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# **Deliberative Practices In and Outside the Malaysian Parliament**

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## **Abstract**

This study is structured as a case study analysis that explores the parliament-citizen relationship of the Malaysian Parliament from the eighth to the twelfth parliaments (October 1990 – March 2013). The Malaysian Parliament is used as a case to understand the deliberative practices of a Westminster-style parliament in an illiberal democracy. This study makes a contribution to the literature by filling the apparent gap and contributing to an understanding of the extent to which the Malaysian Parliament incorporate deliberation as a means of involving their citizens in the policy-making process. As such, this study enriches the study of parliamentary democracy in Malaysia and the non-Western world. The primary concern of this study is to examine the deliberative practices of the Malaysian Parliament and how citizens' concerns are mediated through the Members of Parliament (MPs) and the Malaysian parliamentary institution. This study explores the extent to which Malaysian MPs utilise deliberative forums in and outside parliament to engage citizens and respond to their concerns, and how this facilitates political participation and engagement in an illiberal democracy such as Malaysia. To further understand the nature of deliberative practices in Malaysia, this study focuses on the roles that MPs play in the context of the government's pursuit of a poverty eradication agenda and the implementation of a quota system for Bumiputera. The evidence provided by the broader case study of deliberation processes in Malaysia, and the specific case study of poverty eradication and Bumiputera quotas, points to deliberative practices taking place at different sites and in different forms which are often unconventional and unstructured in light of conventional understandings of deliberation in Westminster systems of the liberal democracies. On this basis, this study argues that deliberative practices in Malaysia have been established and progressed through the balancing, adaption and modification of existing cultures, rules, norms and routines of the Westminster model. The deliberative practices in and outside the Malaysian Parliament are not necessarily in line with the idea of deliberative democracy in the liberal Westminster systems.

Dedication  
*To my parents*

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## List of Abbreviations

ABIM	Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia or the Muslim Youth Movement
AGC	Attorney General's Chambers
AIM	Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia
Aliran	Aliran Kesedaran Negara
APU	Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah
ASB	Amanah Saham Bumiputera
ASEB	Amanah Saham Ekuiti Bumiputera
ASLI	Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute
ASN	Amanah Saham Nasional
ASB	Amanah Saham Bumiputera
BERSIH	Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections
BN	Barisan Nasional
CAP	Consumer Association of Penang
CF	Consent Form
CPCs	Citizen-Parliament Connections
CSAs	Civil Society Agents
DAP	Democratic Action Party
DBKL	Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur
DPMO	Deputy Prime Minister's Office
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
EC	Election Commission Malaysia
EPU	Economic Planning Unit
EPF	Employment Provident Fund
ETP	Economic Transformation Programme
FOMCA	Federation of Malaysian Consumer Association
GAPENA	Gabungan Penulis Nasional
Gerakan	Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia
GLC	Government Linked Company
GNI	Gross National Income
GONGOs	Government Organised NGOs
GPMS	Gabungan Pelajar Melayu Semenanjung
GTP	Government Transformation Programme
HAKAM	Human Rights Association of Malaysia
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ISA	Internal Security Act
IT	Information Technology
JIM	Jemaah Islah Malaysia
JUST	Just World Trust
KLCC	Kuala Lumpur City Centre
KTM	Keretapi Tanah Melayu
KUAM	Tabung Kumpulan Wang Amanah Pelajar Miskin
LDP	Parti Liberal Demokratik

MACC	Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission
MAFREL	Malaysians for Free and Fair Elections
MAPEM	Majlis Perundingan Ekonomi Melayu
MAPEN	Majlis Perundingan Ekonomi Negara
MBM	Majlis Belia Malaysia
MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association
MCMC	Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission
MIC	Malaysian Indian Congress
MMP	Mixed Member Proportional
MNS	Malaysian Nature Society
MoED	Ministry of Entrepreneur Development
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoHLG	Ministry of Housing and Local Government
MoRRD	Ministry of Rural and Regional Development
MoWFCD	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
MP	Member of Parliament
MPs	Members of Parliament
MSC	Multimedia Super Corridor
NAMFREL	National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections
NDP	National Development Policy
NEAC	National Economic Action Council
NEAC	National Economic Advisory Council
NEC	National Election Commission
NEM	New Economic Model
NEP	New Economic Policy
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NICs	Newly Industrialised Countries
NKEA	National Key Economic Areas
NKRA	National Key Result Areas
NMP	National Mission Policy
NVP	New Vision Policy
NYD	National Youth Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPP	Outline Perspective Plan
PAS	Parti Islam SeMalaysia
PBB	Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu
PBRs	Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah
PBS	Parti Bersatu Sabah
PESAKA	Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak
Petronas	Petroleum Nasional Berhad
PHP	People's Housing Programme
PIA	Public Infrastructure Maintenance
PIBG	Persatuan Ibumaba Dan Guru
PIS	Participant Information Sheet

PKR	Parti Keadilan Rakyat
PLCHP	Public Low-Cost Housing Programme
PMD	Prime Minister's Department
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PPP	People's Progressive Party
PPPA	Printing Presses and Publication Act 1984
PPRT	Program Pembangunan Rakyat Termiskin
PR	Pakatan Rakyat
PRM	Parti Rakyat Malaysia
PRS	Parti Rakyat Sarawak
PSC	Parliamentary Select Committee
PSD	Public Service Department
PSM	Parti Sosialis Malaysia
RM	Ringgit Malaysia
ROS	Registrar of Societies
SAPP	Sabah Progressive Party
SOCOSO	Social Security Organisation
SPDP	Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party
SPKR	Skim Pembangunan Kesejahteraan Rakyat
SPM	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia
SUARAM	Suara Rakyat Malaysia
SUHAKAM	Malaysia's Human Rights Commission
SUPP	Sarawak United People Party
TPCC	Temerloh Parliament Consultative Council
TPPT	Tabung Projek Perumahan Terbengkalai
TPU	Tabung Pemulihan Usahawan
TPUB	Tabung Projek Usahawan Bumiputera
UMNO	United Malays National Organisation
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UoA	The University of Auckland
UPKO	United Pasok Momogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation
UUCA	Universities and University Colleges Act
WWF	World Wide Fund Nature
YB	Yang Berhormat
YBK	Yayasan Basmi Kemiskinan

## Glossary

<i>Dewan Negara</i>	The Senate
<i>Dewan Rakyat</i>	The House of Representatives
<i>Reformasi</i>	Refers to a period of Reformation Movement in Malaysia in 1998 as the consequences of the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 that was led by Anwar Ibrahim, the former Deputy Prime Minister that was sacked by Mahathir Mohamed, the then Prime Minister
<i>Yang di-Pertuan Agong</i>	<i>Yang di-Pertuan Agong</i> is the Head of the King that is appointed from the nine sultans. The kingship system is unique. Every five years, the Conference of Rulers (Majlis Raja-raja) will vote one of the sultans to be the <i>Yang di-Pertuan Agong</i> . The nine states are Perlis, Kedah, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Johor, Pahang, Terengganu and Kelantan.
<i>Yang Berhormat (YB)</i>	The term of address of all elected representatives in Malaysia, both for the MPs in the Malaysian Parliament and the state assemblypersons in the State Assembly. Literally it means “the honourable.”
<i>Turun Padang</i>	It often refers but (not necessarily) to the MP’s activity of visiting his/her constituency unofficially to meet the constituents and observe the surroundings, somewhat like when researchers in ethnography, anthropology and so forth undertake a walkabout. He or she will take the opportunity to talk to citizens in a casual atmosphere.
<i>Kenduri</i>	A ceremony or gathering in the Malay community such as thanksgiving, baptism, small wedding receptions and so on. It is normally and literally related to the traditional, ritual and religious ceremony.
<i>Ceramah</i>	Talk on politics or religious matters.
<i>Kampung baru</i>	Villages that were opened by the British from the 1940s to 1960s to combat communism in Malaya. Many of them were located in remote areas.

# Chapter One

## Introduction

Taking into account the re-emerging interest in the study of parliament in recent decades, it is somewhat surprising to find that the subject has not received much attention within the field of Malaysian studies. Since the 1980s, there has been a dearth of research into parliamentary democracy in Malaysia that goes beyond executive-parliament relationships. Less is known about other aspects of the Malaysian Parliament, such as the Members' of Parliament (MPs) perceptions and behaviour, non-state actors' influences in parliamentary affairs, or parliament compatibility with the colonial model and the local political cultures (for exceptions see Ahmad Atory, 2010; Johnson & Milner, 2005; Musolf & Springer, 1979). In examining the Malaysian Parliament, the stereotypical conception of predictability and order, with the legislative merely acting as a rubber stamp to the executive, and the party system dictating MPs' voting preferences, would not sufficiently do justice to an understanding of the "dynamics" of parliamentary affairs in Malaysia. Although the phrase that "the executive legislate and the legislature legitimate" is, to some degree, true, the presence of dynamic "resistance" amongst legislators who oppose the elite politicians is seldom highlighted and may not necessarily validate this conception of the rigidity of the parliament-citizen relationship.

Existing scholarly works on Malaysia's politics tell us little about the parliament-citizen relationship. While some scholarly works' findings reveal that Malaysia's public domain is dominated by the executive (see for example, Gomez & Jomo, 1999; Loh, 2003; Milne & Mauzy, 1999; Mohammad Agus, 2006; Raja Noriza & Norma, 2009; Weiss, 2006; Wong & Norani, 2009), this does not constitute the end of the debate. Rather their findings provide an interesting insights into how a parliament in an illiberal democracy such as Malaysia (Weiss, 2006),<sup>1</sup> as this thesis argues, has structurally detached its citizens from policy-making but at the same time is able to reflect the citizens' concerns. In other words, the paucity of research on the Malaysian Parliament to date needs to be (re)-examined to enrich new knowledge on

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<sup>1</sup> In this study, I use the term *illiberal democracy* that has been used by Weiss (2006, p. 30) to describe the type of democracy in Malaysia. The term *liberal democracy* in this study refers to the advanced democracies in the West (including Australia and New Zealand). However, it is not the aim of this study to argue or dispute how theorists, scholars, pundits and politicians have used these terms in describing Malaysia's democratic development. Rather, these two terms are used to represent advanced democracy and transition democracy/emerging democracy respectively that I will elaborate in chapters two and three.

the political and public policy of parliamentary democracy studies in Malaysia, specifically and in the illiberal Westminster systems, generally.<sup>2</sup>

By analysing the MPs' roles beyond their official tasks undertaken in parliament, this study explores the extent to which Malaysian MPs of the *Dewan Rakyat* (the House of Representatives) use forums in and outside the parliament to engage with citizens and respond to their concerns. In particular, I examine how MPs utilise these forums for deliberation over public policy issues, in response to their constituents' concerns, and in relation to the government's policy agenda. The focus of this study centres on the relationship between the Malaysian Parliament and citizens as mediated through their MPs. In this study, citizens are understood to be the constituents, voters and members of interest groups (Norton, 2012). This study engages with the literature on the nature and form that deliberative democracy can take, and how it might facilitate political participation and engagement in Malaysia; a country where the legitimacy of democratic practices has always been questioned, despite featuring a Westminster-style parliamentary design. To understand how and why deliberation matters, the empirical analysis of this thesis focuses on (1) the multiple roles that MPs play as the only elected citizen representatives in Malaysia at the federal level (in chapter five); and (2) affirmative action policies, in particular related to the poverty eradication and the quota system for Bumiputera (in chapters six and seven).<sup>3</sup> Doing so will enable us to look beyond the mechanical and technical explanations of the separation of power theory in constitutional studies of parliament and explore instead the role parliament can play in enhancing citizen engagement in policy-making.

Although this is a case study of the Malaysian Parliament, a comparative outlook is undertaken in chapter two. In seeking answers to questions regarding to what extent, under what conditions, and through which processes have changes occurred in Malaysia's Westminster model, this thesis examines the governance systems in other Westminster-style

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<sup>2</sup> I use (1) illiberal democracy and illiberal Westminster system, and (2) liberal democracies and liberal Westminster systems interchangeably in this study.

<sup>3</sup> The quota system in this study refers to the quota allocations for Bumiputera in education, economic equity and public sector as a strategy to restructure society. The Malaysian Parliament does not have a specific quota for minority ethnic and gender seats. As the political parties in Malaysia have been established along ethnic lines, the seat allocations in the ruling government coalition party (BN) between UMNO, MCA, MIC, Gerakan and other small parties in Sabah and Sarawak have been determined at the party level. The negotiations for seat allocations based on each party component are done prior to the general election amongst the ethnic political leaders of BN. For example, as no single constituency in Malaysia where the Indian ethnic group is in the majority, often UMNO will compromise with Malay majority constituencies to be given away to the MIC. The Barisan Nasional (BN) style of seat negotiation and allocation prior to the general election has also been practiced by the opposition coalition party, Pakatan Rakyat (PR) between its components, PKR, PAS and DAP (see Laporan Pilihanraya Umum Malaysia, 1999, 2004, 2008).



parliaments in liberal democracies. It may be straightforward to explain what fundamentally constitutes Westminster-style parliaments in liberal democracies but less is understood as to how the Westminster model has evolved outside the Western world in an illiberal democracy of a former British colony such as Malaysia. By taking a comparative outlook, this study generates or at least rejuvenates knowledge of the significant changes in the Westminster model due to the influence of economic growth, local political culture and changes in domestic politics. Lijphart (2008) classifies Malaysia as a majoritarian government-system that is “federal and strongly coalitional” (p. 119) in nature, and therefore, Malaysia’s “[m]ajoritarian democracy is very much the exception rather than the rule” (p. 116). Similar to other parliaments of the former British Empire such as Canada, Australia, India, and Jamaica, Malaysia’s governance system has strong characteristics of a parliamentary-plurality system, and “Malaysia shows that a parliamentary system can have a broad multiparty and multiethnic coalition cabinet in spite of plurality elections, but this requires elaborate pre-election pacts among the parties” (Lijphart, 2008, pp. 169-170; see also Lijphart, 1999).

In discussing Westminster-style parliaments, I borrow Rhodes and Weller’s (2005, p.12) terminologies of the *Westminster model* as “the beliefs and practices of tradition” and *Westminster systems* refers to the countries that have institutionalised Westminster-style parliaments. To understand how the Malaysian Parliament has evolved, this study highlights (1) the historical perspective of the parliamentary system in Malaysia; and (2) the parliamentary activities that involve MPs-citizen interaction. Historical background is particularly emphasised in this study when discussing the public policy (the poverty eradication and the quota system for Bumiputera) and the changes in the socio-economic landscape in Malaysia.

I examine the Malaysian Parliament from 1990 to March 2013. The time framework of this study starts from the eighth parliament and continues up to the twelfth parliament.<sup>4</sup> The selected time period correlates with a period of socio-political and socio-economic development experienced by Malaysia: rapid urbanisation (Leete, 2007), a steadily increasing educated middle-class (Rahimah, 2012; Abdul Rahman, 2001, 1996), and growth in civil society (Weiss, & Saliha, 2003; Weiss, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2011), all of which have had a significant impact on the development and direction of political movements and institutions in Malaysia. The year 1990 was when the New Economic Policy (NEP) (1970-1990) ended.

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<sup>4</sup> The 12<sup>th</sup> Parliament was dissolved on 3 April, 2013.

It has been argued that the NEP is one of the factors that contributed to the socio-political and socio-economic changes that Malaysia is experiencing today (Loh, 2002; Gomez, 2004b; Leete, 2007; Rahimah, 2012; Gomez & Jomo, 1999).<sup>5</sup> Hence, it is significant to investigate in what way and how the NEP has promoted democracy and to what extent this affirmative action policy has influenced deliberative practices in Malaysia.

For decades, scholarly work on democracy has attempted to conceptualise, theorise and analyse the relationship between affirmative action (Kennedy-Dubourdie, 2006; Sowell, 2004; Yuill, 2009), economic development, and democratisation (Fukuyama, 2012; Krishna, 2008a, 2008b; Platter, 2012). In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Lipset (1959b) argued that socio-economy and modernisation foster demands for democratisation, partly in response to the emergence of a new middle class. Lipset's arguments have been developed and expanded by other authors who believe that there is a direct correlation between the establishment of democracy and rapid urbanisation and economic prosperity (Buena de Mesquita & Dwons, 2005; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Karatnycky, 2004; Przeworski et al., 2000). However, while Norton (2005) suggests this is the case with respect to Westminster systems in liberal democracies, such arguments seem less likely to fit the Newly Industrialised Countries (NICs) such as Malaysia and a developed city-state such as Singapore, that have duplicated the Westminster model in Southeast Asia.

Malaysia and Singapore are two examples of Asian countries where economic prosperity, rapid urbanisation and a large number of educated middle class, do not necessarily enhance democratic practices (Jomo, 1999; Rodan, 2004; Weiss, 2006). The economic prosperity in Malaysia has significantly led to middle class citizens to be concentrated in urban areas. This educated middle class group has developed due to the direct involvement of the government in socio-economic policy (Abdul Rahman, 2002; Jomo, 1999; Rahimah, 2012), which has arguably made them less critical to some extent towards the government's policy (Thompson, 2001). Thompson (2001) argues a nation where the state plays a direct role in the economy and where strict political controls are employed, tends to promote conformity instead of creativity amongst citizens.

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<sup>5</sup> The NEP was the first affirmative action in Malaysia specifically designed to combat poverty and to eliminate socio-economic disparity in society, in particular between the Malays and Chinese. The NEP was formulated to eradicate poverty irrespective of race and to eliminate the identification of race with socio-economic position, by focusing on ensuring deprived ethnic groups had the opportunity to enjoy social mobility. I provide further discussion on the NEP and other affirmative action policies in Malaysia in chapter six.

At a conceptual level, this study utilises the analytical framework of deliberative democracy to explicate and explore the processes involved in deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament. I draw from the literature on deliberative democracy, which argues that salient institutions in democracies extend beyond the formal organs of government to those that may shape the pattern of political deliberation. My paradigm of inquiry regarding deliberative practices is derived in particular from the works of Dodge (2010, 2009), Dryzek (2009, 2006, 2000, 1990), and Mansbridge (1999). By combining and modifying their approaches, I intend to broaden our understanding of the extent to which deliberative democracy is applicable to an illiberal democracy that has adopted a Westminster model. On one hand, marrying deliberative democracy and illiberal governance system in a state like Malaysia would seem to be paradoxical. On the other hand, limiting the scope of studying deliberation to liberal democracies would not help us much to understand how Western ideas and traditions evolve in the non-western world (chapter four elaborates on the conceptual framework).

A range of deliberative practices between parliament and citizens occur in different deliberation spheres in Malaysia. *Deliberation spheres* are the sites for citizens to express their concerns and views (see Dryzek, 2006; Dodge, 2010; Mansbridge 1999). Deliberation spheres here refer to both micro-level and macro-level deliberative forums. A *formal micro-level deliberative forum* refers to formal sites such as parliament sittings, committee meetings, civil society public seminars, and community dialogues. An *informal macro-level deliberative forum* refers to informal sites such as community social activities (such as *kenduri*, religious ceremonies, and *turun padang*) which involve face-to-face dialogues. The formal micro-level deliberative forum to some extent is embedded within and mirrored by the informal macro-level deliberative forum in informal deliberation sites, but involves different actors (Dodge, 2010).

