGA got the boys and then if there are areas that we can train together or participate in whatever then you know that kind of relationship, but now there is no representative in MGA committee at all" (Rabeahtul Aloyah Abbas, Executive Director, MALGA).

> "So to us since we have been formed to take care of the ladies let us do our job and anyway we are an affiliate with MGA anyway so if there are any areas where we can work together with the boys and so on we work together but there are areas when we have to do things on our own then we have to do things on our own because in term of ladies tournament there is different schedule, for example MGA wants to do the qualifying rounds next week and next week is the tournament in Philippines for the ladies so how can so the ladies have to kind like decide which to go you know" (Rabeahtul Aloyah Abbas, Executive Director, MALGA).

On the surface, the above quotes show that there is a need for both parties to address the differences in needs between male and female golfers. However, on a more nuanced note, the above quotes show the 'power over', gender bias relationship between MGA the National Governing Body, which is dominantly controlled by Men. MALGA, an affiliate member in MGA, represents the women golfers in the country.

Another issue in gender is the unbalanced numbers of men and women golfers. This is one of the reasons why MALGA came out with the Youth Development Programme to identify talented young

girls to play golf, as well as to increase the number of women golfers in the country. However, this effort did not receive the positive support from MGA. What MGA did instead was to sabotage the programme. It was revealed to me by one of the respondents from MALGA that MGA is the reason why the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports stopped giving MALGA the annual grant for their Youth Development Programme. Not only did MGA sabotage the Youth Development Programme, they also viewed this programme with the cynical, stereotyping view about female involvement in a sport that is dominantly controlled by men. The following quote shows this:

> "In terms of golfing numbers ah, the girls is err one is to five lah, one is to five, I think because girls spend quite a lot of money on cosmetic, beautification, so they tend not to lah. But, the juniors of girls er growing up, if you can catch them before puberty on the interest of golf they don't care about cosmetic and all these things it doesn't matter, is a very interesting, Malaysian err, I think worldwide the golfing fraternity is one to five. And, err some of the golfers when they get married they introduce golf to their wife, that what at later stage lah, but really really to entice and bring up good players is better before puberty lah, when they don't learn to go to see beautician lah" (Robin Loh, President of MGA).

The above quote is consistent with Dunning (1986, cited from Liston, 2006), who argued that the increasing interdependence of males and females in sport was manifested in the ways in which males perceived females' increasing participation in male-dominated sports as a threat to their dominance, and a challenge to their masculinity. The forms of resistance by males to female incursions into male-associated sports reflected the traditional importance of these sports to masculine habitués. This argument put forward by Dunning perhaps manages to shed light into why MGA is so cynical and insistent upon maintaining the stereotyping views of female involvement in golf, a male-dominated sport.

**APPENDIX A3 – GOVERNMENT DIRECT INVOLVEMENT**

| Theme: Government Direct Involvement | • Political power, government direct involvement <br> • Lobbying government to involve in sports/golf development <br> • Financial support from government <br> • Government involvement <br> • With government involvement its easier for MALGA |
|---|---|

As the title of this theme implies, this theme indicates the direct involvement of government in sports in Malaysia, particularly in the state of Sabah. It is understandable that it is part of the government's responsibility to provide sports facilities to the public. This theme also shows how government gives financial aid or provides help in logistical matters to the local sports associations. These are shown in the following quotes:

> "Yeap, at the moment when we engage a pro (professional coach) his salary will be paid by MSN (The State Sports Council) as part of their sport development, I am sure they also pay for football coaches, squash, so the same time, not only MSN, ministry of tourism also help us a lot er especially when we organise things like err big states event like Sabah Amateur open they will come and sponsor the welcoming dinner and the ministry of sports also will come and look we will sponsors the err prise presentation" (George Bandusena, President of SGA).

> "In Sabah alhamdullillah (*Thanks God)* no problem because I think err the leadership here I mean both the ministry of youth and sports as well as the Education Department has been very supportive because they know that in fact one of them mentioned to me sometimes ago you know Raby no national association is doing what you are doing" (Rabeahtul Aloyah Abbas, Executive Director, MALGA).