By combining different perspectives on deliberative democracy, this study reveals the dimensions and complexity of intertwined relationships between the legislature and citizens in Malaysia. I analyse and argue that mechanisms used to link the parliament and citizens in the liberal Westminster systems require some modifications in order to understand the case of the Malaysian Parliament, where democratic ideas are still in transition and the unstructured and informal *kampung*-style (village-style) has been practiced widely in deliberations. In other words, this study explores the alternative forms that deliberative democracy might take on forms that are sometimes distinct from those present in conventional (western) liberal

democracies (Dryzek, 2000, 2006; see also Fishkin & Laslett, 2003). Following Dryzek's call, I argue that it is misleading to assume that deliberation in liberal democracies can be generalised to understand the practice in other countries, especially in the non-western nations (He, 2006a, 2006b; Leib, 2006). Dryzek (2000) suggests that to understand the deliberative concept, it should be studied from both a historical and a comparative perspective, which in turn will reveal that deliberation can be practiced and established in different structures and sites.

In this study, understanding the beliefs, norms, values and traditions that Malaysians have "observed" in the community is vital to gain insights of how and why deliberations are carried out and to what extent they matter to parliament and citizens. The Malay language has pre-existing political terms that point to a culture of deliberation. The "deliberative" concepts of *muafakat* and *musyawarah*<sup>6</sup> had been practiced in the Malay Archipelago prior to the establishment of the modern nation states of Malaysia and Indonesia, and are still practiced in today's Malaysia amongst the Malay community (see also Milner, 1995, 2008, 2012). *Muafakat* means the "principle of unanimity built through discussion rather than voting," (Haas, 1973, as cited in Lijphart, 2008, p. 120) and *musyawarah* refers to "a method of coming to agreement not through majority decision but by a search for something *similar to a* [emphasis added] "sense of the meeting" (Feith 1964, p. 192). In other words, decision-making based on deliberation was already adopted and practiced prior to the colonial era by the Malays and thus such practices were not completely alien to the local political cultures and norms, even if formal western democratic ideals were.

This study takes *everyday talk* as part of deliberation process by adopting Mansbridge's (1999) argument that everyday talk matters in deliberative democracy. Everyday talk refers to the communications that occur in public at different informal macro-level and formal micro-level forums of deliberation between actors in society, such as between lay citizens, journalists, government agents or civil society groups. Using a normative explanation, Mansbridge envisions that the community will filter out the good and bad ideas through their everyday talk before channelling the issues officially for consideration by authorities. By filtering ideas, consensus will be reached between different interest groups. In a society where the media is tightly controlled by the government such as Malaysia, everyday talk is a source for citizens to voice and express their concerns.

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<sup>6</sup> Instead of old spelling of *mufakat* (Haas, 1973) and *mushawarah* (Feith, 1964) used by the authors (also by Lijphart, 2008), I adopted the new Malay spelling of *muafakat* and *musyawarah*, respectively in this study.

Filtering everyday talk ideas may, however, create tensions within the governance system. In exploring tensions that occur during deliberation, I examine the deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament using *a dual strategy* (Dodge, 2010). A dual strategy refers to the MPs' efforts to collaborate with the government in formal micro-level deliberative forums while appearing to be behaving independently with citizens in informal macro-level deliberative forums. Modifying Dodge's dual strategy idea, I use a similar approach to explain tensions arising in deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament. Modifying Dodge's approach is necessary because the main actors that are involved in deliberation for policy advocacy in this study are the MPs who are the agents of parliament i.e. legislators who are, in theory, involved in decision-making.<sup>7</sup> A dual strategy concept encapsulates how MPs act differently in practising deliberation when they (1) collaborate with the policy-makers while advocating the "bottom-up" approach relating to the citizens' concerns; and (2) channel citizens' concerns to the elites while maintaining a partisan disposition. I describe the complexity of the deliberative practice processes in a democracy that is still in a transition period by exploring how the MPs are oriented towards citizens' concerns. Managing tensions is a vital part of advocating citizens' concerns to the cabinet (decision-makers).

The thesis of this study is that the deliberation that has been practiced in Malaysia is a hybrid type of deliberative practice, namely one that reflects practices peculiar to both liberal and illiberal Westminster democracies. In other words, the mixed deliberative practices occurring in and outside the Malaysian Parliament do not necessarily and consistently conform to the stringent criteria outlined by deliberative theorists.<sup>8</sup> A key argument underpinning the thesis is that MPs are crucial actors in the deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament where the executive is dominant and power is not balanced between the executive and the legislature. MPs are crucial actors in "creating the spheres" and "bridging the gap" for deliberations between the micro-level and macro-level deliberative forums. MPs mediate citizens' concerns for different motivations and reasons in and outside the parliament but ostensibly to advocate for better public policies (see Dodge, 2010; Fischer, 2006).

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<sup>7</sup> Dodge (2010) examines the role of civil society when dealing with the government agents in policy advocacy in a case study of the Southeast Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, New Mexico in the United States.

<sup>8</sup> For debates and critics on deliberative democracy criteria, amongst others see Gutmann and Thompson (1996, 2004), Dryzek (2010), Parkinson and Mansbridge (2012), Fishkin (2009), Cavalier (2011), and Steiner (2012).

### *Research Questions and Objectives of the Study*

This study examines to what extent, through what processes, and under what conditions, do deliberative practices occur and matter in the Malaysian Parliament. The main question is concerned with an exploration of whether and to what extent deliberative practices have taken up in and outside the Malaysian Parliament, and whether there has been changed over time, in this case of a Westminster system still in democratic transition. The main question seeks to elucidate in more detail how, and to what degree, citizens in Malaysia have a say in the government policy process, specifically through their MPs. This study, therefore, identifies and analyses the role that MPs have played in the policy-making process, and assess the degree to which MPs have practised deliberation in response to who or what they believe they represent.

In seeking a deeper understanding and broader spectrum of deliberative practices in and outside the parliament, the usage of words *whether* and *to what extent* are critical to accomplish the general goals for this study. There are two general goals that structure this study's research agenda. The first goal is to explore Malaysian MPs' deliberative practices in advocating for their constituents' concerns in parliament, and to identify how these concerns are defined by the MPs themselves. The second goal is to fill a gap in the literature and thus broaden our knowledge of the parliamentary systems of non-Western countries by applying and investigating the relevance of Western deliberative democracy ideas in the context of Malaysian governance practices. This will beneficially enrich our understanding about cross-cultural democratic traditions between states.

Furthermore, in an attempt to provide an overarching answer, three sub-questions are offered which correspond to three specific objectives for this study. Answers to these questions provide insights into the extent to which democratic practices, established in the liberal Westminster systems, are transferable to adapted-Westminster models in a former British colony in Asia. The first sub-question is how much direct contact takes place between MPs and citizens. This question provides answers to the first specific objective which is to identify, through interviews, how Malaysian MPs perceive their role as citizen representatives, and how and to what extent they use the legislature as a forum for deliberation in response to their constituents' concerns. The second sub-question is how citizens view the relations that they have with their respective MPs. This question offers answers to the second specific objective which is to reveal the degree to which citizens view

the legislature as an avenue for analysis of public and civil society's views. Lastly, the third question relates to what extent Malaysian historical background matter in today's Malaysia and whether this has influenced the parliament's deliberative practices. This final sub-question sheds light on the third specific objective, which is to explore the extent to which regional, cultural and partisan similarities or differences exist in the deliberative practices of Malaysian MPs when attending to their constituents' concerns within Malaysia specifically, and Westminster systems generally.

#### *Why the Malaysian Parliament?*

It is timely to widen the investigation of parliamentary systems, as a legislative body beyond the legal spectrum. The studies on parliament in Malaysia should not be rigidly perceived and confined to constitutional and legal perspectives, especially those perspectives focused on the separation of powers between the three different branches of legislative, executive and judiciary. The workings of the Malaysian Parliament can also be analysed in-depth theoretically and empirically, drawing from democratic theorists who conceptualise a broader role for parliaments in public policy. Focusing on citizen representatives and citizens as political actors, this study enriches and revitalises the literature on the Malaysian parliamentary studies by examining it with a more academically eclectic approach. This study attempts therefore, to fill the apparent gap that exists in terms of contemporary understandings of the Malaysian Parliament and expands the scope of Malaysian political and public policy studies.

Above and beyond Malaysian studies, the Malaysian Parliament warrants empirical investigation if we want to better understand if and how deliberative practices occur in Westminster systems outside the Western world. Malaysia as an illiberal democracy contributes to a better understanding of the evolution of a Westminster-style parliament outside the Western world. The Malaysian Parliament is one of the examples how the Westminster systems have been localised as the consequences of balancing, adaption and modification of local political cultures, norms and values with the British parliamentary and political system legacy. This study generates future research and contributes to the enrichment of the study of parliamentary democracies in the non-Western world, which has, in general, been underdeveloped in the field of parliamentary democracy studies. Much work still needs to be undertaken to deepen our understanding of the parliamentary system and its relationship to parliament-citizen relations outside the Western world.

At the conceptual level, although the use of the idea of deliberative democracy in this case functions as a “guide” for understanding the deliberative practices of the Malaysian parliament, this study will also be useful to challenge and refine the criteria identified by theorists as this is a case that will go beyond the liberal democratic boundaries. Applying deliberative democracy ideas to understand how deliberative practices have been taken up in a governance system of an illiberal democracy to some extent creates the intellectual challenges of understanding the contradictions that may surface in practice of government.

### **1.1 The Malaysian Parliament: An Overview of the Past and Present**

This section provides a concise overview of the governance system of the Malaysian Parliament. It is important to describe and explain the administration and procedures of the parliament in order to understand the governance system that has been implemented and how it has influenced deliberative practices in Malaysia. As I mentioned earlier, this study focuses on MPs as the main actors that will allow us to understand the deliberative practices in Malaysia, therefore, the focus here is on the governance system of the House of Representatives (*Dewan Rakyat*) only.

The Malaysian Parliament celebrated its 50 year anniversary in September 2009. The anniversary was calculated from the date of the first general election in August 1959 after Malaysia gained independence from the British in 1957. Adopting the bicameral system in line with the practices of the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, the Malaysian Parliament comprises two houses, the House of Representatives (*Dewan Rakyat*) and the Senate (*Dewan Negara*). Both houses, the House of Representatives and the Senate, were modelled after the House of Commons and the House of Lords of the Westminster Parliament, respectively. In protocol, the Senate position is higher than the House of Representatives but the role played by the latter is more important and significant than the former in policy-making and financial matters.

Although the Malaysian Parliament was established and modelled after the Westminster Parliament, the Malaysian constitution and the parliamentary governance system are hybrid types that have arisen as a result of the combination and modification of various British Commonwealth constitutions and in consideration of local customs and historical background. Constitutionally, one of the obvious characteristics that set apart Malaysia from the United Kingdom is that this former British colony in Southeast Asia adopted a written



constitution<sup>9</sup> with a federal government that in some ways more closely resembles the Australian and Canadian systems. Comparable to the Canadian system, the maximum length of the legislature in Malaysia is five years, but the early dissolution of the parliament is allowed by constitution (See Lijphart, 2008, 1999). As a federal constitutional monarchy (see Milner, 2012; Johnson, & Milner, 2005; Raja Azlan, 1986), besides the House of Representatives and the Senate, *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* (the paramount ruler)<sup>10</sup> is one of the three components of the Malaysian Parliament.

The MPs of the House of Representatives are the only elected representatives that citizens vote for democratically and directly in Malaysia.<sup>11</sup> The members of the Senate (the senators) are appointed.<sup>12</sup> A member can only hold one position in the House of Representatives or the Senate at any one time. Both MPs and senators can be appointed as the cabinet members. However, the Prime Minister can only be drawn from the ranks of elected MPs. Traditionally the president of the party that won the majority of seats in the House of Representatives will be appointed as the Prime Minister. As a member of the House of Representatives, the Prime Minister has overarching powers in parliament as he/she appoints the cabinet members and controls the executive; and advises the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* on the appointment of judges. The Prime Minister also advises the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* to dissolve the parliament for the general election. Although the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* acts upon the Prime Minister's advice, parliament cannot complete the parliamentary procedure without his presence (Article 55, the Federal Constitution; see also Milner 2012).

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<sup>9</sup> However, under certain circumstances the unwritten laws (known as the common laws) of the English common law that Malaysia inherited from the British colonial government may apply when there is no particular written law governing the case (see Harding, 1993, 1985; Harding, & Lee, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* is the Head of the King that is appointed based on rotation among the nine sultans. The kingship system is unique. The British agreed to remain and incorporate the monarch system of the nine Malay states (Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak, Pahang, Perlis, Selangor, and Terengganu) into the 1957 Malaya Constitution. Every five years the Conference of Rulers (*Majlis Raja-raja*) will vote one of the sultans to be the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong*. The nine states are Perlis, Kedah, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Johor, Pahang, Terengganu and Kelantan (see Nazrin Shah, 2004; Milner 2012; Raja Azlan, 1986).

<sup>11</sup> Malaysians do not have the right to vote for their mayors, presidents or local government councillors. All of them are appointed either by the federal government or state governments under the 1976 Local Government Act. Local governments in Malaysia are established into two divisions: (1) urban council; and (2) district council. The urban council is further categorised to two divisions: (1) city hall/city council; and (2) municipal council. The mayor is the head of city hall/city council and the president is the head for the municipal council or district council. The Minister of Federal Territories and Well Being is the government ministry that directly governs the three federal territories in Malaysia - Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Labuan. The mayors of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya, and the president of Labuan, are appointed by the federal government (Legal Research Board, Malaysia, 2002; Phang, 1997, 1989).

<sup>12</sup> Constitutionally, regardless of the size of population, each state is represented by two senators only that are appointed by the state governments. Therefore there are 26 senators out of the 13 states in Malaysia. Meanwhile another 44 senators are appointed by *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* after he has been advised by the Prime Minister, including four senators for the federal territories (Parliament Malaysia, 2012).

Theoretically, the Malaysian Parliament performs the functions of law making, and controlling national finances. Structurally, the legislative, executive and judicial branches are supposed to check and balance policy-making. The executive, however, has been the heart of parliamentary policy-making in the Malaysian Parliament. The Malaysian Parliament shows a similar pattern to other Westminster-style parliaments, both liberal and illiberal, in which the executive has the tendency to exert significant influence over the legislature in policy-making (Lijphart, 1999, 2008). Nonetheless, the mechanisms used to check and balance executive power vary from one nation to another in the Westminster systems (details in chapter two).

In retrospect, the Malaysian Parliament had shifted from an “autonomous public institution” in administering its own parliamentary affairs somewhat “separate” from the executive prior to 1992, to an institution subjected to executive oversight under the Prime Minister’s Department. The executive through the minister (Law and Parliament) in the Prime Minister’s Department<sup>13</sup> has direct power to control and oversee the Malaysian Parliament’s affairs, although in theory every ministry is answerable to the parliament (see Harding, 1993, 1985; Harding, & Lee, 2007; Legal Research Board, 1998). In this study, I argue that the legislature’s role of checking and balancing the executive has become “awkward” since the Malaysian Parliament as an autonomous institution has been administratively “downgraded” to have “equal status” to other public departments or government agencies that are subjected and answerable to the different ministries. Consequently, a hybrid deliberative mechanism has been adopted and practiced in and outside parliament to overcome the puzzle of “who is answerable and accountable to whom.”

In addition to the clear demarcation of citizen representatives across the divide, the government MPs can be grouped further into two categories in parliament: (1) front benchers, and (2) backbenchers. The former comprises of the administrative group of cabinet members and parliamentary secretaries. The latter comprises all MPs who do not have any administrative responsibility at the ministerial level. In stark contrast to backbenchers in other Westminster systems in the liberal democracies, the backbencher club in the Malaysian Parliament is exclusively for government MPs only.

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<sup>13</sup> The Prime Minister’s Department consists of the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO), the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office (DPMO) and various federal government agencies and bodies such as the Economic Planning Unit (EPU), Law and Parliament, the Attorney General’s Chambers (AGC), the Election Commission (EC), the Public Service Department (PSD) and the Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC). In the 12<sup>th</sup> parliament, besides the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, there were six ministers and four deputy ministers at the Prime Minister’s Department (PMO, 2013).

With a weak backbencher club and without a formal parliament select committee, as I argue in this thesis, parliament sittings were “briefing sessions” when the lower house was dominated by the ruling party, Barisan Nasional (BN), between 1990 and 2007. The opposition MPs were the only dynamic allowing the legislature to check and balance executive deliberative practices. However, the presence of opposition MPs in parliament had influenced the government’s direction in policy-making, albeit indirectly. Since 2008, opposition MPs had become the backbone for policy advocacy to channel citizens’ dissatisfaction or disapproval of government policy. Parliament sittings were the best forum for MPs to voice citizens’ concerns, particularly so for the opposition MPs who did not have the opportunity to have meetings with ministers outside the parliament and to gain coverage in the main media (I elaborate on and examine this in subsequent chapters).

### *Seat Numbers in Parliament*

In the 50 years since its establishment, the House of Representatives has expanded more than 100 per cent with the addition of 118 seats since the first general election in 1959. The Malaysian Parliament practices a simple majority and thus, the party that wins the majority of seats, even by a single seat, will establish the government. To date, the Malaysian Parliament has 222 parliamentary constituencies. In Table 1.1, I list the number of parliament seats according to states and federal territories in the House of Representatives under the period of this study from the eighth parliament to the 12th parliament.

Table 1.1 Number of Seats in the House of Representatives of the Malaysian Parliament from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> General Elections

States/Federal Territories	GE 8 (1990)	GE 9 (1995)	GE 10 (1999)	GE 11 (2004)	GE 12 (2008 )
Perlis	2	3	3	3	3
Kedah	14	15	15	15	15
Kelantan	13	14	14	14	14
Terengganu	8	8	8	8	8
Penang	11	11	11	13	13
Perak	23	23	23	24	24
Pahang	10	11	11	14	14
Selangor	14	17	17	22	22
Kuala Lumpur	7	10	10	11	11
Putrajaya	-	-	-	1	1
N. Sembilan	7	7	7	8	8
Melaka	5	5	5	6	6
Johor	18	20	20	26	26
Labuan	1	1	1	1	1
Sabah	20	20	20	25	25
Sarawak	27	27	28	28	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>222</b>

Sources: Penyata Rasmi Parlimen Malaysia, Dewan Rakyat (1990-2008), Laporan Pilihan Raya Umum Malaysia (1999, 2004, 2008)

Note: GE = general election

There are 165 constituencies in West Malaysia (Peninsular), and 57 in East Malaysia (Borneo).<sup>14</sup>

Table 1.2 Dissolution of Parliament, Election Date and Governing Period in Malaysia, 1959-2008

Year	Dissolution of Parliament	Election Date(s)	Governing Period
1959	July 1959	19/08/1959	4 years
1964	March 1964	25/04/1964	4 years & 7 months
1969	March 1969	10/05/1969	4 years & 11 months
1974	August 1974	24/08/1974	5 years & 3 months
1978	June 1978	08/07/1978	3 years & 11 months
1982	March 1982	22/04/1982	3 years & 8 months
1986	July 1986	03/08/1986	4 years & 4 months
1990	October 1990	20-21/10/1990	4 years & 2 months
1995	April 1995	24-25/04/1995	4 years & 6 months
1999	November 1999	29/11/1999	4 years & 6 months
2004	March 2004	21/03/2004	4 years & 4 months
2008	February 2008	08/03/2008	5 years

Source: Malaysian Prime Minister's Office <http://www2.pmo.gov.my> retrieved 19 June, 2012; Parlimen Malaysia <http://www.parlimen.gov.my> retrieved 10 April, 2013.

Table 1.2 summarises when the parliament term was dissolved, the date(s) of elections, and the length of each term from the first parliament to the 12<sup>th</sup> parliament in Malaysia. Although five years is the maximum length of each parliamentary term in Malaysia, the Prime Minister may at any time advise the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* to dissolve the parliament earlier.<sup>15</sup> The Malaysian Parliament has never been dissolved due to expiration of its constitutionally limited term. Elections are an arena for political parties in Malaysia to test or re-test their popularity amongst the citizens.<sup>16</sup> By-elections are used to evaluate or re-evaluate the

<sup>14</sup> There are 11 states and two federal territories in West Malaysia, and two states and one federal territory in East Malaysia. Malaysia has a population of about 28.3 million with Bumiputera composing about 61 per cent (Malays – 50 per cent and other Bumiputras (mainly the natives of Borneo) – 11 per cent), the Chinese 24 per cent, the Indians 7 per cent and the rest 8 per cent. About 80 per cent of the population is concentrated in West Malaysia (Census 2010, Statistic Department Malaysia, 2011). With the exception of Penang, in which the Chinese and Bumiputera are almost at par, all other states are rather dominated by the Bumiputera group. Malaysians often refer to West Malaysia as the Peninsular and East Malaysia on Borneo Island as Sabah and Sarawak. Besides Sabah and Sarawak, the Federal Territory of Labuan is also situated in East Malaysia. Politically and geographically, the Peninsular is further categorised by two regions – the west coast and the east coast. In general, the west coast is a region along the Straits of Malacca and the east coast is a region along the South China Sea. The west coast is the most urbanised, developed and populated region in Malaysia with a multiracial population. Contrary to the west coast, the east coast is less urbanised and less developed and populated with an almost homogenous population and often, culturally perceived as a conservative region. Economically, however, all states in the Peninsular are better off than Sabah and Sarawak (Statistic Department, Malaysia, 2011; Leete, 2007).

<sup>15</sup> As mentioned earlier, the Prime Minister has the legitimate power to advise the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* the date to dissolve parliament. At his discretion, the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* may agree or disagree with the Prime Minister's advice. However, as the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* represents the constitutional monarchy, he has never declined the Prime Minister's suggestion.

<sup>16</sup> Constitutionally, general elections must be held within 60 days after the parliament is dissolved. When a seat is empty, the Election Commission (EC) will call for a by-election. A by-election must be held 60 days from the date that the seat is vacated. For financial reasons, however, if the seat is vacated within two years before the

mechanisms used in deliberative practices in consideration of the concerns of locals that I elaborate on in the empirical chapters. As Table 1.3 below displays, Malaysia has had 12 general elections. In practice, the general election is held simultaneously at federal and state levels in all states in the Malaysian Peninsular (excluding Sabah and Sarawak) (SPR, 2012).<sup>17</sup>

Table 1.3 General Elections in Malaysia, 1959-2008

The Malaysian Parliament		
Peninsular	Sabah	Sarawak
1959	-	-
1964	-	-
1969	1969	1969
1974	1974	1974
1978	1978	1978
1982	1982	1982
1986	1986	1986
1990	1990	1990
1995	1995	1995
1999	1999	1999
2004	2004	2004
2008	2008	2008

Sources: Laporan Pilihan Raya Umum Malaysia (1999, 2004, 2008)

Since independence, the coalition party of BN (known as Alliance prior to 1973), has always been the governing party at the federal level. Although Malaysia has been governed by the same political party (BN) at the federal level, the presence of states ruled by opposition parties since independence shows that electoral competition in this federal illiberal democracy are dynamic.<sup>18</sup> If we take into consideration the lack of press and media freedom in Malaysia (Transparency International - Malaysia, 2010), it thus triggers a question of the kind of practices that the opposition has to engaged in to win parliamentary seats.

Malaysia entered a new political episode after the 12<sup>th</sup> general election that was held on 8 March, 2008. BN lost its two-thirds majority for the first time in parliament and it was its worst performance since ruling the nation in 1957. The opposition pact, Pakatan Rakyat (PR) won 82 seats out of the 222 seats in parliament. Five states - Kedah, Kelantan, Penang, Perak and Selangor - were under the PR. The PR also won the majority of the seats in the federal

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term ends, the EC can decide not to carry out a by-election. The vacant parliamentary seat thus will be run by the party that has won it previously.

<sup>17</sup> Sabah held the federal and state elections simultaneously in 2004.

<sup>18</sup> Throughout 12 general elections a few states have been ruled by opposition parties: Kelantan (1959-1977 and 1990 to 2012), Kedah (2008-2012) and Terengganu (1959-1964 and 1999-2004) were under PAS; Sabah (1985-1994) was under PBS; Penang (1969 and 2008-2012) was under DAP; Selangor (2008-2012) was under PKR; and Perak (2008) was under DAP. BN gained control in Perak after the defections of the three assemblypersons from PKR and DAP who decided to become independent MPs (SPR, 2012; Parlimen Malaysia, 2012; Chamil, 2010).

territory of Kuala Lumpur. In Peninsular Malaysia, PR won the majority of 51 per cent against BN's 49 per cent of popular votes (see appendix I). Fifty four out of the 140 seats that the BN won in the House of Representatives were from Sabah and Sarawak, which only represent about 20 per cent of the population in Malaysia. Sabah and Sarawak became the main strongholds allowing the BN to retain power at the federal level (ASLI, 5 March 2012) (see appendix II).

The 12<sup>th</sup> general election has been described as the Malaysian “political tsunami” (Editorial, 2010, p. 126) which interrupted the BN's dominance of about 50 years (Loh, 2010). BN's failure to keep a two-third majority in parliament was attributed to failure of the party to address citizens' concerns such as corruptions in government administration, elitism in politics, inflation, and deteriorating ethnic relations between Malay, Chinese and Indian groups. It also failed to recognise the roles of the opposition and civil society and undermined the new media as a political tool (see Mohd Azizuddin, 2009, 2011; Smeltzer, & Keddy, 2011; Zaid, 2009). Consequently, Mohd Azizuddin (2009, 2011) argues that the government has gradually embraced the deliberation ideas, albeit at micro-level, to re-gain citizens' trust. For example, the government has promoted “people's first” slogan, and has encouraged government MPs to follow the opposition's move of using new media tools (such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs) to make contact and engage directly with citizens.

### *Parliamentary Procedure*

The House of Representatives must have its first sitting within 120 days after it is dissolved and the commencing date of a term begins when the sitting of parliament takes place for the first time. To legitimise the sitting of parliament, the quorum for the House of Representatives must be at least 26 members excluding the speaker. In each term, the parliament will be divided into five parliamentary sessions in which each session is equivalent to one year.<sup>19</sup> The Order Paper is distributed to the MPs on the first day before the

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<sup>19</sup> In each parliamentary session, the House of Representatives will hold three to four parliamentary sittings. The duration of each parliamentary sitting is arranged by parliament after consultation with the minister responsible for parliamentary affairs in the Prime Minister's Department. The final parliamentary calendar will only be produced when the minister in the Prime Minister's Department has consulted the government agencies, the House of Representatives and the Senate. He/she will prepare a memorandum to the cabinet before submitting it to the secretaries of the House of Representatives and the Senate (Parlimen Malaysia, 2012).

sitting begins. To endorse or reject any bills or motions tabled in the Parliament, the two houses will undertake voting.<sup>20</sup>

The first hour of the parliament sitting is allocated for oral question-and-answer time. The MPs are given the opportunity to pose questions to any minister, deputy minister or parliamentary secretary.<sup>21</sup> The questions must be within the purview of the minister's responsibility and accountability (Parlimen Malaysia, 2012). An MP is allowed to ask not more than 10 oral questions and five written questions.<sup>22</sup> In addition, the MPs can pose three extra questions during question-and-answer time. For specific question to ministers regarding the bills or matters under the ministerial purview, the Order Paper requires MPs to submit the questions at least 14 working days prior to the parliamentary sitting (Parlimen Malaysia, 2012).<sup>23</sup> The Prime Minister is not directly compelled to answer questions from the MPs. MPs may ask the Prime Minister questions during the question-and-answer slot for ministers. Often, the Prime Minister delegates the task of answering the questions to other ministers or deputy ministers of the Prime Minister's Department.

The question-and-answer sessions that I examine from the Parliament Hansard are vital to understand what, how and why citizens' concerns are raised by MPs in parliament. By analysing the question-and-answer contents, this study indicates that the MPs utilised citizens' concerns based on everyday talks in different locations to influence or challenge the top down policy-making approach of the executive. This would eventually alter the government's decision-making to reflect the citizens' wishes, wills and needs.

### *Law Making Stages*

Law making in Malaysia involves two stages: (1) *pre-parliament stage* and (2) *in-parliament stage* (Loh, & Surin, 2011). The *pre-parliament stage* refers to the drafting processes outside

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<sup>20</sup> Article 63 states that MPs have a special privilege that is not granted to other professions in Malaysia which allows them to raise issues and questions in parliament that are deemed sensitive in public venues and forums. In other words, MPs cannot be sued and charged before courts if they raise sensitive issues or questions, for example during question-and-answer sessions or in law-making proceedings in the parliament as long they do not advocate a motion to establish Malaysia as a republic. Suggesting the replacement of the constitutional monarchy system in Malaysia is deemed a threat to national security (Federal Constitution; Chamil, 2009).

<sup>21</sup> In the 12<sup>th</sup> parliament, the Prime Minister did not appoint any parliamentary secretary for the cabinet.

<sup>22</sup> Only the Malay language can be used in parliamentary sittings. MPs must get permission from the speaker first if he/she wants to use English terms.

<sup>23</sup> In parliament, MPs must abide by federal laws and the Standing Order. The Standing Order provides the guidelines for all rules and regulations for the two houses in parliament. All oral and written questions from the MPs that have been submitted by the parliament secretary will be listed on the order paper with their turn and the date of the question appearing randomly according to the computer system that has been set up. Each question must not be more than 40 words.

parliament. Meanwhile, the *in-parliament stage* refers to the tabling, reading and passing processes in parliament. Traditionally, a ministry will sponsor a bill that is known as a government bill. Before its tabling in parliament, at the pre-parliament stage, the ministry that sponsors the bill will draft the proposed bill at the ministerial level. Later, the proposed bill will be handed over to the Attorney General's Chamber to be formulated and finalised. Besides the ministry, any MP or senator can initiate a bill which is known as a private bill. However, since the establishment of parliament, a private bill has never once been passed as a law in Malaysia<sup>24</sup> (Faruqi, 2008).

A bill can be first tabled in the House of Representatives or the Senate. However, any tax bills or money bills must be first tabled in the House of Representatives and only cabinet ministers are allowed to table these bills. The bill must go through the following stages in the House of Representative and the Senate before enacting of the bill: (1) first reading;<sup>25</sup> (2) second reading;<sup>26</sup> (3) committee stage;<sup>27</sup> (4) third reading;<sup>28</sup> and (5) the royal assent from the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong*.<sup>29</sup>

## 1.2 The Parliament Sitting Debates

Under Mahathir Mohamad, the fourth Prime Minister (1981-2003) in the 1990s (the eighth through tenth parliaments), the government did not face many challenges in governing and controlling the behaviour of MPs in parliament. The Parliamentary Services Act (1963) that granted autonomous power to parliament in governing its administration and thus reducing the executive dominance in its internal affairs was repealed in 1992. Since the Parliamentary Services Act (1963) was repealed, the administration of parliament has been transferred to the

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<sup>24</sup> Since a private bill has never been passed in the Malaysian Parliament, I only emphasize law making steps referring to a government bill in the paragraph. For further reading on the complete stages of law-making in the Malaysian Parliament, see Loh and Surin (2011), Harding (1993), and Harding and Lee (2007).

<sup>25</sup> The first reading is completed when the minister reads the bill's title aloud without necessarily reading the contents. For a government bill, the respective minister is required to give at least one day notice to parliament before tabling the bill (Standing Orders of the Dewan Rakyat, SO 48).

<sup>26</sup> Notice must be given to the House and the bill must be circulated to all members before the second reading. Bill is read for the purpose of voting by the House. Debates and discussions are held to seek for the pros and cons of the bill and MPs can decide to oppose or ask the minister to amend it. MPs may ask the House to defer the second reading for six months for the purpose of amending the tabled bill.

<sup>27</sup> The *committee stage* here refers to the default committee. The committee stage is only required when the amendments to the bill are proposed and debated. By default, all members of the House of Representatives is a parliament committee (Standing Orders of the Dewan Rakyat, SO 54).

<sup>28</sup> The respective minister requests a motion to submit the bill for the third reading. No substantive amendments are allowed at this stage. The MPs are only allowed to debate the principles of the bill. By default, the bill is passed by the House of Representatives.

<sup>29</sup> The royal assent from the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* is needed after the parliament passes a bill. However, the bill automatically becomes law after 30 days, even if the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* refuses to give his assent.



Prime Minister's Department, which is responsible for overseeing all parliamentary affairs (Abdul Aziz, 2006; Chamil, 2010; Faruqi, 2008; Loh & Surin, 2011). The beginning of the 1990s was marked as the starting point of further deterioration of the Malaysian Parliament as an autonomous institution administratively distinct from the executive. From 2004 through 2008, the MPs made several initiatives to revive the Parliamentary Services Act (1963) but to no avail (Wan Junaidi, 2010).

Many public policies and government programmes were changed and transformed under Mahathir's administration. New domestic and international policies as well as economic and social policies were planned and implemented under Mahathir.<sup>30</sup> The role played by the MPs during the Mahathir era changed as well. Many MPs intensified their networking internationally by visiting, meeting and attending MPs conferences at regional and international levels to keep up with government agendas. Mahathir enacted a sudden change in the role played by the MPs, resulting from the introduction of many new national policies. In order to transform the nation from an agrarian society to an industrial one, many new bills were introduced and existing acts were amended in parliament (Ahmad Atory, 2010; Chamil, 2010; Hwang, 2003; Mahathir, 2011).

In the 11<sup>th</sup> parliament (March 2004 – Feb 2008), however, the House of Representatives experienced a new debate culture during parliamentary sittings. The fifth Prime Minister, Abdullah Badawi (2003-2009) introduced a "transparent approach" to encourage the government MPs to criticise cabinet weaknesses during parliamentary sittings. Abdullah hoped that by encouraging government MPs to participate in debate and critique the cabinet, parliamentary sittings could be used as feedback to make the government more accountable to citizens and give the appearance of listening to citizens' concerns (Wan Junaidi, 2010). Abdullah's transparency approach sparked a new culture of debate in parliament which made government MPs more actively involved in debates. Consequently, an "internal opposition"

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<sup>30</sup> Mahathir Mohamad was a Prime Minister for 22 years. During his tenure as Malaysian Prime Minister, he introduced and implemented a few policies such as the Look East policy, corporatism, industrialisation, privatisation, and *Wawasan 2020*. He also promoted the ideas of Asian Values, and the concentration of power to the executive. He also worked to map Malaysia as the campaign of the third world country and symbol of a modern Islamic state, in his administration. During his tenure, Mahathir launched a campaign "Buying British Last" under Margaret Thatcher. Mahathir argued that the Western democracy and human rights that are championed by the West did not suit with the Asian cultures. He portrayed the United States administration as "neo-colonialism." Besides the United States, Malaysia's relationships with the United Kingdom (especially during Margaret Thatcher's reign) and Australia (especially under Paul Keating) were rather sour under Mahathir (see Hwang, 2003; Mahathir, 2011; Milne & Mauzy, 1999; Oii, 2006; Plate, 2011; Steward, 2003; Wain, 2009).

emerged among the government MPs when debating the government agendas, for example in relation to the poverty eradication policy that I elaborate further in chapters six and seven.

Later, a new culture of debate in parliament intensified even further in the 12<sup>th</sup> parliament since the opposition denied the government two thirds majority for the first time. The parliament became a “fighting arena” amongst the MPs, where in Wan Junaidi’s view (2010), the MPs have failed to observe the norms of “Asian Values” in questioning the government.<sup>31</sup> Chamil (2009) argues that the nature of debate in the Malaysian Parliament, however, remains a zero sum game i.e., there is a clear demarcation between the government and opposition. Bipartisanship as a common ground to promote better public policy is almost non-existent in parliament (Loh & Surin, 2011). The voices of opposition MPs are hardly considered by the ruling government as the parliament has no capacity legally to establish any parliament select committees and the backbencher club are exclusively for the government MPs. Any proposal by the opposition that would benefit citizens or the state must not be supported by the government MPs. Rais (1996) argues that the government would never consider the opposition viewpoints, even if it would give benefits to citizens and they might otherwise support it.

Despite the new emerging debate culture, the power that the executive has in making final decision remains and shows the similarity Malaysia shares with other Westminster systems in liberal democracies. On one hand, as the backbenchers must vote on the government agendas, the “internal opposition” has not influenced the cabinet to change their stand in some government decisions that have caused controversy amongst the citizens. On the other hand, whether the presence of a larger amount of opposition seats in parliament has been able to influence the governance system in policy-making and to what extent the opposition MPs have influenced and have altered the deliberative practices in Malaysia provide interesting cases to understand the evolution of the Malaysian Parliament.

### **1.3 Organisation of the Thesis**

This thesis comprises of eight chapters. Chapter two reviews the literature related to the Westminster-style parliaments in the United Kingdom and other former colonies of the British Empire that has underpinned the establishment of the Malaysian Parliament. This chapter presents the evolution of the Westminster model in and outside Great Britain since

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<sup>31</sup> I discuss Asian Values more in the next chapters, in particular chapter three.

the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to decentralisation, de-colonisation and the local influences in the political systems. In addition, I also describe the establishment of other parliamentary systems outside the Westminster systems to better enhance our understanding of the relationship between democracy and parliament. Overall, my intention here is to provide a comparative outlook between the Malaysian Parliament and other parliaments in positioning this thesis as a case study, which is analysed in chapter four. By reviewing different parliaments, I identify to what extent changes have occurred from the original model and what constitutes a Westminster system. This chapter sheds light on the different characteristics and roles that parliaments have in establishing deliberation forums and fostering democracy.

Chapter three reviews in depth the existing literature on the Malaysian Parliament. The review indicates clearly that the lack of interest amongst scholars in undertaking empirical studies of the Malaysian Parliament go beyond a legalistic framework or the consideration of executive-parliament relations. More significantly, this chapter provides an understanding of the political similarities and differences that feature in the Malaysian Parliament governance system vis-a-vis, in particular, other Westminster systems in and outside liberal democracies that I elaborated in the preceding chapter. I then describe the linkages between the parliament, civil society, middle-class, and poverty and quota system with the establishment of democracy in Malaysia. How parliament is governed and the significance of the emergence of civil society and middle-class are highlighted here as points of departure for exploring the deliberative practices in and outside the parliament in later chapters (chapters five to seven).