In brief, the above quotes show how the government is helping the local sport associations. However, a more serious point is the fact that the government is using the taxpayer money / public money to help and to develop facilities for elite sports in which only a small number of the community, mostly from the elite group, can participate. In this case, it refers specifically to golf. There are two ways of explaining the involvement of the state government in developing golf. First, the 'vision' of the chief minister in providing good places for businessmen to meet and talk about business was cited as one of the reason for government direct involvement. This can be seen from the following quote:

> So they created the golf club then, especially during Datuk Harris, he saw the future of golf tourism, he saw. He saw that because of the state infrastructure is not well develop in terms of bringing in foreign investors, the only way to solve this is to bring them to dine and play a round of golf and to see the beauty of Sabah through golf, so for him, he felt that the business community need a place. That was Datuk Harris vision when he built up golf courses, because he knows business men need places to talk about business, a proper place and the only place at that time he saw is golf club. Because at that time the infrastructure was very bad, even our Tanjung Aru airport was a coffee shop airport, so the only way to show case is to built golf courses and golf clubs and that's the only place where businessman meet, businessman needs place to do business, and when that happened, the economic spin off, the economic activities

can be taken place because those days no five stars hotel also, so that's how it started (Robin Loh, President of MGA).

Datuk Harris in the above quote was the sixth Chief Minister of Sabah who governed the state from 1976 – 1985. The idea of using sports to generate the local economic spin off could be seen as a good and workable idea. However, does this economic spin off really cover the whole society? I personally remain doubtful. Because it shows the priority of the government during that time was to fulfill the needs of the elites. Involvement of government in sport, has been shown to serve the needs of the elite few rather than the masses. This is not unique to developing nations like Malaysia. Even in the developed nations like the United States there is evidence that the government uses tax-payer money to developed sports facilities under the pretext of generating economic growth (Keating, 1999). However, Keating (1999, p.25) found that:

> "The economics of sports subsidies is dismal, as large taxpayer expenditures for new stadiums, ballparks, and arenas fail to generate economic growth and new jobs, despite the grand assertions by team owners and countless politicians. And while the politics of sports pork can be high profile and glitzy, it amounts to the same pathetic special-interest politics we see every day in government, whereby the many are taxed for the benefit of an elite few. In this case, the few happen to be millionaire sports team owners and players".

The elite few are capable of lobbying the government. This could be the reason why government has the tendency of attending to the needs of the elite few. And, this is the second explanation for why governments are directly involved in sports. In the case of golf development in Sabah, it was the lobbying tactics used by the golf club members that persuaded the government to develop golf courses in the state.

> "Of course err Tun Mustapa, he started actually the this (SGCC) course I cant remember about the date and after that BERJAYA came to power KGC was the only golf course in Kota Kinabalu at that time and err when BERJAYA took over Datuk Harris was persuaded lah by people like J.J. Murugesu, the founders members here lah, they say why don't you continue the development of this course which he did lah with some government help in the development of golf in Sabah, in fact all golf courses like Keningau, Labuan, err Kudat, Sandakan, Tawau the government has big hand in it either by giving them land or some with finance" (George Bandusena, President of SGA).

For note, Tun Mustapa, in the above quote, was the third Chief Minister of Sabah and held office from 1967 – 1975. BERJAYA (now defunct) is a local political party. Not only did Datuk Harris continue the development of the SGCC golf course, he went on to develop and build golf courses in every district in Sabah, as mentioned in the above quote. The use of public funds, by providing financial support and government machinery, and by providing lands to develop golf courses, indicates two things. First, the private sectors' absence in sports development was such that the government had to fill the void. Second, its shows abuse of power by the government. This second assumption is best left as a point of mere speculation, due to the lack of data to support it. However, this could be an interesting point for further investigation.

To sum up, the theme of government's direct involvement can be divided into two equally important conceptions. First, there is the notion that state governments are just being responsible by providing all the necessary support, either financial or logistic, to local sport associations. This could probably be due to the absence, or limited involvement of the private sector in sports development. The second notion indicates abuse of power by the government. This is due to the fact that the state governments prefer the elite few (in the case of golf development) rather than the public.