Chapter four details the conceptual framework of this study, using deliberative democracy as a theoretical foundation to establish the thesis argument. I discuss how the different deliberative democracy approaches rooted in Western ideas are applied in my study. I also outline the research design, methods and methodology. The motivation for employing a qualitative research technique is discussed, namely in order to capture the “human elements” in my study. I lay out the criteria used to select the participants, methods of gathering data, and the types of data used, by focusing on the reasons and justifications for undertaking interviews and applying multiple data triangulations. In summary, chapter four will contextualise the case study. The underlying element of this chapter illustrates how I structure

and interpret the conceptual framework, research design, methodology and methods chosen in the specific political context of the Malaysian Parliament.

Chapter five describes the official and unofficial roles of MPs in and outside the Malaysian Parliament. I present thematically the MPs' roles based on primary data and explore deliberative practices by linking and examining roles by reference to (1) the modes of engagements MPs use to communicate to citizens, and (2) citizens' concerns transmitted in and outside parliament by MPs. I also analyse the roles non-state actors have played in the community, in particular the civil society in (1) reframing MPs' roles, and (2) bridging the lay citizens to parliament divide through the MPs in the context of informal and formal, and macro-level and micro-level deliberative forums. This chapter shows the similarity of the roles of the Malaysian MPs to those of the other MPs in the Westminster systems. Certain roles are similar to the MPs' roles in the *transplanted Westminster models* and other roles are similar to the MPs' roles in the *implanted Westminster models*. However, the similar roles do not necessarily imply a similarity and uniformity of deliberations that have been practiced by MPs across the Westminster systems. The citizens' concerns and local issues related to socio-politics and socio-economy define the particularity and uniqueness of the governance system in Malaysia. These particularity and uniqueness, to some extent, influence the deliberations that have been practiced by MPs and at the same time, impose challenges and limitations for them to carry out their duties to citizens.

Chapter six provides a rich description about poverty eradication and the Bumiputera quota system within the scope of affirmative action policies as policy cases within a case study. This chapter suggests how citizen's *everyday talk* has more weight in influencing the deliberative practices rather than the official success figures of the poverty eradication and the quota system for Bumiputera. Contrary to the existing works that examine poverty and quota using quantitative data, this chapter revitalises and refreshes the discussion by using different triangulation data as presented in chapter four. This chapter revisits and readdresses the existing work on poverty and quotas by examining views extracted from interviews conducted by myself, and excerpts from the Parliament Hansard, government documents and media reports. While the statistics provided by the government agencies and literatures help to understand the "facts" of the "success and failure" of the poverty eradication policy and the Bumiputera quota system in Malaysia, the qualitative methods of inquiry reveal to what extent and why *untold* perceptions of MPs and the Parliament Hansard seem to contradict existing "facts" and findings. To better understand the poverty and quota issues, I discuss the

different affirmative action policies, especially the NEP (1970-1990). It is vital to (re)examine why the NEP is *still* the cause of the endless polemics relating to poverty and quota issues in Malaysia two decades after it ended.

Chapter seven is a continuation of the previous chapter focused on poverty and quota issues. This chapter provides deeper analyses of the consequences of a dual strategy adopted by MPs specific to the poverty eradication policy and the quota system as policy cases within a case study. I describe the tensions occurring as the consequence of a dual strategy in managing deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament. This chapter establishes the “other side” of MPs’ views that have often been perceived as entangled and embedded within the interests of the political parties in order to produce a coherent decision-making or outcomes based on the executive’s directives and commands, especially amongst the government MPs.

The concluding chapter details and summarises the arguments that I have made in this thesis and readdresses the questions of *whether* and *to what extent* the conceptual and theoretical framework of this case study has established a premise that deliberative practices exist or have the potential to exist in Malaysia. This chapter will show that deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament do exist and have been established and progressed through the balancing, adaptation and modification of existing cultures, rules, norms and routines as well as the “exploitation” and exploration of available deliberative forums by different state and non-state actors in and outside the parliament.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Comparing Parliaments**

Intersecting functions of parliament as a mechanism of governance as well as an institution of democracy have too often been ignored in contemporary accounts of parliamentary systems. The narrowness of academic discussions on parliamentary democracy that focus on the relationship between the executive and legislative branches of government has blurred the idea that the study of parliament as an institution can contribute to a better understanding of democracy itself (Bergman et al., 2000).

To better understand the deliberative practices of a parliamentary system that fosters the relationship between parliament and citizens, a comparative outlook is undertaken in this chapter. In this chapter I use the Westminster liberal democracies as a baseline and identify three critical features that are required for a parliament to be able to undertake deliberation: (1) executive power in relation to parliament; (2) partisanship in parliament; and (3) the parliamentary committee system. Comparison allows us to explore the extent to which theories of deliberative democracy are applicable to a range of democracies, beyond those liberal countries.

In doing so, I explore a sample of the relevant literature on Westminster parliamentary systems. This chapter describes and compares the evolution of the Westminster systems across the former British Empire and details to what extent the local, political, and cultural norms and influences have changed the characteristics of the Westminster model. Comparing Westminster-style parliaments provides an understanding of the similarities and differences between the systems and traces the mechanism used and the forums available for deliberation in the parliamentary system. Emphasis is given here to the Westminster systems of the liberal democracies to enable an exploration of the similarities and/or differences in deliberative practices between the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada in comparison to those in Malaysia. In addition, I also discuss the Westminster systems of non-Western countries and other parliamentary models to provide broader insights into the relationship between citizen engagement and democratisation process vis-a-vis the Malaysian case. Thus, this chapter offers a macro-level look at how we might understand the Malaysian Parliament as a Westminster-style parliament.

## 2.1 Conceptualising the Westminster-style Parliament

For those countries affiliated with the British Empire, the Westminster parliamentary model was used as a base from which to develop indigenous parliamentary systems. Known as the “mother of Parliaments,” the Westminster model became the most “distinctive export” and legacy of British political institutions during the long era of British imperialism and colonialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Baldwin, 2005; Dufour, Jenson & Saint-Martin, 2011; Fyde & Miller, 1970; Rhodes & Weller, 2005). In the historical perspective, descriptive and normative approaches are often used to explain how the Westminster model became established and was adopted by former British colonies, and also how through time, the local political scenario had changed or abolished the tradition of Westminster model.

The Westminster model is highlighted in particular because of the historical connection Malaysia, as a former British colony, has with the United Kingdom. To understand the particularity of the Malaysian Parliament, exploring the establishment of other Westminster-style parliaments, both in the “Western countries” of liberal democracies such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and Canada, together with the non-Western countries of the former British colonies in Malaysia, Singapore, the Bahamas and India, provides an initial understanding of what features constitute the Westminster model. To explore the extent to which the Westminster model has changed and remained in the case of the Malaysian Parliament, understanding how the other Westminster systems have evolved is useful for this study.

In assessing Westminster-style parliaments, attention needs to be paid to the fact that there is some ambiguity in whether many originally Westminster models can still be called “Westminster” parliamentary democracies. Democracy ideas, sudden changes in the domestic political system, realignment of the geographical political boundaries and political cultures, norms and values have to some extent led to the modification of the model. Thus, there is increasingly a lack of consensus amongst scholars about what constitutes the Westminster model. The model has gradually evolved (e.g., the United Kingdom), but has also suddenly transformed from the foundational model (e.g., New Zealand) to suit the contemporary political ideas and to remain relevant to the local political arena of countries that have adopted it.

Rodan (2005) argues that the basic premise for a nation to be characterised as a Westminster system is that the nation has embraced a liberal democratic tradition. If we use Rodan’s

thesis, most of the former British colonies in the Asia Pacific, Africa and the Caribbean cannot be regarded as Westminster systems as most of them are not qualified to be categorised as liberal democracies. On the other hand, if we accept Lijphart's (1999) criteria below to define the Westminster model, only the United Kingdom,<sup>32</sup> New Zealand<sup>33</sup> (prior to 1996) and Barbados<sup>34</sup> can be considered as having implemented the Westminster model.

Lijphart's typology of parliamentary systems may be useful as a departure point for understanding the variations in the definitions of Westminster parliamentary democracy. Lijphart suggests that parliamentary systems incorporate the following features: the non-confidence vote in order to remove the government; the head of government is not elected by the popular votes of citizens; and thirdly, cabinets are collective or collegial (Lijphart, 1999, pp.117-18). Lijphart (1999) argues that significant differences in Westminster-style parliaments can be divided into two categories: (1) an executive-party category; and (2) a federal-unitary category. Following on from Lijphart's argument, Matthews (2011, p. 488) argues that the construction of the Westminster model is meant "...to deliver centralised power, a strong executive and clarity in relation to the direction of public policy and the responsibility of specific politicians."

Changes have not only occurred in the Parliaments of former British colonies but also in that of the United Kingdom,<sup>35</sup> the originator of the model. Devolution of the Westminster parliamentary system in the United Kingdom with the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, the Wales National Assembly and the European Union Parliament, has blurred the concept of what constitutes the Westminster model (Matthews, 2011). The structure and operation of the Scottish Parliament indicate some contrasting purpose when dealing with the

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<sup>32</sup> In the United Kingdom's case, Lijphart (1999, pp. 10-21) outlines ten criteria: "(1) Concentration of executive power in one-party and bare majority cabinets; (2) cabinet dominance; (3) two party system; (4) majoritarian and disproportional system of elections; (5) interest group pluralism; (6) unitary and centralised government; (7) concentration of legislative power in a unicameral legislature; (8) constitutional flexibility; (9) absence of judicial review; (10) a central bank controlled by executive."

<sup>33</sup> In the New Zealand's case, Lijphart (1999, pp. 21-27) also outlines ten criteria: "(1) concentration of executive power in one-party and bare majority cabinets; (2) cabinet dominance; (3) two-party system; (4) majoritarian and disproportional system of elections; (5) interest group pluralism; (6) unitary and centralised government; (7) concentration of legislative power; (8) constitutional flexibility; (9) absence of judicial review; (10) a central bank controlled by the executive." Prior to October 1996, Lijphart argues that New Zealand's Westminster model was a better example as a majoritarian model before it changed to a mixed member proportional (MMP) electoral system.

<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, the criteria in the Barbados' case are: "(1) concentration of executive power in one-party and bare-majority cabinets; (2) cabinet dominance; (3) two-party system; (4) majoritarian and disproportional system of elections; (5) interest group pluralism; (6) the characteristic of the second (federal-unitary) dimension of the majoritarian model: (Lijphart, 1999, pp. 27-30).

<sup>35</sup> Hereafter referred to as the British Parliament.



executive of the British Parliament, particularly in finding a common voice to the party cohesiveness (Bratberg, 2011). The devolution of the British Parliament was to overcome the flawed government decision-making that had produced the legitimacy “crisis.” It also helped to localise the parliamentary deliberative process so as to be closer to citizens (Matthews, 2011; Stark, 2010). Devolution has in theory increased the transparency and accountability of the Parliament in Scotland and Wales, and has reduced the “democratic deficit” of the British Parliament (Flinders, 2011).

The changes and adaptability indicate the potential of Westminster-style parliaments to develop a parliament that become more deliberative and closer to citizens by giving more leverage to the legislatures to check and balance the executive power in particular in the countries that have been considered to exercise a pure majoritarian system such as the United Kingdom and New Zealand. In the case of the United Kingdom, the devolution of the British Parliament has shown a trend of the parliament to move towards the federal system of the Australian model (Rhodes, 2005) or the Canadian model (Bochel, & Defty, 2012; Lijphart, 2008). On the contrary, the unitary system of the New Zealand Parliament had opted for a drastic change in 1996 to the German-style Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system to increase the voices of minorities through the small political parties (Miller & Curtin, 2011). Despite the changes occurring in the Westminster parliamentary model, Westminster systems survive because the model is resilient and adaptable to local conditions because “the Westminster model does not tell politicians how to behave. It describes how government might be organised” (Rhodes & Weller, 2005, p.2).

Rhodes and Weller (2005) divide the Westminster models into two groups, *the transplanted Westminster* and the *implanted Westminster*. The *transplanted Westminster* refers to the countries where the settlers adopted and then adjusted the British governance tradition to the local conditions, such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Meanwhile, the *implanted Westminster* refers to the former British colonies that inherited the British institutional arrangement as a pre-condition of gaining independence, such as Malaysia, Singapore, India, and Pakistan. In an attempt to understand the similarities and/or differences in deliberation between the Westminster systems of liberal and illiberal democracies, I further elaborate the characteristics of the case in the transplanted Westminster systems.

In the Oceania region, the experience of Australia and New Zealand offer two completely different Westminster models, yet both have shown a gradual shift from the original

Westminster prototype. Australia is a federal state with a bicameral parliament and New Zealand is a unitary state with a unicameral parliament. Both parliaments have also adopted new mechanisms in the parliament structure. The Australian Parliament partly replicated the US senate, for its Senate (upper house). Meanwhile, the New Zealand Parliament adopted the German style of MMP. The institutional fragmentation in Australia is stronger and makes it more difficult to undertake constitutional reform than in New Zealand and Britain (Erdos, 2008).

The abolishment of the appointed upper chamber in the New Zealand Parliament shows an example of the flexibility of the Westminster-style parliaments to reform and re-establish themselves in one way or another in order to adapt to the current political needs of respective nations by modifying their constitutional underpinnings (Lijphart, 1999; Wanna, 2005; Woodhouse, 1994). According to Lijphart (1999), the Westminster model that was transplanted to New Zealand prior to 1996 is an ideal government system. In stark contrast, Wanna (2005, p. 153) suggests that New Zealand is “the maverick rather than the pure model” of the Westminster model owing to the consequences of the introduction of the MMP electoral system in 1996. In 1993, through a referendum, New Zealanders decided to replace the old system with the MMP (Ingle, 1995). The introduction of the MMP electoral system indicated the departure of New Zealand electoral system from a majoritarian First-Past-the-Post system to proportional representation (PR) (Barker, & Levine, 1999; Lijphart, 1999). However, despite the changes and realignment that have taken place, the New Zealand Parliament has continued with Westminster elements, including the presence of a two-party dominant system and a relatively powerful executive. Woodhouse (1994) argues that the constitutional reform movements that occurred in Australia and New Zealand in the 1980s were a response to the problem of imperfect accountability that was recognised by both citizens and parliament. For example, in New Zealand, this led to a radical restructuring of government departments, whereby the heads have direct accountability to Parliament (Woodhouse, 1994). What the Australian and the New Zealand parliamentary reforms tell us is that parliamentary regimes are able to overcome political tensions and challenges to legitimacy via internal restructuring that might come from internal and external factors such as political and ideological transformation, economic meltdown, social movements and so forth (Kelso, 2009; Longley, & Hoffman, 1999; Longley, & Olson, 1991; Rush, 2011). That is to say that in Westminster systems, public opinion has to some extent been able to

influence the dynamics of institutional change and institutional settings where the executive has always been argued as dominant over the legislative branch.

In the Southeast Asian region, Singapore and Malaysia (chapter three explores the Malaysian Parliament in greater detail) illustrate how transplanted Westminster systems are able to create political stability and promote economic growth but not human rights and civil society movements. Similar to Malaysia, the Westminster-style parliament in Singapore was established as part of the decolonisation process, and maintained British interests in Singapore. According to Rodan (2005, p.109), Singapore's Westminster system is a unique case because the Singaporean Parliament represents a case of "major transformation rather than adaptation" to the Westminster model. The Singapore government is an example of how the rapid transformation of the original Westminster structure and liberal democracy can come to support a form of authoritarian capitalism.<sup>36</sup> Singapore represents a case of a country with only "selective appearances of Westminster government" (Rodan, 2005, p. 126) in that the government only adopted the tradition when it suited them best. Ultimately, the assertiveness of Lee Kuan Yew in promoting and fostering the Asian values as a way of legitimising the Singaporean government caused the demise of a substantive Westminster tradition (Kingsbury, & Avonious, 2008; Mahbubani, 2004; Rodan, 2004, 2005).<sup>37</sup> Although the Malaysian Parliament has not transformed as drastically compared to Singapore, the support of authoritarian capitalism to promote economic growth and the promotion of Asian Values indicates some similarities between these two cases.

The above brief discussion points to two important lessons. First, in Western settings where the history of democracy is longer, the transition, changes and adaptation have been based on "voluntary" and rather smooth and structured evolution, thus allowing deliberation to be taken for granted and properly embedded in the political system. Second, in non-Western settings, where the history of democracy has only been introduced in general in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, there is evidence of more volatility with newer and different features

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<sup>36</sup> Authoritarian capitalism refers to a state that limits the information, expression and civil liberty that are perceived as threatening to government interests and power structures. Yet, in contrast, the same government is pro-growth development by systematically opened up its markets to international trade, capital and investment (Rodan, 2004)

<sup>37</sup> Instead of Asian Values, Saward (2003, p. 145) uses the term "Asian Democracy" to describe the style of government in Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea that emphasises "consensus, obeying moral leadership, the claims of the community rather than the individual and personal discipline" which critics argue is pseudo-democratic.

being inserted into the systems to suit the local political cultures and in order to give the systems local legitimacy.

## **2.2 The Westminster System and Deliberation**

For the purpose of this study, I make comparison of deliberative practices across the Westminster systems using three frames of reference: (1) executive power in relation to parliament; (2) partisanship in parliament; and (3) parliamentary committee system.

### **2.2.1 Executive Power in relation to Parliament**

The consequences of executive dominance over the legislature among the Westminster systems vary from country to country. In general, all parliaments that adopt the Westminster-style parliaments in the Western and non-Western world are well-institutionalised but the degree of power held by the legislature to check and balance the executive varies (Dufour, Jenson, & Saint Martin, 2011; Lijpart, 1999; Matthews, 2011; Monk, 2010; Patapan, & Wanna, 2005; Paun, 2011; Rhodes & Weller, 2005; Siaroff, 2003).

In examining the power that legislatures have vis-à-vis the executive (or other powers) in political systems in Asian parliaments, Norton and Ahmed (1998) uses the terms the *external environment* and the *internal characteristics* to frame their analysis. The external environment and internal characteristics are used to evaluate the characteristics of a legislature in terms of it being a *policy influencing legislature* or a *reactive legislature*.<sup>38</sup> By analysing a range of existing literature on Westminster models, the reactive legislature characteristics is prevalent in both transplanted Westminster and implanted Westminster models (although they are not necessarily mutually exclusive) such as Malaysia, the United Kingdom, Singapore, India and Australia. Generally, the policy influencing legislature (e.g. the Scandinavian countries) incorporates the citizens' voices rather "directly" than the reactive legislature.

Although Malaysia is a federal state like Australia and Canada, the characteristics of the majoritarian model<sup>39</sup> prevail in Malaysia. Comparable to the United Kingdom, New Zealand (prior to 1996) and Barbados, Malaysia's Westminster model is characterised by the

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<sup>38</sup> There are six variables for the external environment: (1) political culture; (2) external patrons; (3) the constitution; (4) administrative structure; (5) the party and electoral system; and (6) interest groups. Meanwhile, there are four variables for the internal characteristics: (1) the chamber; (2) party groups; (3) committees; and (4) members.