**APPENDIX A4 – NETWORKING & SUPPORT**

| Theme: Networking & Support | • Maintaining network of support <br> • Building new networking <br> • Corporate & Business networking |
|---|---|

Newbold (1999) argued that it is difficult to have a firm definition on networking 'because there are so many ways to define and interpret networking, the term itself is problematic' (p.295). The attempts to define networking will be usually found in marketing literature. This is shown in the work of Parvatiyar and Sheth (2002, cited from O'Brien and Gardiner, 2006, p.26) where networking is described as collaborative and cooperative activities. Gilbert and Tsao (2000, cited from O'Brien and Gardiner, 2006, p.26) noted that networking is an integral feature of relationship marketing, and has emerged in the literature as 'a means of understanding the totality of relationships amongst firms engaged in production, distribution, and the use of goods and services'. O'Brien and Gardiner (2006) argued that networking was employed by particular stakeholders to build relationships (p.27).

Based on the above background, networking is best described as collaborative and cooperative activities based on good relationships; this certainly fits the description of the networking & support theme from this research. In more detail, the collaborative and cooperative activities involve three main characteristics: first, building of new networking; second, maintaining network of support; and, finally the corporate and business networking.

Building of new networking in the context of this research refers to the action taken by MALGA to involve and garner support from other parties. As evident from the interviews with respondents, there are two ways MALGA have used to build and expand their own networking. First, through a professional golf event, some sort of conference, where representatives gather from the world governing body of golf; the R&A also attended. Utilising the royal status of the President of MALGA is another approach in building up networking. These ways of building new networks are shown in the following quotes:

> "The R & A, how do we got the support from The R&A, actually it started maybe year 2005 where our executive director Datuk Rabeahtul Alowiyah Abas, she was in Thailand at that time, I think she was attending one of the professional event in Thailand, and she meet this R&A people there. One of them, the director of R&A, Mr. Duncan at that time, Duncan Weir if I am not mistaken, ermm Datuk Rabeahtul saw the opportunity there and ermm so she seise that opportunity, she went up and approach Duncan Weir and asked Duncan Weir what R&A, what is R&A is about, because not a lot of people know what R&A is all about, we only know R&A as the governing body, world governing body, but what are the things that they can help, they can offer so, Datuk Rabeahtul go and find out from him, then only she realise that actually they do a lot of junior programme in the world you know, they support everywhere, and they also have the passion into developing it into mass, they said they want more junior to come out not just a selected group. So, when Datuk Rabeahtul found out about that, that when she wrote in, she came back and she wrote in to ask for support and we get it in 2006. That's how it started, initially like I said earlier they gave us 5000 pound" (Jeannette Tambakau, Vice President, MALGA).

> "Last year, our President Tuanku Puteri (*Royal Princess)* approach him (prime minister) and we wrote a letter to him and he actually supported the junior programme and he actually gave us a grant 200,000 to continue the programme because he could see the result because

we give him all the result of what we've been doing so he give 200,000" (Jeannette Tambakau, Vice President, MALGA).

There are two significant points that are worth mentioning from the above quotes. First, it is a clear evidence of business world influence in golf. This is because Datuk Rabeahtul, the Executive Director of MALGA, had the chance to meet with people from The R&A through a professional event in conjunction with one of the golf competitions in Thailand. This professional event usually will be used by corporate people who are representing their company. These companies are normally the sponsors of the golf event. The second significant point is that status and social class, in the context of Malaysian society, play a very important role in networking. It is shown in the above quote that MALGA was able to build its networking with the Prime Minister of Malaysia due to the fact that their president is a member of the royal family.

In addition to the above points, networking has also happened and has been made possible through the existing platforms of networking. In this case, it involves networking among business people. The Vice President of MALGA, Datin Jeannette, for instance, is one of the most successful businesswomen in Sabah. Through this, she was able to garner support for MALGA from her very own business network. The following quote provides good illustration on the ways in which business networking has helped MALGA:

> "We have some who are very supportive for example like Sutera, the president Datuk Edward Ong, he is always very supportive from day one so I've got to use the facilities free for the girls, you know the driving range balls are free, to play in the golf course are free, this are important you see because it doesn't cost us anything. And, at the same time I also get members to donate old club to me, you know like golf attire or equipment or whatever if they don't want it they just send it to me and I can donate it to school. These are small things that actually can help us as well for example like The Mines Resort, Tan Sri Lee Kim Yeoh, he also support us you know in the junior development programme and because of his connection with all the corporate bodies like with the CIMB bank and all those things you know so he help us to garner a little bit here and there so these are the things that you know, if people are seeing you, you know doing a good deed you know there will be people who support us" (Jeannette Tambakau, Vice President, MALGA).

> "In terms of opportunity I think Datin Jeannette has coordinated with Sutera to provide as much facilities err available for any of them" (Rabeahtul Aloyah Abbas, Executive Director, MALGA).

It is also worth noting that Datin Jeannette being a successful businesswomen and an avid golfer with a single handicap, is the ladies captain of Sutera Harbour Golf Club. This position makes it easy for her to get the necessary help from the Golf Club.

To sum up, networking in the context of this research refers to efforts relating to the garnering of support and help for local sport associations. It is also worth noting that in the example of networking, we see an implication of the hierarchical nature of society in Malaysia. This is something that needs to be taken into consideration because networking only happens within the same level of class. For instance, business people will find it easy to get the support from business networking. Royalty will find it easier to get higher level politicians to help. This leads to a question: does networking represent an extension of dominant coalition? This will be further discussed in the conclusion chapter.

**APPENDIX A5 – SOURCES – MEDIA RELATIONS**

| Theme: Sources – Media Relations | Reliance on Media – disseminate info / report as proof |
| --- | --- |
| | Personalise relations with local print media |
| | Engagement with the media |
| | Local media support |

This theme shows the relationship between the LSA in Sabah as sources with the local print media. From the above table it was shown that the LSA are very dependent on the local print media to disseminate information, as well as to provide proof in terms of media reports on the progress of its own programme. The following quotes illustrate this dependency of LSA to the local print media.

> "We need the support from the newspaper because it is the most efficient media to keep the public informed about the team, we cannot boycott the media" (Alijus Sipil, Secretary General, translated from Malay language).

> "I think media play a very important part in any sport development because I think firstly the media can err turn your story from positive to negative and from negative to positive right is whether you want to write the positive way or the negative way so they hold the err magic pen basically. So having said that I think everybody should be responsible in their own areas so responsible reporting will be necessary. And I think err if the media feels what we have done is really good and I feel we need err media to really give very good publicity because we are in err dire need of really financial support" (Rabeahtul Aloyah Abbas, Executive Director, MALGA).

This dependency on local media support has made the LSA friendlier in its approach to the media. This friendly approach is manifested in the way the LSA makes relationships with local print media practitioners more personal, as shown in the following quotes:

> "The (local) media knows my style, I've got Francis at the Sabah Times, Vitalis with the Borneo Post and Afandi from the Daily Express, these three reporters knows when I has a statement to make all I did is to send them text messages and they will do the rest" (Alijus Sipil, Secretary General, translated from Malays language).

> "The (local) newspaper understand it, if they receive something like a report they will published and quote the source from SAFA but if it is something like a statement they will get back to me and to confirm if they can attribute that statement as a secretary general statement, if I say yes then they will published it if I say no they will not going to published it. So that's how it is going on at the moment" (Alijus Sipil, Secretary General, translated from Malay language).

This support is indeed very important for the LSA, especially in their effort raise their public profile. Having good public profile can help LSA to stay in the good books with their current sponsors' also, it can act as a convincing message to attract prospective sponsors. The following quotes illustrate this:

"What we have done so far, I must say that our local media has been very supportive. And they also have given us very extensive coverage. Especially like every time I invite them to cover our clinic, golf clinic, or covers our coaching seminars they've always give us good write up. And then, whenever we have junior tournament and all that they also give us a very good write up. And, every time if there is a big tournament that our girls went and they do something that they came in top three or top one they always came back and there is always a good coverage" (Jeannette Tambakau, Vice President, MALGA).

"Because what ever come out in the newspaper we actually cut it out and we send it to R & A, to tell R&A how well we are doing. Of course, media is very important. And, also because we approach lots of corporate bodies and with all these media, you know, this are our supporting document, supporting profile on what we have been doing and how far we have achieve and all that" (Jeannette Tambakau, Vice President, MALGA).