<sup>39</sup> Majoritarian model is used interchangeably with the Westminster model in this study.

concentration of power in the executive in a one-party<sup>40</sup> and bare-majority cabinet since it gained independence in 1957. Malaysia is a perfect example how a single-party has held a permanent majority and has governed a state without interruption, and has thus undermined the influence of minority parties outside BN as the opposition (details in Section 2.2.2 Partisanship in Parliament). The Malaysian parliamentary system is also dominated by the cabinet since the majority of the cabinet members are appointed from the lower house like in the United Kingdom and New Zealand. Later in 1996, New Zealand adopted the MMP system to address the weaknesses of parliament in checking and balancing executive power, which often acted unilaterally in the 1980s-1990s (Norman, 2003). As in New Zealand, the phenomenon of the executive dictated party discipline and rules fixing is described by Wanna (2005, p.154),

The absence of institutional constraints or checks and balances did not see New Zealand degenerate into one-party authoritarianism. Rather, an agreeable ‘elected dictatorship’ emerged in which the executive largely respected shared conventions and formal accountability, behaved as a ‘responsible government,’ and respected the freedoms of people and media.

In general, executive power has always been at the centre of normative explanations of the elite role vis-à-vis the parliament in Westminster systems. In Rhodes’ (2005) words in describing the unity of the executive and legislature, “Parliament, a term often confined to the House of Representatives, is not sovereign” (p. 146). Emphasising economic growth as a means for political stability, Singapore’s case shows much similarity with Malaysia of the role executive plays in parliament. The Singaporean government’s developmentalism approach has been used to direct the parliament to become an extension of the executive rather than a reactive legislature. Through the concept of “good government” in governing Singapore, strong executive influence in decision-making has penetrated and determined the affairs of parliament (Ho, 2003; Lee, 2009). Developmentalism and economic prosperity are used as tools to limit political challenges from the opposition and citizens.

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<sup>40</sup> Although BN comprises of a few political parties, the coalition is formed prior to elections and the main political parties that established BN remained the same, with the exception of other party components in Sabah and Sarawak as mentioned previously in chapter one (see Lijphart, 2008).

In Malaysia, the executive has been argued to have absolute power to determine the legislation passed by the Malaysian Parliament,<sup>41</sup> and the legislation is seen as “rubber stamping” the executive’s agenda. In other words, parliament decision-making is often overshadowed by and based on the government political party’s orientation and interests (Abdul Aziz, 2006; Gomez & Jomo, 1999; Lim, 2002; Loh, 2002; Saifuddin, 2008; Wong & Norani, 2009; Zaid, 2009). Similar to Singapore, therefore, this discussion on deliberative democracy would not be complete without mentioning the executive’s dominance in every aspect of citizen life – in politics, the economy, and social development (Crouch, 1984, 1993, 1996; Jomo, 1986; Jomo & Wee, 2003; Kahn, 1996, 2000; Loh, 2002; Milner, 1991a, 1991b; Ramasamy, 2004; Verma, 2002b; Weiss, 2006).

### **2.2.2 Partisanship in Parliament**

All Westminster liberal democracies - the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and Australia - share a common heritage in terms of being two-party dominance, which is a by-product of the majoritarian electoral system. The winner-takes-all (of the single-party majorities) is the norm in a majoritarian electoral system. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was no motivation for the government of the Westminster electoral majoritarian systems to consult opposition MPs as the ultimate aim was to defeat rather than accommodate them (Lijphart, 1999, 2008). On one hand, the evolution of parliamentary norms from adversarial to “consensual” had only begun to change in the 1990s in the Westminster liberal democracies. On the other hand, the adversarial norm has remained in the illiberal democracies such as Malaysia and Singapore, where partisanship obviously prevails and the role of opposition has been kept very limited (Johnson, & Milner, 2005; Lijphart, 2008; Rodan, 2004). The most crucial objective for governments in this kind of adversarial system is that the government maintains the backbenchers’ loyalty and makes sure that they observe party discipline for the production of coherent policy (Paun, 2011).

Political parties use parliament as an arena of deliberative assembly and parliamentary representation symbolises the political inclination and interests of citizen representatives.

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<sup>41</sup> For further insights into how the executive has penetrated and influenced the governance system in this study’s timeframe see: (1) Chamil (2009), Wan Junaidi (2010), Wan Azhar (2009), Loh and Surin, (2011), and Ahmad Atory (2010) for the Malaysian Parliament; (2) Khoo and Loh (2002), and Loh (2002) for Malaysia’s democracy discourse; (3) Abdul Aziz (2006, 2009a, 2009b), Faridah (2009), Jayum (2009), and Mohammad Agus (2006) for federalism and constitution politics; (4) Ho (2003), Raja Noriza & Norma (2009), Sharifah Hayaati (2009), and Rais (2006) for public policy and government bureaucracy; (5) Wong and Norani (2009), and Puthuchery (2009) for elections and democracy in Malaysia.

Strong party discipline and political patronage in the legislative arms of government are the common features in Westminster systems, including the United Kingdom (Bochel, & Defty, 2012; Döring, 2003; Flinders, 2000; Kam, 2001), Australia (Farrell, & McAllister, 1995; Levy, 2010; Miragliotta & Errington, 2012; Monk, 2012; Van Onselen, 2004;), New Zealand (Gillon & Miller, 2006; Wanna, 2005), Canada (Bochel, & Defty, 2012; Malloy, 2003, 2004; Pond, 2008), India (Kashyap, 2004; Rubinoff, 1998; Stern, 2005), Singapore (Austin, 2009; Ho, 2003; Lee, 2009; Rodan, 2004), Bangladesh (Ahmed, 1997, 1998, 2012; Moniruzzaman, 2009), and Pakistan (Ahmed, 2005). As Uhr (1998) states, “Parliamentary representation is about nothing if it is not about political parties. Electors vote for parties; candidates identify themselves with party levels...” (p. 83). Such findings are validated by the strong partisanship feature of the Westminster model in policy-making across Westminster-style parliaments both in Western and non-Western countries, including Malaysia. The common feature of the parliaments in the Westminster systems mentioned above is that “they are the collective decision-making bodies that follow long-shared practices and procedures” (Patterson, & Mughan, 2001, p. 39).

As in Malaysia, the studies on unified voting by MPs shows party discipline and ideology matter in creating “togetherness,” cohesion, and common understanding amongst parliamentary representatives. Therefore, deliberations that have been practiced in Malaysia have the tendency to concentrate at the formal micro-level of the state institutions and the designated deliberation forums for the partisan deliberation (Dryzek, 2006) (details in chapter four). Party discipline, affiliation and ideology also do influence MP’s preferences and strongly bind MP’s preferences in Canada and the United Kingdom (Bochel, & Defty, 2012; Kam, 2001; Pond, 2008). Party discipline to some extent may distort the MPs’ capacity to reflect on their own constituents’ concerns and thus hamper the genuine pursuit of deliberation.

Similar to the parliament in the United Kingdom, the Malaysian parliament practices the majoritarian model which results in disproportional election outcomes relative to the support for the ruling party. Citizens vote for their MPs based on a single member district based on “first past the post” system: the candidate with the majority vote or, if there is no majority, with the largest minority vote wins” (Lijphart, 1999, p. 15). In the case of Malaysia, the candidate wins even with a one vote majority which produces disproportional results in terms of the share of citizens’ popular votes for certain candidates and parties, in comparison to the

actual seats in the lower house gained by the majority party, causing significant reductions in the power of the opposition. Outside Western countries, the Singaporean Parliament, to some extent, is a reflection of the Malaysian case in terms of how the government suppresses the opposition in order to perpetuate its power (Austin, 2009) (details in chapter five).

In general, similar to other Westminster systems, the Malaysian Parliament reflects the influence of interest group pluralism. Prior to 1999, opposition parties in Malaysia stood separately and independent from each other but always clustered in parliament as a singular “opposition.” Since the 10<sup>th</sup> parliament (1999-2004), Malaysia has shown evidence of a movement towards a two-party system between two major groupings, BN and PR, like the United Kingdom (the Conservative party and the Labour party), and New Zealand (the Labour Party and the National Party).

Despite strong partisanship features in policy-making, parliaments in liberal democracies still provide space for the opposition to promote their views and engage in keeping the executive accountable to parliament and citizens. One way of doing this is through parliamentary committees, which Malaysia lacks. For example, the Australian parliament grants the opposition chairs in the References Committees, Scrutiny Bills Committee, the Senators’ Interest Committee and the Privileges Committee (Uhr, 1998) that I elaborate next.

### **2.2.3 Parliamentary Committee System**

Parliamentary committee systems can be divided into two categories: (1) the formal legislative committee in the parliament, and (2) the informal parliamentary committee outside the parliament. Both the formal legislative committee in the parliament and the informal parliamentary committee outside the parliament refer to the formal micro-level deliberative forums in this study. The formal legislative committees or parliament select committees in the parliament are established to filter, examine and review legislation as well as to provide recommendations made by the parliament. The informal parliamentary committees outside the parliament are established as unofficial associations of parliamentarians. The informal parliamentary committees can be political party committees, which replicate the format of official legislative committees, or can be focused around cabinet as a “little parliament,” or committees that provide for input from political groups in civil society, which are important committees as they function as broader societal deliberation forums (Halligan, et al., 2007; Uhr, 1998).



In the Westminster liberal democracies such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United Kingdom (Paun, 2011), the legislative committee system is vital. As suggested by Uhr (1998), the select committees are essential in the *age of minority* for inclusive and better deliberation, and these committees oversee the behaviour of the majority. In his argument, Uhr does not deny the right of the majority to rule, but instead suggests that parliament can be used as an arena to control the action of majority rule through the establishment of different parliament committees. To provide greater in-depth consideration to the crucial functions of the formal parliament select committee as an arena for deliberation, the Australian Parliament is highlighted here as an example vis-à-vis the Malaysian Parliament.

In the case of the Australian Parliament, each of the parliament select committee plays a role as a “bridge” between the respective legislatures to the public, and also balances the two houses’ roles in legislating and legitimising bills. Various committees that have been established in the House and Senate such as the Reference Committee, the Privileges Committee, the Procedure Committee and so forth, are important arenas for the provision of advise and recommendations to members on bills tabled in parliament, and also in theory reduces the possibility for “faulty execution of policy and policy failures” once legislation has been implemented by the government (Uhr, 1998, p. 147). The recommendations made by the committees are balanced through the appointment of committee members from both the government and opposition blocs. However, observers suggest that formal legislative committee functions often become routine and ineffective because the government sometimes bypasses the inquiry and deliberative processes that they undertake (Holmes, 2005 as cited in Monk, 2010).

Meanwhile, in New Zealand, one of the reasons that the government decided to opt for the MMP system is to allow more parties and different voices to be heard and taken into account in public law and policy. Prior to the drastic changes from pure majoritarian system to MMP, citizen discontent led to constitutional reform that gave citizens more “input” (Ingle, 1995; Wanna, 2005). This was through the introduction of a proportional system and a rejuvenated parliamentary committee system. The implementation of the MMP system has also allowed, at the same time, for the formal parliamentary committee system to be restructured substantially to give more prominence to citizen submissions in the process by either directly involving them in committee deliberations or indirectly via their representatives (Miller, & Curtin, 2011).

However, it is naive to think that formal legislative committees as forums for deliberation are free from political bias, because the politicians are the members of the committees, and thus they act politically when stating their views (O’Keeffe, 1992). Because the committees behave politically, in the United Kingdom, cabinet members tend to believe in the effectiveness of parliamentary committees. The bureaucracy however, feels that such committees often fail to come up with fresh and innovative ideas or arguments, and often go over issues already being debated in public (Hindmoor, et al., 2009; Monk, 2010; Tolley, 2009). As for citizen perceptions, the survey conducted by the Victorian state legislature of important parliament committees also reveals that voters perceived the process as being “dismissive” (Monk, 2010, p.10).

In stark contrast to parliaments in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United Kingdom, the Malaysian Parliament does not establish any permanent and formal parliamentary committees, as mentioned in chapter one. By default, all members of the House of Representatives are part of the parliament committee that participate in debates, and filter, examine, review, and vote on each bill’s amendments (Standing Orders of the Dewan Rakyat, SO 54, 54, 56, 57, 58 & 59). If required, however, a select committee of MPs may be established by parliament with the consent of the Prime Minister’s Department to examine proposed amendments to a bill. The Parliament, however, is often not forthcoming in establishing a select committee of MPs (Faruqi, 2008, p. 583). The Parliament may establish a select committee of MPs if the House of Representatives agree to a motion to further examine a bill requiring amendments. Approval is needed from the House of Representatives by presenting a report before the House for any bill’s amendments that has been discussed by and referred to a select committee of MPs (Standing Orders of the Dewan Rakyat, SO 60; see also Loh and Surin (2011)).

Unlike in the Westminster liberal democracies in which the informal parliamentary committees act as complementary to the official parliament select committees, in Malaysia, the informal political party “parliamentary system” that is established outside the parliament plays a vital role in filtering, examining and reviewing functions that should characterise the formation of public law and policy in an effective governance system. However, the disadvantage of relying on this approach to deliberation is that the views presented are inevitably biased. On informal political party committees, Uhr (1998, p. 95) argues,

It is important to note that while such party committees are powerful filters screening out unwanted traces from the policy process, they are not, strictly speaking, part of the official parliamentary process: they occupy political space but it is private rather than public space, in that their ‘deliberations’ rarely aim to inform and shape public opinion to same extent as formal parliamentary deliberation.

The discussion of Westminster models in liberal democracies indicates that parliament, as an “agent of regime change” (Longley, & Hoffman 2007, p.131), has to be constantly ready and able to evolve in line with political transformation in a given nation. On reflection, even the British Parliament as the “mother of parliaments” (in particular of the majoritarian system) inevitably has to deal with and cannot avoid the political changes that occur in the wider political community.

### **2.3 Beyond Westminster-style Parliaments**

Beyond the Westminster model, the emergence of an increasing number of non-Westminster parliamentary democracies since the end of the Cold War has stimulated new interest among scholars interested in parliament as a democratic institution (Bergman, et al., 2000; Waldegrave, 1995). The focal point of discussions is how historical background has influenced the models adopted and the efforts that have been made in promoting, enhancing, stabilising and consolidating democracy (Linz, 1994; Sartori, 1994; Siaroff, 2003). This is useful for this study to compare the extent democratic ideas have penetrated and been institutionalised in the Malaysian Parliament.

Most of the parliamentary systems in liberal democracies, specifically in Europe, have evolved gradually through incremental steps from absolute monarch to a democratic system since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, different trends have been experienced by the new emerging democracies such as those in Central and Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union (see Gherghina, 2011; Illonskzi & Olson, 2011; Kopecky, 2004; Olson & Illonskzi, 2011; Olson & Norton, 2008) and former European colonies in Africa (see Allmark, 2012; Azevedo-Harman, 2011a, 2011b; Nijzink, Mozaffar & Azevedo, 2007) and Asia (see Allmark, 2012; Norton, 1998b; Norton & Ahmed, 1998; Park, 1998; Rüländ et al., 2005). Drawing on these cases, what we can learn is that different paths have been taken by the new emerging parliamentary democracies in the former communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union as well as the establishment of parliamentary institutions in Asia

and Africa in seeding and/or restoring democracy. The Central and Eastern European, the former Soviet Union, and the Asian and African experiences may provide significant insights for this study in terms of how democracy can be installed and restored using different deliberation mechanisms. In other words, the various parliamentary systems that have been established in these regions are not necessarily following the same footsteps that have been taken by the existing liberal democracies to date. Therefore, the deliberation types and mechanisms used may differ in terms of the mediation structure and sites for deliberation, most likely because of the different political cultures and historical circumstances experienced by the citizens in the nations.

At the start of the post-communist era, Olson and Norton (1996) suggested that the political development in Central and Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union could be conceptualised as a period of “parliaments in adolescence.” Later, Olson and Norton (2008) divide these former communist regimes into two groups, the *post-communist parliaments* and the *post-Soviet parliaments*. The first group, the post-communist parliaments, comprises the Central and Eastern European countries that are members of the EU, such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia, which do not have a great attachment to past practices. The second group, the post-Soviet parliaments, comprises the former countries of the old Soviet Union such as Moldova, Russia and the Ukraine, which still retain the “phraseology” of the Soviet era in terms of political culture (Illonskzi, & Olson, 2011, p. 117; Olson, & Illonszki, 2011). Such findings suggest that the characteristics of the political attachment of “post-colonial or ideology colonialism” are different from one country to another country. On one hand, countries such the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, which in retrospect have embraced the ideology of “democracy” prior to the communist era, and are culturally “European,” have been able to transition to democracy faster and more smoothly than other countries, following the footsteps of the Western European states in establishing and celebrating democracy in their political systems. On the other hands, the newly emerged and independent countries of the post-Soviet Union, such as Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia, found it more difficult to adjust to new political ideologies and systems that were introduced to them. Thus the post-Soviet parliaments have the tendency to fall back on the old Soviet system practices in creating new governance processes.

The Central and Eastern European and the former Soviet Union country trends in adopting democratic parliamentary systems indicate that local political cultures and norms matter in promoting democracy and how they have patterned citizen preferences. The Central and Eastern European and the former Soviet Union country experiences in (re)-adopting parliamentary democratic systems mirror the development of Westminster model across the former British Empire previously. This study suggests that countries that had a close attachment to the British political cultures and values due to the presence of the European descendants in these societies, which in turn fostered the firm establishment of Westminster models, at least in comparison with former colonies that shared rather different political cultures and values and whose societies were less dominated by European descendants. On one hand, of the *transplanted Westminster* countries such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Bahamas adopted and adjusted to the Westminster model easier because of the close attachment to the British and the presence of European descendants in the wider society. On the other hand, the *implanted Westminster* former colonies such as Malaysia, India and Pakistan adopted the system as part of the bargaining process to gain independence. As they observed different norms, values, belief and political cultures from the British, they ultimately found it difficult to adjust the model and this created a few political conflicts or eventually resulted in the departure from the system. However, this is not to suggest that the transplanted Westminster and implanted Westminster nations have nothing in common. As this study examines in the next chapters, the historical, native political system and political values do play a role in dismissing or consolidating the fundamental concept of democracy and the functions of parliament in non-Western countries, namely Malaysia.

In Asia, a different scenario can be said about the development of scholarly studies on parliamentary system in Asia as compared to those in the Central and Eastern European countries. According to Norton and Ahmed (1998), the Central and Eastern European countries' smooth transition to democracy and rapid democratisation from the communist system have diverted the intention and focus on parliamentary democracy scholarly works there and thus, has caused the parliamentary "democratic revolution" in Asia to be sidelined or overlooked. Consequently (with the exception of India and Japan), little is known about the processes of law making in legislatures in Asia, be it from a theoretical or empirical point of view. This of course includes the study of Malaysia. As I presented briefly in the preceding chapter and will elaborate in details in the next chapter, the Malaysian Parliament as a public

and democratic political institution is one of the least studied topics in Malaysian political studies.

Lack of interest in comparative studies on parliaments in Asia is understandable. One of the difficulties in studying parliamentary systems in Asia is to find a common ground to analyse the different cases. Ethnicity, belief systems, cultural values and colonial factors are intertwined with the political systems in most Asian countries, which limit the comparative potential to examine the parliaments in contrast to the study of Western legislatures (Norton, & Ahmed, 1998; Rüländ, et al., 2005). Although there is a basic similarity between the parliaments in India, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Thailand, Pakistan, the Maldives and Nepal, the very different and diverse political cultures and traditions amongst them do not guarantee data comparability, especially when the issue of deliberative practices is factored into the equation. However, one obvious similarity is that all these Asian countries have a simple majority system of electoral system despite the differences in parliament structure (unicameral or bicameral), voting renewal (compulsory or non-compulsory), and legislature tenure (three to five years) (Norton, & Ahmed, 1998, p.9).