On the surface this theme shows how the LSA are dependent on the media. However, by drawing from the role of 'primary-secondary definer' as highlighted by L'Etang (2006) in explaining the concept of 'source-media relationship' there is a more significant point to be highlighted. L'Etang (2006) argued that "source-media relations' are relevant to investigating public relations' influence and, or public relations' primary role with respect to the media; whereby, the media generates initial and particular interpretations of events and issues. Then, other actors attempt to protect reputations, or to promote particular frames of reference, or ideologies, thus reducing the media to secondary definers" (p.387).

To preserve the role of sources, in this case it refers to the LSA, as a primary definer, the LSA has resorted to engagement and more personalised relationships with local print media practitioners. As mentioned in the engagement theme, the practice of engagement is a manipulative relationship. And, this is again proven in this source-media relations theme, whereby the media will give good coverage because they (the media practitioners) are part of the event, not outsiders. Engagement with the media is indeed a brilliant way of maintaining the role of sources as primary definer.

Personalised relation is another practice used by the LSA to maintain their role as primary definer. This is evidenced in the close relationship between SAFA's Secretary General, and the sport reporters of the local dailies. It is very close to the extent that the Secretary General only needed to send text messages to the reporters, and the reporters would do the write up. Through these close, personalised relationships it has turned around the dependency factors, whereby the media now will be dependent on the LSA as their source of news.

To sum up, the source-media relations theme tell us about the dependency relationship between these two. However, due to the dependency on media, the LSA has come out with two notable ways of getting the media to support them. One is through engagement, whilst the other practice is to embark on more personalised relationships with reporters. Through these, the LSA actually manage to maintain their role as a primary definer, by manipulating their relationship with the media.

| Theme: Strong-Arm-Tactics | No consultations |
|---|---|
| | Threat and Hierarchy |

This theme is a clear example of 'power over' exercised by the LSA. The definition of 'power over' by Giddens (1976) is to look at power as a transformative capacity of human agency. This capacity refers to the capability of the actors to intervene in a series of events so as to alter their course. Mann (1986) argued that power is all about the ability to affect the behaviours of others or more precisely, the ability to affect the probability that others will perform some behaviour. Foucault, whose massively influential writings about power, have been taken to imply that there is no escaping domination, that it is everywhere, and there is no freedom from it or reasoning independent of it (Lukes, 2005. P.12).

The strong-arm-tactic is indeed a clear manifestation of the above definition. As shown in the above table, and in the case of SAFA, there is no consultation being held with the fans. The fans have no choice but to follow whatever SAFA has decided. In this case it refers to the process of changing the team logo and mascot. This decision has received objection from fans citing the reason that SAFA should have consulted with the fans first. However, the management of SAFA kept on with their plans for change regardless of the fans' reaction. This is shown in the following quotes:

> "Okay so now with the brand the fans has to follow our new, err re-branding. Okay one thing there is a website, there is a website rhinos, but I don't read them anymore. No more, I don't want to read them anymore, now we have sabahawk. After fifteen years the new fans now the younger are different totally, now those rhinos is already about what, maybe 40 years old, let them be, no forcing, it's up to you, if you are diehard fan you must support no matter what" (Shahriman Abdullah, Honorary Treasurer).

> "Frankly speaking the public or the fans views on changing the team mascot and nick name from rhinos to hawks was not sought after, not that we don't appreciate them it is because we have very tight time-frame from the decision to change the mascot on December 2009 to the launching of the new name and mascot on January 2010" (Alijus Sipil, Secretary General, translated from Malay language).

> "We did not hold any consultation with the fans regarding the decision to change the nick name and mascot of the team. We did not" (Alijus Sipil, Secretary General, translated from Malay language).

The above quotes show how the management of SAFA become so dominant that they can simply ignore the fans' reaction. This is in line with Lukes' (2005) interpretation on Foucault's writing about power that 'power over' is all about domination, and there is no escaping it. In the above case, the fans cannot escape the domination of SAFA. This is vindicated over time by the fact that objections raised by the fans have slowly faded from the public sphere.

If SAFA resort to ignoring the stakeholders to show their 'strong-arm-tactics', MGA, the national governing body of golf use their hierarchical position to issue threats to the other stakeholders, in this case to its very own affiliate member, the MALGA. By using its hierarchical position as the governing body, MGA manages to present threats and cause tension in the relationship with MALGA, as shown in the following quote:

"It affect in a way it has cause lots of problem, coordinating problems, it has affected in a way you know some girls feels err loyal to us and then some girls they are threaten you know in a way they feel that they being

threaten because MGA is the governing body, so it causes some kinds of uneasiness among the players and the parents" (Rabeahtul Aloyah Abbas, Executive Director, MALGA).

"To come and claim that SGCC players can represent the country I think that's wrong, to say SGCC needs state funding I think that's wrong, SGCC is a social club how can you have state funding, to claim that SGCC players is the best player in the country and they must represent the country that is wrong. I say this because MALGA had said this" (Robin Loh, President of MGA).

MGA clearly used its own power, recalling that, as defined by Mann (1986), power is about the ability to affect the behaviour of others. As shown in the above quotation, MGA has managed to threaten the girls and their parents because these girls and their parents know MGA has the power to determine their future playing career. MGA also used its prerogative to cause MALGA to lose its annual grant from the federal Ministry of Youth and Sports because only MGA as the governing body of golf in the country has the right to receive any state funding.

To sum up, this theme is a clear manifestation of 'power over' as practiced by SAFA and MGA to assert their authority. This has been achieved through ignoring their stakeholders, and by having no consultation with fans in the process of changing the state football team's identity. Threatening the golf players on their future is the tactic used by MGA.

| Theme: Self-interest | Parents Concern |
| | Personal Interest, agenda and preferences |
| | Self-interest |

This theme will highlight how self-interest among the stakeholders concerned will affect the changes that the LSA are trying to make. In this case it refers to the Youth Development Programme by MALGA. It is worth noting that this 'self-interest' comes in the forms of concerns among parents; the personal preferences by the teachers who are given the responsibility to teach the girls; the bureaucracy imposed by the school's headmaster; and the personal agenda of the national governing body attacking MALGA.

The teachers' personal preferences whilst not entirely disrupting the whole programme could still affect the outcome of the programme. For instance, MALGA wanted to enroll as many young schoolgirls from the age of seven as possible, especially from those who had no golf background whatsoever. But, in actuality this did not always happen, as shown in the following quote:

> "We make a written announcement (to open the golf club at school) stating that first the student must be willing to pay the fees; the second condition is their parent must be a golfer. This will make it easier for us to teach the student who already know or familiar about golf through their golfing parent" (Salimiah Jamili, Teacher, *Translated from Malay language).*

> "We are told by MALGA to open up this opportunity for less fortunate students but showing high interest to learn and play golf, that is what we were told initially by MALGA" (Salimiah Jamili, Teacher, *Translated from Malay language)*.

Certain school headmasters also have their own preferences, which also affected this programme. MALGA on the other hand had to follow suit because in the end it was the school headmasters that had the final say whether to support the Youth Development Programme or not.

> "The principal has decided that the golf programme in the school can only be carried out in the afternoon session, thus she chose only teachers from the afternoon session to handle the programme" (Salimiah Jamili, Teacher, *translated from Malay language).*

> "There is a case of one parent wanted to enroll her seven years old daughters in the programmeme but we refuse. The reason we gave to the parent is that we don't want the student (in the afternoon session) to feel tired after the golf session and will disturbed the teaching and learning process; the policy of our school is to preserve its excellence in achieving good result in terms of academic performance by its student so we don't want just because of the golf session it will affect the overall academic performances of that particular student, worst case scenario we will be answerable to the principal and we don't want this to happened. The principal also has stressed that the golf session in the school would not interfere with the teaching and learning process of the student, which is why she decided to have the golf session in the afternoon so the morning session student can participate after their class" (Salimiah Jamili, Teacher, *translated from Malay language).*

This self-interest theme is indeed consistent with what Mann (1993, cited from Whitmeyer 1997) called the fallacy of monocratic bureaucracy. Mann (1993) through his analysis of political power

f3.8observed that the central elite do not have the tremendous ability to achieve their interests, even if they have control over the state and a significant amount of infrastructural power. Whitmeyer (1997) argued that Mann's analysis of political power is partially correct in noting that the central elite do not have a tremendous ability to achieve their interests, and that even the power of the common people and local actors does not make up the difference because there seems to be 'missing power'. "The 'missing power' is in the middle, in the bureaucratic structure, in the system. It is not serving the interests of any small elite. Rather, it is the unintended and often popularly disliked emergent effect of many individuals using their own small amount of power in part to further their own interests" (p.217).