Existing literature here indicates to us one similarity with Malaysia in which historical legacies, and local political cultures and norms to some extent, determine legislative institutional change. Historical background to some extent has influenced the process of adopting a new system or the transition to a new system.

## **2.4 Engaging Citizens with Parliament**

Bergman et al. (2000) argues that that many writings on parliamentary studies have a tendency to omit debates about what makes parliament democratic, concentrating instead on the impacts of constitutional differences in governmental approaches towards democracy and political stability. The conventional definitions are inadequate to describe the ever-growing and changing nature of the parliamentary system that to some extent has evolved on the basis of local or regional political, cultural or common historical background, which are incorporated into these parliamentary systems. Bergman et al. (2000, p.256) are concerned about the narrowness of the thinking in academic discussions on parliamentarism as being merely about:

[A] relationship between the executive and legislative branches of government...[and] modern accounts of parliamentary democracy do not tend to

give pride of place to parliament...[hence] they have also tended to ignore democracy itself.

The role played by the executive in policy-making to some extent has shifted the focus from parliament as a guide of democracy to the executive role in strengthening or weakening democracy. This development occurred because parliamentary systems have been dominated by the executive while the legislative function seems to appear to legitimise the executive's political agenda (Bochell & Defty, 2012; Matthew, 2011; Miragliotta & Errington, 2012; Monk, 2012; Paun, 2011). Nonetheless, new efforts have been undertaken in studying parliament and authors have increasingly shown an interest in examining the relationship between citizens and parliament over the last decade, both in regards to the Westminster and non-Westminster systems of liberal democracies. Unfortunately, existing studies have been limited to examining liberal democracies.

Attempts have been made by a few, such as Norton (2005, 2012) to examine the relationship between parliament and its citizens. Norton, based on his previous work *Does Parliament Matter?* in 1993 included a few extended and updated insights in his analysis of the British Parliament and the public. As a body that legitimises public policy, the parliament is central for democracy and the process of democratisation. In theory, parliament is the arena where the legislature transmits the power that it has been granted by citizens to the executive (Norton, 2002, 2012). A range of literature has focussed on the parliament-citizen relationship in terms of how parliamentary government promotes popular sovereignty that protects individual freedom as well as the balance between the executive and the legislative branches (Clark & Wilford, 2012; Henn & Foard, 2012; Leston-Bandeira, 2012; Sloam, 2012; Street, Inthorn & Scott, 2012; Walker, 2012). They suggest that the discussion on parliamentarism should go beyond executive-legislative debates to include how citizens are allowed to influence policy outcomes and strengthen the transparency and accountability of parliament (Leston-Bandeira, 2012).

Norton's works (1993, 1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2002, 2012, 2005) are probably among the most extensive analyses that have been carried out in examining the gradual evolution of the British Parliament from the industrial revolution until the contemporary era. Norton's works provide insights, firstly into the formal functions of parliament in a Westminster system as a key body within politics in general, and secondly, in his later works (Norton, 2005, 2012) he also highlights the important role that organised interests have played in the formation of

political party systems, and in linking notions of democracy to the British Parliament (see also Ballinger, 2011; Dufour, Jenson, & Saint-Martin, 2011; Matthew, 2011; Paun, 2011). These organised interests, however, only made more substantial impacts in lobbying for public interests from the 1970s. How organised interest groups have gradually penetrated and influenced the parliament policy-making in the British Parliament can be used to analyse and understand the relationship between parliament and citizens in Malaysia, taking into account that executive dominance in the United Kingdom and Malaysia obviously prevail in the relationship between the executive and parliament. The scenario in the British Parliament can be used as an example to shed light on and understand how and to what extent the executive has taken seriously the role played by the civil society which this thesis will explore in subsequent chapters.

Through the republicanism lens, Uhr (1998) uses deliberative assembly of the Australian Parliament to analyse the impacts of citizen involvement and engagement with the parliament. He analyses the parliamentary practices related to the deliberative process of the representation and legislation in the parliament deliberative assembly using partisanship to understand deliberation. Uhr's deliberative assembly signifies "a legislature with structured and public processes of decision-making" (p. 93) and partisanship can be used "to energise rather than marginalise the deliberative process" (p. 82). A responsible government will use parliament as a deliberative assembly to represent, legislate and be accountable to citizens that inherit the partisanship tradition rather than pretending to be an "assembly of independents" (p.61). According to Uhr, independent views can be more easily manipulated by the executive, which has an information and power advantage over "independent" MPs. However, he argues that federalism provides a better solution for checking and balancing the executive and central government power in political deliberation because policy responsibilities are divided between the federal and state governments. However, the Australian Parliament's governance system cannot be translated to the Malaysian Parliament because the Malaysian federal system has stronger tendency towards centralisation, and Lijphart (1999, 2008) has coined the term *quasi federal* to describe the relationship between central and states power in the Malaysian system.

Increasingly, scholarly works have argued that in the new millennium, the parliament needs to cope with more diverse interest groups and the new media to remain relevant to the public especially in policy-making (Arnold, 2012; Jann, 2001). Civil society movements and the use



of new media in contemporary politics have forced many governments in democracies to revisit the role of parliament, especially in those democracies where parliament had been considered merely as a rubber stamp to the executive (Griffith, & Leston-Bandeira, 2012; Hough, 2012; Leston-Bandeira, 2012). The changing environment in involving and engaging citizens more in policy-making, in particular with the emerging role of civil society, has resulted in the emergence of new perspectives in theorising the phenomenon of parliament-citizen relationship. Theorising parliament-citizen relations beyond liberal democracies, however, creates challenges if we fail to understand the complexity of the political norms and values that are observed by the society, this being particularly so in non-Western countries. According to Weiss (2006, p. 9), civil society in an illiberal democracy such as Malaysia is “a realm rather than as a specific set of actors” and therefore works differently compared to those in Western practice.

The lack of interest in analysing the parliament-citizen nexus is not exclusive to the Malaysian Parliament. There are certain aspects of parliamentary democracy that remain under-scrutinised, although recently there has been a growing interest in the relationship between parliament and citizens, mainly in European countries. Empirical investigations of parliament-citizens relations that have been carried out in the liberal democracies in Europe, namely the Netherlands (Andeweg, 2012), Finland (Arter, 2012), France (Costa, et al., 2012), Germany (Saalfeld & Dobmeier, 2012), the United Kingdom (Norton, 2012), Portugal (Leston-Bandeira & Tiburcio, 2012), and Italy (Russo & Verzichelli, 2012), show that the use of new media to make the parliament more open and accessible to citizens has narrowed the gap between citizen and parliament. However, the use of technology and the efforts of parliament to engage citizens directly have not completely eliminated citizen distrust of the legislative processes and power, which is similar in Malaysia (details in chapter three). Findings from the mentioned works indicate that the public perceive representatives to be linked with citizens only during elections. Although there have been improvements in involving citizens more in parliamentary affairs, the distrust shown by citizens towards the legislatures means it will take time for progress to be made in strengthening these relationships.

Beyond the European countries, Arnold (2012) examines the emergence of new parliamentary governments in different regimes as well as the restoration of parliamentary institutions in Latin American countries such as Brazil, Argentina, Costa Rica, Chile,

Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua. He argues that developing citizen-parliament connections (CPCs) is vital for enhancing, establishing or restoring democracy in those states. However, the citizens are often unresponsive to parliament's effort to engage people as their level of confidence in legislative initiatives is low.

Perhaps, one way to sum up this discussion is by posing a few questions that this study addresses further in the following chapters. As an arena of political party contestation, how accountable is the parliament in deliberating on citizens' concerns? A further question could be: what would it take for parliament to engage the public and represent the best interests of the citizens through their members? These questions will be examined further in the following chapters.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

Comparisons made with other parliaments in this chapter will help to generate a new perspective as well as add to existing generalised findings. Describing how other parliaments established fundamental empirical points in constructing the understandings of the Malaysian Parliament's deliberative practices. Generally, a striking feature and similarity of the Westminster models across nations is the existence of a strong executive in the legislative body. Interaction between the executive, parliament, and citizens, has institutionalised the parliaments in the various Westminster systems in line with local norms, cultures and values. On one hand, the structure of parliaments in the Westminster systems of the liberal democracies, however, has remained almost the same (with the exception of New Zealand). On the other hand, the Westminster systems in illiberal democracies and non-Western countries have been re-established and re-designed based on local political conditions.

Existing definitions of parliamentary regime types do not sufficiently enlighten our understanding of parliamentary democracy because often scholarly works have concentrated on the balance of power between the branches of government (Leston-Bandeira, 2012; Strøm, 2000). This trend has marginalised studies on parliament and its relationship with citizens in terms of their influence or actual input into policy making, despite the citizens being central to any definition of democracy (Strøm, 2000). Nonetheless, since the emergence of the good governance concept, the Westminster systems also have gradually opened up to citizens' direct participation, engagement and involvement as a way to enhance the legitimacy and accountability of public institutions. In theory, deliberative democracy may fit well with the

elements of good governance. However, there are limitations and constraints when trying to mediate the public citizen and government preferences into public policy.

New trends have also occurred when parliament is not the sole institution that effectively makes policy, as the nature of society has changed and the direct roles of citizens in rectifying some public policies and budgets have become prominent trends in both Westminster and other parliamentary democracies, such as in established systems like in Canada and Ireland, as well as in an emerging economy such as Brazil (Nylen, 2003; Smith, 2009). The ability of the state to adapt to changes in society's beliefs, systems, values and norms points to the value of the flexibility of parliamentary systems to evolve and deliberate. Since the 1980s, the policy-making structures for public policy in many democracies have become more people oriented.

One of the biggest challenges for parliaments to remain relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century relates to the ability to adapt from merely being involved in policy-making and public management to implementing good governance that embraces "good policy-making" and "good public management" (Jan, 2001). There is a trend toward increasing consideration of how parliaments, if they want to stay relevant, *should* or *could* respond to new relationships between public institutions and citizens in many advanced democracies. In sum, the gradual evolution of the Westminster model, the existence of hybrid regimes, and the new emerging democracies of parliamentary democracy, however, has led to an accumulation of research and discussion in a "grey zone" related to specific descriptions or prescriptions about parliament. That is to say, that parliamentary democracy was not established deliberately as one type of regime institution like the presidential system. The question to ponder is whether a Westminster model can cater for deliberation robust enough to reflect the citizens' concerns and also be responsible and accountable politically and economically to citizens.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Readdressing Studies on the Malaysian Parliament**

In exploring deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament, this chapter examines several categories of literature related specifically to the Malaysian Parliament and democracy discourses in Malaysia. Alongside this, the literature on the rising middle class and growth of civil society organisations is also reviewed because these emergent new actors in contemporary Malaysian politics are significant. The area of the literature assists in understanding how and to what extent the existence of these two non-state actors might re-shape the MP-citizen relations and the deliberative practices in Malaysia.

In this chapter, I investigate the Malaysian Parliament, largely as a set of institutional arrangements, in order to question the extent to which there are arenas or political spaces where deliberation could take place. There are very few studies on the Malaysian Parliament, its operations, and how parliamentarians interact with each other and with their constituents. The few that do exist are reviewed in this chapter, and they have tended to focus on the executive-parliament relations or are quite biographical. This chapter provides a more micro-level examination of the potential opportunities and constraints that the Malaysian parliamentarians might face in undertaking deliberation.

#### **3.1. Parliament and Malaysian Political Studies**

In 2005, Abdullah Badawi, the fifth Prime Minister (October 2003–April 2009) announced his idea that the Malaysian Parliament should become a “first-world parliament” and that this would be achieved by restoring Parliament’s power to govern its administration autonomously (as mentioned in chapter 1) (Chow, 2005). By proposing this goal, Abdullah hoped to promote and enhance the legitimacy, transparency and accountability of parliament towards citizens. He aimed at transforming the Malaysian Parliament to become more like the other Westminster parliaments in liberal democracies. Abdullah’s notion of a first world-parliament, however, ultimately focused on administration aspects only without recognising the importance of establishing formal parliamentary select committees and citizen engagement in policy-making.

To achieve the first-world parliament status, a few Malaysian politicians have highlighted the importance of parliamentary select committees, the politics of knowledge, wisdom and service of the MPs’ performances in enhancing parliament-citizen relations that I elaborate in

detail in chapter five (Malike, 2010; Saifuddin, 2008; See Loh, & Surin, 2011). Their suggestions reflect the current political and demographic changes in Malaysia. The prime motivation for providing suitable forums and engaging citizens in policy-making is to address the growing cynical opinions amongst Malaysians toward the government's agenda (Lim Kit Siang, DR.18.2.2009; Saifuddin, 2008; Zaid, 2009). In reaction to the Prime Minister's suggestion, Lim Kit Siang (the Ipoh Timur MP) when debating the agenda to make the Malaysian Parliament a first-world parliament said,

A world class parliament in the first world is fully committed toward renovation and modernisation such as having parliamentary select committees with ministries accountable to select committees (Lim Kit Siang, DR.18.2.2009).

Lim's view is not uncommon in the literature on the governance of the Malaysian Parliament in particular and Malaysian politics in general.

There was hardly any work published on the Malaysian Parliament from social science field in the 1980s and 1990s as briefly mentioned in chapter one. However, the trend changed after works were published to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Malaysian Parliament (Ahmad Atory, 2010; Chamil, 2009; Loh, & Surin, 2011; Wan Junaidi, 2010). In this chapter, the literature review of the Malaysian Parliament is organised into three sections: (1) empirical studies; (2) politicians' accounts; (3) a brief consideration of scholarly textbooks and legal perspectives on parliamentary reform.

As an institution that makes laws, it is expected that most research and scholarship dedicated to the Malaysian Parliament will concentrate on legal perspectives, with additional focus on constitutional issues (for example Abdul Aziz, 2006, 2009a, 2009b; Faridah, 2009; Harding, 1993; Harding, & Lee, 2007; Suffian, Lee, & Trindale, 1978; Wan Azhar, 2009). Often the concept of separation of powers between the legislative, executive and judiciary is the focus of these studies. Therefore, their discussion and explanation is primarily mechanical and technical. Emphasis is given to the competing powers of the three different branches with the parliament. Attention is directed toward parliament's technical and legal functions rather than the avenues and process of citizen engagement with parliament. Nonetheless, these works provide a foundation for understanding the arguments made in this study about the challenges and limitations that MPs face when carrying out their duties.

Musolf and Springer's (1979) study can be considered as the pioneering empirical study of the Malaysian Parliament in contemporary Malaysian politics. Their work contributes to the knowledge about representation and decision-making of the Malaysian Parliament, which is still very limited in the 21st century. Although Musolf and Springer do not consider the parliament as a forum for citizen engagement, their work is foundational for the present study. I, therefore, review their work at length because it analyses the interconnections between legislator, party and electorate in the Malaysian Parliament. For example, Musolf and Springer take into consideration the significance of ethnic relations and see ethnic issues in Malaysia as the core issue when analysing the Malaysian parliamentary system. They examine legislators' perceptions and the impact of these perceptions on representative politics and policy-making in the Malaysian Parliament.

Musolf and Springer's inspiration for their study came from the assumptions held by previous Western scholars about the "flabbiness" of legislatures in developing countries, assumptions that were made without understanding the local geopolitics. "Flabbiness" refers to the dominant role played by a few politicians in decision-making and thus indicated that most lawmakers were ineffective and did not play an important role in decision-making. The conclusions made from the Western perspective were also based on certain functions of legislators in developing countries that were uncommon in liberal democracies, such as MPs acting more like mediators and more involved in economic development than law-making. The focus of MPs was, in particular, to bring economic development to rural constituencies of the *kampung* (villages) community. Interestingly, Musolf and Springer's findings are to some extent still relevant in today's Malaysia; although the economy, political situation and social relations have changed (I examine the impact of these changes further in chapter five).

Musolf and Springer argue that Malaysia is a classic example of a multi-ethnic society state that can be used to understand the Westminster parliamentary model in the developing world. The literature from the 1970s tends to argue that Malaysia was a highly divided communal society that was multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-lingual and multi-cultural as the result of the European colonialism, yet politically stable and economically better off than other third-world countries that were part of the former British Empire (Vasil, 1971; von Vorys, 1975). Furthermore, the Malaysian Westminster-style parliament was seen to have been adapted and moulded by its domestic political environment. Malaysia, emerging as a new nation from colonial racial fragmentation, used economic policy to restructure its society (Berger, 2009;

Shamsul, 1986; Tarling, 2001). Thus, collective parliamentary representation with the executive as the central power prevails in the Malaysian Parliament, and this has impeded individual legislators' activities (Johnson & Milner, 2005).

Although there are similarities between the research frameworks of the present study and Musolf and Springer's in terms of analysing how MPs' perceptions impact policy-making in the Malaysian Parliament, I do not use ethnic relations as a focal point when advancing the arguments of this thesis.<sup>42</sup> To a large extent, the methods and methodology employed in the two studies also contrast significantly. In this thesis, only qualitative research methods are employed; while Musolf and Springer undertook interviews, they used quantitative analysis techniques to analyse the collected data. I focus on MPs' perceptions of the citizen-parliament relations pertinent to deliberative practices using interpretivism and a case study. This can be contrasted with Musolf and Springer's institutionalism focused approach to examining the legislators-parliament relationship through MPs' perceptions. Even if the similarities exist between the two studies, the differences in the time frame mean this study will still make a significant contribution to Malaysian studies.

Musolf and Springer carried out their interviews in 1975, five years after the introduction of the NEP. In the 1970s, Malaysia was still an agricultural nation (a third-world country) with a poverty rate of about 43.9 per cent (1975) (Shireen, 1998, p. 48). There was only a small middle class population and the urbanisation process was mainly concentrated around Kuala Lumpur (Klang Valley) and Georgetown (Penang) (Leete, 2007; Rahimah, 2012; Sowell, 2004). Today, Malaysia is an industrialised nation (a NIC), with a poverty rate of about 3.8 per cent (2009) (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 13 Sept. 2012). There is now a large middle class population that is driving the rapid urbanisation process nationwide (Abdul Rahman, 2006; Leete, 2007; Rahimah, 2012; Sowell, 2004). Taking into consideration all of the changes that have occurred, it will be interesting and valuable to examine how the way the Malaysian Parliament has governed has changed over the same period.

Another work that examines MPs' perceptions is by Ahmad Atory (2010). He analysed the roles and duties of the Malaysian MPs in 2006 through 2007. Like most books on Malaysian Parliament written by Malaysians (see for examples Ahmad, 1969; Chamil, 2009; Wan Junaidi, 2010), he puts the most emphasis on the historical perspectives prior to the

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<sup>42</sup> Taking into consideration the political history and political development of Malaysia, however, this study inevitably touches on ethnicity and religious matters in the country.

establishment of Malaya/Malaysia. He details the MPs' perceptions of their role rather extensively, which can be used to compare with the interview findings of this study. Atory however, does not clearly describe the methodology he used, in particular his methods for gathering data, the background of participants, and the number of participants recruited.