Thus, self-interest could be considered as a small amount of power that belongs to some significant minority stakeholder. This small amount of power enables the individuals concerned to further their self-interest. This self-interest does, to a certain degree, affect the relationship between LSA and its stakeholders, and often will push the LSA to renegotiate its own power.

**APPENDIX B: SAMPLE OF THE GUIDE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERVIEW**

**A: Questions for semi-structured interview with SAFA**

1.  With a new line-up of management for SAFA how would you differentiate this new line up with the old management?
2.  I was made to understand from newspaper report that the management has change the nick name of the team from Rhinos to Hawks. Would you explain further?
3.  What is wrong with the nick name Rhinos and why 'Hawks;?   What are the new management intend to achieve from this changes?
4.  What action have you taken to achieve those aims and what is your future plan?
5.  How does you want the public to perceived SAFA?
6.  What message that you or the new management want to tell to the fans?
7.  Who approve those messages?
8.  How helpful the local media to you?
9.  Apart from relying to the media, do you think that you should also use another means to disseminate your messages to the public?
10. Do you think that you do face any resistance in disseminating your messages?
11. Why do you think that resistance exist?
12. Do you think that by having control over how your messages being disseminated it will have lasting impact to the public?

**B: Questions for semi-structured interview with MALGA/MGA/SGA**

1.  Golf should be seen and perceived by the society just like any other sport – a recreation. What would you think of this?
2.  Do you think that something needs to be done to overcome the stigma people have on golf?
3.  In your own capacity what would you do to transform the current perception of society about golf into perceiving golf as a recreational sport?
4.  How would you plan to do this?
5.  Did you see any factors that could help or hinder you from executing your plan?
6.  To change the negative stigma of golf being associated as an elite sport, what will be the most appropriate message you could tell to the public?
7.  In your organization who will decide upon which messages to be disseminated to the public?
8.  How helpful the local media to you?
9.  Apart from relying to the media, do you think that you should also use another means to disseminate your messages to the public?
10. Do you think that you do face any resistance in disseminating your messages?
11. Why do you think that resistance exist?
12. Do you think that by having control over how your messages being disseminated it will have lasting impact to the public?

**C: Questions for semi-structured interview with Media practitioners.**

1.  Your job as a sport desk editor will require you to be more aware of the sporting affairs locally and internationally. Between local and international sporting event which one will get priority?
2.  What is your opinion about the new management of Sabah FA in general?

3. How do you perceive the step taken by Sabah FA to change the team nick name from Rhinos to Hawks?
4. Do you agree that golf will be forever an elite sport in the context of Malaysia?
5. What is your opinion about the effort taken by MALGA to promote golf to women? Do you think MALGA did enough?
6. In your daily work you will always receive information or material from the sport organization, how would you treat this information?
7. Have you ever come across to a situation where you need some information from the sport organization but they are not willing to share? How would you overcome this situation?
8. How often do you receive press releases from Sabah FA and MALGA/MGA/SGA?
9. Apart from receiving press releases or attending press briefing by the sport organization do you receive any other form of information when writing news about sport?
10. The online forum such as sabahrhinos.com is the place for the fan of Sabah FA to discuss things related to the team, how would you see this? Does this development pose a threat to your newspaper?

**D: Questions for semi-structured interview with Sabahrhinos.com**

1. Sabah FA got new line up of management what do you think of this new management?
2. Do you aware of any attempt by Sabah FA to change its image?
3. What do you think of this effort?
4. Between 'rhinos' and 'hawks' as a nick name for Sabah FA which one do you prefer the most?
5. Do you see any differences in name changing?
6. Do you follow the news of Sabah FA from local newspaper?
7. As a member of Sabahrhinos.com, do you think that Sabah FA had done enough in terms of communicating with the fans?

**E: Questions for semi-structured interview with teachers/golf coaches**

1. Golf is an elite sport. What do you think of this?
2. The MALGA are promoting golf to the masses, do you think this effort will be successful?
3. What do you think of MALGA approach in promoting golf to women?
4. Does MALGA have done enough in disseminating its messages to the public?

Word Count: 61,328