Another useful survey is the handbook *Understanding the Dewan Rakyat* edited by Loh and Surin (2011), which offers a richer insight into Malaysian MPs. The compilation of MPs' views through an online survey provides a useful complement to the interviews and Hansard. In order to educate citizens on parliamentary affairs, the handbook mainly focused on six key issues concerning democracy in the Malaysian Parliament and was initially generated from the *MP Watch: Eye on Parliament* project by the Nut Graph in early 2010 to create awareness amongst voters of what their MPs stood for. The project concentrated on the impact of the current legislative process, Islamisation, the Internal Security Act (ISA), access to information, and the separation of powers in Malaysia. These issues have often been used as case studies in other empirical studies examining civil society and democracy in Malaysia.

Loh and Surin provide readers with both analytical and primary source sections. The latter includes interview transcripts, published without accompanying empirical analysis. This provides a comprehensive compilation of MPs' views on current issues related to policy, law, and institutional reform in Malaysia. Meanwhile, the analytical section is concerned with the technical elements of the Malaysian Parliament from a legalistic perspective. MPs' views were captured through the online interviews that were undertaken by the Nut Graph in February to July, 2010. The Nut Graph sent six online questions to all MPs of the House of Representatives. Out of the 222 MPs, 109 did not respond to the survey. Unlike this study, the interview questions for the *MP Watch* project were structured, standardised and guided to control the subject under investigation. The six questions asked were related to the ISA, the Information Act, the impact of Islam in Malaysia, the separation of powers, the MPs' roles, and parliamentary integrity.

Taking a different tack, Malike and Musliza (2010) focus on the role of opposition MPs to explore the democratic system in the Malaysian Parliament. Malike and Musliza argue that the role the opposition plays in the Malaysian politics has been sidelined (see also Loh & Surin, 2011). Although the roles and responsibilities of opposition MPs are the same as those of government MPs, their existence has been perceived by the executive as a negative impact on establishing a dynamic nation (Abdul Aziz, 2006; Malike, & Musliza, 2010). The



ineffectual presence of the opposition in the Malaysian Parliament has for decades meant opposition MPs have been unable to exercise checks and balances on cabinet decisions. The Parliament is thus left merely to legitimate laws without legislating them. The role of the opposition was also described by Abdul Aziz (2006), who argues that the opposition MPs in Malaysia are still important to check and balance the government and act as a “pressure group” to protect the citizens, despite the government’s effort to sideline them.

In addition to the literature that has the Malaysian Parliament as its main subject (Ahmad Atory, 2010; Chamil, 2009; Loh & Surin, 2011; Musolf & Springer, 1979; Wan Junaidi, 2010), Johnson and Milner (2005) provide a comprehensive analysis of the implantation and evolution of the Westminster system in the Malaysian Parliament. Johnson and Milner’s analysis traces the adoption and adaptation as well as the consequences of the Westminster model from the Federation of Malay Lands prior to the independence of Malaya in 1957 up to the first year of Badawi’s administration. Johnson and Milner’s work outlines how the Westminster model was adopted from the colonial framework while at the same time incorporating the traditional Malay feudal system of *kerajaan* (sultanate system) in which the sultan and *istana* (palace) had the ultimate power to make final decisions over and above his *pembesar* (the cabinet members). The traditional polity in today’s Malaysia is represented by the Prime Minister (as the “sultan”) and the Prime Minister’s Department (as the *istana*), which have the power to oversee parliamentary affairs and decision-making for the nation, meaning the Parliament (as the *pembesar*) legislates only symbolically by following the executive’s agenda (see also Milner, 1995, 2012).

What becomes evident from these analyses is that, similar to other Westminster systems, the executive branch of the Malaysian government is the core and central driver of policy-making. The legislature as a parliamentary forum, however, has been utilised by the cabinets of the same government since 1957 to perpetuate their power while continuing to fulfil the citizens’ economic needs and physical development. In the words of Johnson and Milner (2005, p. 82),

The many changes made over time have generally served to strengthen the hand of the executive, which nonetheless has a vested interest in continuing to foster the ‘traditions of the parliamentary ideal’.

The cabinet ministers have been resistant to redesigning the traditional characteristics of the Westminster model that were implanted by the British colonials because the model is

politically advantageous for the incumbent government. Therefore the Malaysian Parliament, while reflective of the Westminster model, does not mirror precisely the Westminster democratic practices evident in Western countries.

Several works on the Malaysian Parliament authored by politicians have also been published in recent years. For example, Wan Junaidi (2009),<sup>43</sup> Saifuddin (2008) and Zaid (2009) have documented their experiences as MPs and cabinet members in the ruling government.<sup>44</sup> Their works are valuable as they present their personal accounts and views based on their hands-on experiences in the government and in dealing with the Malaysian Parliament. Saifuddin (2008) and Zaid (2009) examine the trend of parliamentary democracy in Malaysia using their personal experiences and capacity as government MPs/senators and cabinet members. Saifuddin's work is more concerned with governance and policy-making in Malaysia while Zaid emphasises more on the Malay aspects of the ruling government. They evaluate how the BN has governed Malaysia and highlight the consequences for contemporary Malaysian politics. They argue that the political culture that has been practised by the BN, and in particular by the UMNO, is one of the reasons for the neglect in nourishing the involvement and engagement of citizens directly in policy-making. As cabinet members, both Saifuddin and Zaid had direct involvement in government administration. There is nothing new about what has been highlighted in these books, but Saifuddin's book was extraordinary in the Malaysian political arena because the author was still an MP and cabinet member of the BN when it was published. As described by Abdul Hamid Mohammad, a retired Chief Justice of Malaysia, in reviewing the book,

Even though what he says is nothing that the public have not heard or know about, the difference is that the author is currently in office. In Malaysia, usually, one becomes critical of his colleagues, his office or his party when he is out of it, not when he is still inside. This is a welcome development (Saifuddin, 2008, p. xii).

Saifuddin's (2008) and Zaid's (2009) accounts show interesting contrasts with Ahmad Atory's findings concerning what government MPs perceived as good values to hold when carrying out their role and duty. Based on Ahmad Atory's (2010, pp. 63–68) findings, there

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<sup>43</sup> I review Wan Junaidi's work under the "textbook" category.

<sup>44</sup> In the 12th parliament, Wan Junaidi (2010) was the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Santubung MP, and Saifuddin (2008) was a deputy minister and the Temerloh MP. Zaid (2009) was a former minister, senator and MP, under both Mahathir and Abdullah.

are two important criteria, amongst others, that MPs should have: (1) academic qualification and experience,<sup>45</sup> and (2) personality and attitude.<sup>46</sup> What can be learnt from Ahmad Atory's findings is that government MPs do not necessarily practise what they preach. This explains why the citizens' support of the BN has been gradually declining; there have only been limited efforts taken by the government to prevent the negative influence of "money politics, corruption, sabotaging, parachute candidates, cronyism, nepotism, quick rich politics, clown politicians and others" (Saifuddin, 2008, p. 3; see also Gomez & Jomo, 1999; Zaid, 2009). These practices have been engraved in Malaysia's political culture where the MPs spend money to buy votes to gain positions as political leaders in the BN rather than representing the citizens. Many of the government MPs are not able to digest the notion of engaging citizens in policy-making and the importance of political integrity and being knowledgeable (Saifuddin, 2008; Zaid, 2009).

In contemporary Malaysian politics being knowledgeable is not a criterion for an MP hoping to be appointed as a cabinet member. Often the MPs who are in favour with the elite will be appointed by the government rather than the most capable and knowledgeable politicians (Abdul Aziz, 2006; Zaid, 2009). The "knowledge crisis" in government has produced many flawed public policies because intellectual and academic debates are considered bad for the executive image and disrespectful to the leaders in terms of "Asian Values" (Barr, 2002; Wain, 2009). This culture is well described by Saifuddin (2008, p. 15),

Some political parties do not like to organise intellectual programmes. Even if such programmes are indeed organised, too much time, energy and funds are wasted on the officiation ceremonies in which more often than not, the front seats are occupied by individuals who are not interested in knowledge but are rather more concerned with keeping up appearances with the official officiating the ceremony. As soon as the official leaves the ceremony, these people would

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<sup>45</sup> Ahmad Atory claims that 100 per cent of the respondents agreed that obtaining tertiary education was important. However, there are a significant number of MPs – especially among the government – who do not have a degree. However, Ahmad Atory found that when asked about what types of experience were important for an MP to have, 98 per cent of his respondents said politics and parties; 96 per cent said administration, and 95.1 per cent said community work. Although Ahmad Atory stated that professional work experiences such as those of a lawyer, doctor, businessman, etc. were important, no percentage is given. Most of the opposition MPs have graduated from tertiary education and have backgrounds in the professional fields.

<sup>46</sup> Ahmad Atory indicates the characteristics that government MPs believed they must display are honesty (100%), dedication (100%), committed (100%), people-oriented (100%), wise (100%), accountable (98%), fair and just (97%), generous (94.1%), and religious (90.1%) The third criteria is leadership ethics such as visionary (100%), responsive (100%), sensitive (100%), transparent (96.1%), innovative (96%), entrepreneur (75.2%), and professional (72.3%).

then leave as well....[T]hose who remain until the end of the programme are those who are actually interested in gaining knowledge, but are not likely to climb the ladder of a party where the culture is as such.

Interestingly, “consensual” rather than “confrontational” is one of the elements often associated with “Asian Values.” The consensual concept is an objective of deliberative democracy in consolidating policy-making amongst the different actors. Authors (see Avonious, & Kingsbury, 2008; Barr, 2002; Heryanto, & Mandal, 2003) have criticised the Asian Values because they have been propagated by the authoritarian leaders to justify their actions (I elaborate on this later in the chapter). Thus, the comparability of Asian Values with democratic ideas has been dismissed, even though the concept of consensus could be compatible with deliberative democracy.

Beyond this, most available works are best classified as textbooks (Ahmad, 1969; Chamil, 2009; Wan Junaidi, 2010) and seldom include a critical and empirical analysis of the parliament, reviewing instead the structures, governance bodies and functions of parliament. These works are best described as being merely descriptive and/or narrative in nature. Works by Wan Junaidi (2010) and Chamil (2009) are worth reviewing here, however. Both Chamil (2009) and Wan Junaidi (2010) trace the evolution of the Malaysian Parliament from the British era in the Malay Peninsula to the establishment of Malaya/Malaysia. Wan Junaidi highlights more the role of the speakers than parliament as an institution. This book is a personal account of the author rather than an academically presented empirical analysis. The book provides the readers with historical perspectives on the Malaysian Parliament’s evolution which have been organised chronologically. Chamil meanwhile provides insights on the development of the Malaysian Parliament from the first to the twelfth term. He discusses parliamentary practices and the cabinet system in Malaysia and like most books on the Malaysian Parliament, Chamil focuses more on legal elements, albeit from a journalistic perspective. As textbooks, the lengthy discussions of the evolution and quotations are not supported by any references. Nonetheless, these books provide a strong foundation for readers to understand the background and the evolution of the Malaysian Parliament. These personal accounts and experiences in dealing with parliamentary administration are useful to differentiate between the theory and practice of the parliament.

### 3.2 Democracy and Malaysian Political Studies

The concept of deliberative democracy is new in the literature concerning democracy in Malaysia because mainstream Western scholars have tended to categorise Malaysia as being an illiberal democracy, electoral autocracy, pseudo-democracy or quasi-democracy that is really a competitive authoritarian regime. In general, discussion of political institutions, governance, public policy, civil society and so forth in Malaysian studies is premised upon democratic discourse of the political economy, sociology, development studies and history disciplines.

Scholarly works conceptualise Malaysia with various terms and typologies to explain the level of democratic development in Malaysia. Depending on the approaches employed in their studies, the typologies used to describe democratisation in Malaysia vary. Besides Weiss's (2006) illiberal democracy, Malaysia has been classified as being a liberalising autocracy (Zakaria, 1997), a modified democracy (Crouch, 1993), a repressive-responsive regime (Crouch, 1996), a pseudo-democracy (Case, 2001, 2004, 2009), an electoral autocratic (Diamond, 2002), and a competitive authoritarian (Levitsky & Way, 2002). All of these scholarly works conclude that autocratic rules have undermined the check and balance mechanism of the parliament. Nevertheless, there is no consensus amongst the scholars as to what degree of authoritarianism or democracy make up the Malaysian system. Recent comments made by Greg Sheridan, the Australian foreign editor, are worth pondering when trying to understand the tensions in the practice of deliberation in Malaysia: "Malaysia on any measure is one of the most democratic and freewheeling nations in Southeast Asia. Its elections are certainly not perfect, but they are better than in most parts of the world" (Sheridan, 2013).

It has been argued that the BN government believes that elections are the means to measure democracy (Puthuchery, 2009; Wong, & Norani, 2009). Interestingly, the ruling government justifies its actions as necessary to ease inter-ethnic tension and to sustain socio-economic stability. Ethnic relations have been the most powerful political tool for the ruling government to "tame" Malaysians and prevent them from questioning and challenging authority (Gomez, 2004b; Heryanto, & Mandal, 2003; Loh, 2002; Shamsul, 1994; Van Vorys, 1975). As early as the 1970s, Abdul Razak, the second Malaysian Prime Minister (1970–1976) suggested that with the presence of different ethnicities, cultures and religions, Western democracy was not suitable for Malaysia. This sentiment later underpinned Prime

Minister Mahathir's (1981–2003) concept of "Asian Values." Razak emphasised that the ultimate goal of democracy in Malaysia was preserving political stability. Thus, if the promotion of democratic practices was seen to be breaking the harmony amongst the ethnicities in any way, it was deemed unacceptable.

The presence of ethnic politics as well as the rising ideological cleavages between the Malays, Chinese and Indians and the rise of nationalism amongst the Malays have been seen as the consequences of the British colonialism. The British brought Chinese and Indians to the Malay Peninsula without any intention of integrating them with the locals. In addition, the British attempted to introduce the Malayan Union (1945) that applied the *jus soli* concept to grant Malayan citizenship to immigrant Chinese and Indians. This was opposed by the Malays and this marked the beginning of nationalism amongst the Malays (for further insights see Milner, 1995; Tarling, 2001).<sup>47</sup> Recently, the consequences of the colonial legacy in Malaysia have been examined by Lange (2009). Lange analyses the long-term effects of the British legacy on state-building in Malaysia and Botswana. He argues that the "readjusting power relations and institutional changes" by the Malaysian elite politicians established political stability and economic prosperity in Malaysia (Lange, 2009, pp. 1–2) despite the existing plural society that spoke different languages, and was defined by different belief systems, culture and lifestyles.

Many analysts argue that BN has nurtured paternalistic politics that has emphasised elitism since Malaysia gained independence in 1957 (Gomez & Jomo, 1999; Loh, 2002, 2010; Puthuchery, 2010; Rodan, 2004). The Malaysian federal system has a strong paternalistic element (Jayum, 2009; Mohammad Agus, 2006) which in recent years has been challenged by demands from below for increased policy participation (Mohd Azizuddin, 2009, 2011; Verma, 2002b; Weiss, 2006). A paternalistic element in the governing of a state, however, does not necessarily mean authoritarianism but a "rentier state" in which the public sphere is very much under the state control (Sloane-White & Beaulieu, 2010, p. 328) (details in chapters five through seven). The paternalism of the federal system is strongly rooted in the Malaysian Parliament too.

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<sup>47</sup> The concept of "social contract" is used to "unify" the citizenry. "Social contract" refers to the consensus achieved between the Malay and non-Malays that was the basic framework for the Federated Malay States Constitution of 1948. Specifically it referred to the agreement made between the UMNO, MCA and MIC relating to Islam, Malay language, citizenship and the Malay (later the Bumiputera) privileges. The "social contract" remained in the Constitution of Malaysia, when it was established on 16 September, 1963 (Chamil, 2010, pp. 47–51).

Studies on semi-authoritarian/authoritarian regimes such as Malaysia and Singapore demonstrate that the paternalistic elements of the governing system contribute to sidelining or restricting the influence of citizens' preferences and views, both in policy-making and policy implementation. The citizens' preferences have been sidelined as a result of the bureaucratized polity that penetrates into the sphere of social development in authoritarian regimes (Ho, 2000; Jomo, & Wee, 2003). Ho (2000) argues that the expertise, technicality and methodological rationality of the bureaucrats and technocrats dominate the governance of the state, thus restricting citizen participation. In contrast, a few empirical works on the role of elite politicians in Malaysia by Sloane-White and Beaulieu (2010) and Van Donge (2012) have suggested that the government's role has contributed to political stability and economic prosperity in Malaysia. Van Donge (2012) argues that similar types of state-led development have had different effects in different countries. By undertaking a comparative study of Malaysia and Kenya, he shows how similar policies can produce different outcomes. While the paternalism of the Malaysian government has promoted socio-economic growth, Kenyan paternalism has failed to do so. Like South Korea, rent-seeking has to some extent benefited Malaysia's economy (Khan, 2000), but not the Philippines (Kang, 2002).

Paternalism and strong leadership have been identified as the key ingredient of Malaysia's success in maintaining political and economic stability. As Johnson and Milner (2005, p. 81) argue, "[t]he bicameral parliament has largely served as a mechanism for processing, rather than shaping or generating, legislation." Under Mahathir, the administration emphasised paternalism as being a critical element of Asian Values. Despite Malaysia's capitalist economic development, Asian Values were promoted by Mahathir as an alternative to the individualism and human rights that were championed by liberal democrats (see Barr, 2002; Weiss, & Saliha, 2003). Khoo (2002) and Zakaria (1994) argue that Asian Values are not conducive to consolidate democracy because the public spheres for citizens to be actively involved in social and political movements are restrained by authority (see also Weiss, 2006). Mahathir's Asian Values curbed and thwarted the development of civil society movements in Malaysia that I elaborate later in this chapter.

Because good government<sup>48</sup> prevails over good governance, Asian Values exemplify the state's efforts to depoliticise professionals, civil servants, students and the community as a

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<sup>48</sup> "Good government" denotes the concept of a responsible government. The former influential political leaders in Southeast Asia such as Lew Kuan Yew, Mahathir Mohamed and Suharto believed that a responsible

whole (see Ng, 1997; Sen, 1999; Thomson, 2001) by limiting their engagement in policy-making and only allowing them to participate in a particular forum that has been endorsed by the government, what this thesis calls a *forum by design*. Citizens' rights to communicate and associate with different political actors are thwarted and compromised by the involvement of government which decides what is best for citizens and curtails human rights movements. Nonetheless, the concept of good government as being an expectation of the Asian Values concept still prevails amongst the MPs that have administrative positions in the Malaysian cabinet (Barr, 2002; ; Loh & Surin, 2011; Saifuddin, 2008; Wan Junaidi, 2010; Zaid, 2009). The political thinking amongst senior ministers is still that a limitation on citizens' rights or civil liberties such as freedom of speech, gathering and so forth has allowed Malaysia to become one of the successful nations in Southeast Asia in terms of political stability and economic growth (Barr, 2002).

As the architect of modern Malaysia, many authors and scholarly works relevant to this study have been written on Mahathir's politics and leadership (see for example Ahmad, 2008; Ho, 2006; Hwang, 2003; Khoo, 2003; Milne, & Mauzy, 1999; Oii, 2003; Plate, 2011; Steward, 2003; Wain, 2009). In addition, Mahathir's political strategy and influence can be analysed in works written by him (see for example Mahathir, 1982, 1999, 2002, , 2010, 2011). During the Mahathir era, the Prime Minister had the final decision over whether legislation would be passed or not. The parliament became more rigid and less tolerant, and thus a passive culture amongst MPs was nurtured. In other words, Mahathir successfully altered parliament's culture by strengthening the executive dominance over the two branches of the parliament – the lower house and the upper house (Ho, 2003). Mahathir curtailed the legislature's voice in policy-making and the judiciary's role in interpreting the law independently (Abdul Aziz, 2006, 2009a; Faridah, 2009; Loh & Surin, 2011; Rais, 2006; Raja Noriza, & Norma, 2009).

Prior to the 12th general election, the Malaysian Parliament had become an institution for the government to demonstrate its electoral majority, formulate its policy, and announce its achievements. Under Mahathir, in order to produce fast-track decision-making related to public policy, he constrained deliberation locations for citizens and civil society by enforcing draconian laws (e.g., the ISA, the OSA) inherited from the British colonial governance. The top-down approach had been fully practiced in making decision, and thus deliberation only took place within state institutions. In other words, the decision-making had been made at the

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government only can be achieved through the top-down approach and that too much freedom given to public and civil society would impede economic growth and create political instability (see Mahbubani, 2004).



ministerial level or party level and then announced at the parliament without “truthful and factual” debates taking place amongst the legislators. With the parliament governance system that the government has implemented, as this study will elaborate later (chapters five to seven), attending the parliamentary sittings has become, to some extent, a “ritual ceremony” for many MPs. Most of the MPs did not participate or actively engage in the debates during Mahathir’s tenure as Prime Minister. Despite his critical view of how Mahathir ran Malaysia, Oii (2003) argues that the Malaysian style of democracy is still better compared to many other states in Asia in responding to and providing for the citizens’ basic needs and facilities. He also states that Mahathir was not a dictator as he was pictured by many international media. Oii also argues that it is wrong to assume that the solid support that Mahathir gathered during his tenure as Prime Minister was illegitimate.

It has often been argued that BN’s legitimacy and accountability, and the government’s actions in passing bills and implementing public policy, ultimately depends on the continuation of the relatively sound economic development that Malaysia has experienced since the 1980s (Gomez & Jomo, 1999; Loh, 2002). Like the case of Singapore, it comes as no surprise when the executive highlights its efficiency-based programmes and economic fundamentals to justify the government’s policies (Ho, 2000). The current system may suit the government’s agenda for the sake of efficiency, but it may also cultivate citizens’ feelings of alienation with respect to a system in which their voices are rarely heard (Case, 2001, 2004; Crouch, 1993; Puthuchery, 2005). The tendency for citizens to support a (semi)-authoritarian regime is greater when the elite politicians control political institutions as well as economic resources. To remain in power, the elite will constantly remind the citizens of the dangers of mass public and civil rights movements. The elite often rationalise their roles by using and/or manipulating certain sections in society such as when they insist that the freedom to speak in public forums will contribute to instability in the country (Altemeyer, 2004; Martin, 2001).

The term “new politics” emerged after the 10th general election (1999-2004) in response to BN’s poor performance. The topic of implementing good government had re-emerged but was buried again after BN won a large number of seats in the 11th general election in 1999 (Saifuddin, 2008). However, Oii (2003) argues that the 11th general election was the beginning of a new phase in Malaysian politics. For the first time the majority ethnicity, the Malays, were divided into two camps and had given a clear signal to the federal government (Oii, 2003). Malaysians expressed their discontent with the government in the 12th general

election and the BN, it was argued, had to overhaul its political framework to embrace a more democratic approach and increased openness to citizens' views (Transparency International-Malaysia, 2010; Zaid, 2009).

In an attempt to understand the impacts of the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997–1998 and political trends since the 12th general election, Mohd Azizuddin (2009, 2011) analysed the current political phenomena to assess the state of deliberative democracy in Malaysia. He examined the government's political will vis-à-vis pressures from the opposition, civil society and the influence of the Internet. Malaysia has just embraced the concept of deliberation, and Mohd Azizuddin (2009) argues that the 12th general election to some extent made the concept of deliberation visible in Malaysian politics as the government had no choice but to listen to citizens to remain in power. Prior to 2008, Mohd Azizuddin argues that deliberation occurred at the elite level only. Since then, civil society and the new media (especially the Internet) have created new ways of engaging citizens in policy-making. Mohd Azizuddin advances his case by using the sixth Prime Minister Najib Razak's (2004–present) concept of "1Malaysia." For Mohd Azizuddin, deliberative democracy occurs in Malaysia at the elite level of the coalition government only. The elite may fulfil the element of rational deliberation in making decisions for citizens as purported by Cooke (2000) but such policy-making is not considered deliberative in liberal democracies. The main reason for deliberation is to get consent from citizens through discussion and debate with their representatives in order to prevent the state's manipulation of the citizens (Bohnam, 1996; Cooke, 2000).

Mohd Azizuddin (2009, 2011) argues that both the government and the opposition have gradually incorporated the idea of deliberation in advocating for citizens' concerns. Because government support has declined since the 12th general election, there is an inclination to change the mind-set of the cabinet and to adopt a bottom-up approach that is people-friendly as a first step toward a fuller implementation of deliberative democracy in Malaysia. Mohd Azizuddin's argument is validated by the existence of the Temerloh Parliament Consultative Council (TPCC). Saifuddin (2008) claims that the TPCC acknowledges consensus decision-making made by the people collectively and translates it into policy.

### **3.2.1 Executive Power in relation to Parliament**

A few academic works have addressed the parliamentary system indirectly by linking their discussions with an analysis of democracy movements in Malaysia. These works, however, mainly emphasise the role of the executive and connect it to democratisation (Case, 2001, 1996; Crouch, 1996; Mauzy, 1983; Milne & Mauzy, 1999; Rais, 2006; Raja Noriza & Norma, 2009). As a young nation whose success has been derived from the various short-term and long-term socio-economic plans and affirmative action policies (see chapter six), it comes without surprise that most of the academic works on Malaysian politics concentrate or at least touch on the executive's role. A range of literature on Malaysia's politics overwhelmingly indicates that the executive plays a dominant role in parliament. The various terms that have been used to describe the level of democracy in Malaysia (listed above) thus refer to the power that the executive has in parliament. Although the terms used to illustrate the state of democratisation in Malaysia vary, they all point to one conclusion: that Malaysia is neither a fully democratic nor fully autocratic state.

The liberty granted to Malaysian citizens is limited and restricted and the elections (both general and by-elections) are controlled by the executive (Brooker, 2000; Case, 1996, 2001; Crouch, 1993, 1996; Diamond, 2000; Karl, 1995; Levitsky, & Way, 2002; Schedler, 2002; Zakaria, 1989, 1997). From a broad point of view, Welsh (1996) argues that Malaysia's limited version of democracy is acceptable to most Malaysians. In other words, Malaysians accept the electoral system as good enough to legitimate the democratic process in Malaysia because, as Puthuchery (2009, p. 251) notes, "It is generally agreed that Malaysia is not a liberal democracy." In general, the culturally accepted top-down decision-making process that has been established for decades by the executive is exceptionally significant in moulding citizens' thinking and preventing citizens contesting government policy (Alaggappa, 2004; Rahimah, 2012; Welsh, 1996). The executive legitimises its top-down approach to governing the nation as an effective tool to prevent ethnic unrest and to maintain a unified society. That is to say, the government justifies the domination of the executive in the name of national interests. MPs are used merely as a conduit to propel and pass the executive's agenda.

As the same executive's powers have accumulated over twelve general elections, this has enabled any proposal to amend the Constitution (to further enhance executive power) to be passed with ease in the Parliament (Abdul Aziz, 2006; Khoo, 2005; Loh, & Khoo, 2002;

Puthuchery 2005; Wong, & Norani, 2009). The Malaysian Constitution is one of the most regularly amended in the world. For example, in the first 14 years of its existence, the Constitution was amended 15 times (Milne, & Mauzy, 1999, p. 16). Many Acts have been amended to prevent any sensitive issues related to ethnicity being questioned, even during parliamentary sittings. Issues such as the special rights of Bumiputera, Islam, and the national language are considered highly sensitive. Thus, any forum or debate to reevaluate these rights has been prohibited. This was particularly evident during Mahathir's term as Prime Minister, when considerable centralisation of power by the executive was successfully carried out. The Constitution has been amended repeatedly to enhance executive powers over both the legislature and the judiciary and thus strengthen the authoritarian elements in governing Malaysia (Barr, 2002; Gomez & Jomo, 1999; Heryanto, & Mandal, 2003; Milne, & Mauzy, 1999; Puthuchery, 2009; Rodan, 2004; Wain, 2009). Among the major impacts of the constitutional amendments were the reduction of the sultans' and Yang di-Pertuan Agong's powers and immunities at both state and federal levels, and the removal of the power of the judiciary to review government actions. The Constitution has been used as a tool to confirm that ultimately the elite's political interests "are good for all". Although the fundamental form of democracy exists, the vital substance of parliament is absent.

Since the removal of judicial review, the Parliament has become weaker and has been used as a platform to only highlight government success.<sup>49</sup> Judicial review was interpreted as having a negative impact on economic growth, creating inefficiencies in governance processes, and disrupting government agendas. This episode signals the on-going erosion of the Parliament as a neutral political institution in Malaysia (Abdul Aziz, 2006). The decision-making by majority voting in the parliament, coupled with the secrecy surrounding the deliberation of that body, make it difficult or impossible for the people to control the actions of executive. Since the government has a parliamentary majority that was large enough to pass constitutional amendments, it has strengthened the executive power and limited the role of the courts (Cheah, 2004; Gatsiounis, 2008; Khoo, 2002; Saravanamuttu, 2004). The Malaysian Parliament's procedures surrounding public policy-making means that the executive has the ultimate power in designing, controlling and filtering decision-making, and

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<sup>49</sup> The independence of the judiciary has been in question since 1988 when six Supreme Court judges were suspended, which was followed by the removal of the Lord President and two other judges. These events have been seen as the beginning of the erosion of the rule of law in Malaysia (see Abdul Aziz, 2006; Harding & Lee, 2007).

this makes cabinet members the most influential MPs in an institutionalised pattern of decision-making in the parliament.

### **3.3 Poverty, Quota and Democratisation**

Within the scope of democratisation, it has been argued that poverty and democracy are interrelated. Many scholarly works suggest that economic prosperity has positive effects for democracy, allowing it to be established and survive (for examples see Barro, 1996, 1997; Bueno de Mesquita, & Downs 2005; ; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Karatnycky, 2004; Lipset, Seong & Torres, 1993; Londregan & Poole, 1996; Przeworski et al., 2000). Industrialisation that promotes economic growth will change the political, social and cultural fabric of a society and this encourages political participation. Citizens with a better economic foundation will feel secure enough to seek political liberties and emphasise rights, which are not always a priority amongst lower income groups (Bueno de Mesquita & Downs, 2005; Inglehart, 1990, 1997; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005).

The notion that urbanisation may spark and expedite democracy is not new, and Lipset, has advanced this notion since the late 1950's (Lipset, 1959a, 1959b, 1981, 1994). His works suggest that urbanisation is the foundation for advancing citizens' participation in democracy. This assumption is, to some extent, true since the civil society movements are mostly concentrated in the two most urbanised areas in Malaysia, namely Penang and the Klang Valley, rather than in the lesser urbanised and poorer areas. Barro (1996) argues that low income groups tend to give less emphasis on democracy as they have little time to be thinking about something "abstract." Democracy is "a sort of luxury good" (Barro, 1996, p.24). It is argued that democracy is valued more highly when individuals have become economically sound and secure. It has been suggested that the low income groups would trade off democracy for basic goods (Helliwell, 1994). Whether this assumption can be applied to the Malaysian case will be examined in chapters six and seven.

On the other hand, some empirical works argue that economic prosperity does not necessarily promote or result in the consolidation of democracy, and may result in a nation becoming or remaining an illiberal democracy or pseudo democracy (Booth & Seligson, 2008; Krishna, 2008a, 2008b; Mainwaring & Perez-Linan, 2003; Muller, 1997). To some extent, within the context of Westminster systems in Southeast Asia, their argument on the face of it appears appropriate. In cases of Malaysia and Singapore, economic prosperity has actually contributed towards the further enhancement of executive power, with the focus being put on

“good government,” rather than individual liberty, in alignment with the themes of the Asian Values concept promoted by Lee Kuan Yew and Mahathir in Singapore and Malaysia, respectively.

Since the 1980s, Malaysia has gone through rapid economic and demographic changes that have influenced its political development. Hence, most works on Malaysian politics have been focused on the impacts of the rapid economic growth on Malaysian political institutions and demographic changes mainly from the developmentalism, political sociology and political economy perspectives. To elaborate, some scholarly works (Crouch, 1984, 1994; Gomez & Jomo, 1999; Jomo & Wee, 2003; Kahn, 1996; Loh, 2002; Sloane-White & Beaulieu, 2010) utilise political issues and cases to analyse the policy-making process in Malaysia. These studies do not specifically emphasise parliament but focus instead on economic development, political parties, executive government, ethnic politics and so forth. They provide little analysis of the relationship between the Malaysian Parliament and the citizens, but nevertheless offer valuable insights into Malaysia’s politics, economy and social trends.

Prior to the ethnic riots of 13 May, 1969, steady economic growth and low inflation did not change the Malays’ perception that they had been marginalised by the state. Then, the tension amongst the different ethnicities, in particular between the Malays and the Chinese, increased as economic disparities and inequalities were seen through an ethnic lens (Gomez & Jomo, 1999; Jomo & Wee, 2003). The ethnic riots of May 13, 1969 were a critical point in Malaysia’s history and for the federal government policies regarding the selection between different socio-economic plans and policies for “national unity.”<sup>50</sup> The NEP was a response to the ethnic riot on 13 May, 1969. The socio-economic based ethnic cleavages were seen as a national security threat and it was hoped that the NEP would narrow the socio-economic gap predominantly between Bumiputera (especially the Malays) and the non-Bumiputera (especially the Chinese). The NEP has been used as a means by the government to correct the economy and to prevent further socio-economic resentment-derived riots in Malaysia (Sowell, 2004). Table 3.1 shows that the Chinese and Bumiputera were the wealthiest and poorest, respectively, in Malaysia. Although the NEP has been able to curtail riots in

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<sup>50</sup> Although there have been a few attempts by some authors to reinterpret the factors that caused May 13, the economic imbalances between the Malays and the Chinese was believed to be the main factor that sparked the riot.

Malaysia, its objectives and implementation has however, led to unintended consequences resulting in constant tensions between different actors involved.

Table 3.1 Poverty Rates by Ethnic Group in Malaysia, 1990-2004

Year	Poverty Rate (%)				Bumiputera to Chinese	
	All Ethnic groups	Bumiputera	Chinese	Indian	Difference	Ratio
1990	16.5	23.0	5.4	7.6	17.6	4.3
1999	8.5	12.4	1.2	3.5	11.2	10.3
2004	5.7	8.3	0.6	2.9	7.7	13.8

Source: Adjusted from Leete (2007)

Poverty eradication has always been on the federal government agenda in Malaysia, with programmes to eradicate poverty and rural development undertaken using a top-down approach. Often, citizen input on development is ignored by the government (Mohd Azizuddin, 2009). How and to what extent the MPs are able to reverse the top-down to “bottom-up” approach in giving voice to citizens’ concerns about poverty in Malaysia will be investigated further in chapter seven.

Malaysia under Mahathir went through rapid industrialisation and urbanisation that reduced the poverty trend in Malaysia. Although Mahathir has been criticised by many democratic theorists and academicians as an “authoritarian” (see for examples Case, 2001, 2004, 2009; Crouch, 1993, 1996; Gomez, 2004b; Gomez & Jomo 1999; Levitsky & Way, 2002; Tan, 1990; Weiss, 2006; Zakaria, 1989), they do not deny his contribution toward transforming Malaysia from an agrarian to an industrialised nation (see for examples Gomez, 1990, 1991, 1996; Gomez & Jomo, 1999; Jomo, 1994; Loh, 2002; Rahimah, 2012; Sloane-White, & Beaulieu, 2010; Sowell, 2004; Tan, 1982; ; Van Donge, 2012; Zainal, 2001). Mahathir significantly modernised the economy, and tremendously reduced the absolute poverty level in Malaysia (Ho, 2003; Leete, 2007; Rahimah, 2012). Whether they agree or disagree with the government mechanisms to eradicate poverty, the similarity in their arguments is that Malaysia is a success story in terms of poverty eradication and restructuring economic inequality between ethnic groups. Specifically, this success has been directly associated with the quota system in education, the public sector and public equity for a particular ethnic, namely the Malays. Smits (2009) illustrates that the institutionalised mechanisms used by governments to address poverty amongst citizens in democratic states have become the source of controversial debates since the 1980s. Other Westminster systems such as the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, have established their own welfare policies that have

taken into account their own political and cultural background for the purpose of supporting low income families.<sup>51</sup>

Cultural, social, and ethnic composition, and historical background have a great influence on the preferential quota system. Racial divisions in the UK, Australia and South Africa are, for example, different from those in Malaysia. Yet the objective is common – to increase the equity of the marginalised groups in certain key sectors within a state. Many Westminster systems, such as the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, Nigeria, and Sri Lanka, have promoted quotas for certain group in their countries.<sup>52</sup> In India, quotas were initially introduced to restructure the inequalities in a society that was heavily based on the caste system through the principle of “equality in fact” instead of “equality in law” (Deshpande, 2006, p. 67). The quota policy implemented under affirmative action has been justified using different terminologies such as Preferential Treatment, Positive Discrimination, Reverse Discrimination, Protective Discrimination, Compensatory Discrimination, Standardization, Positive Action and so forth (Kennedy-Dubourdie, 2006; Piquet, 2006; Sowell, 2004; Yuill, 2009). The quota has always been the subject of discussions in politics and academia because “assumptions, beliefs and rationales dominate controversies” (Sowell, 2004, p. ix).

In Malaysia, the quota allocation for Bumiputera is about the provision of entitlements to address the consequences of British imperialism after the decolonisation of Malaya. Mahathir believed in addressing the inequality amongst the citizens, an affirmative action should be designed and implemented based on historical principles rather than inclusiveness. Mahathir criticised those scholars, analysts and pundits who use justice, merit, equality and rights concepts in liberal democracies as failing to understand Malaysian history. He believed that it is the state’s obligation to correct injustice and inequality as the consequences of colonialism (Mahathir, 2011; see also Khoo, 2003; Plate, 2011; Wain, 2009).

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<sup>51</sup> Smits claims that none of the programmes have met targets to eradicate poverty. Under economic rationalism based on neo-liberal perspectives, led by the American and then followed by the European governments such as Britain, France and Germany, governments since the 1990s have reformed their welfare programmes to encourage the recipients to actively look for jobs and enter the labour markets. Their footsteps have been followed by other democracies such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand in which the role of governments in providing welfare support has been reduced to promote individual responsibility and to encourage the involvement of civil society more actively. The proponents of the left-of-centre governments of liberals and social democrats in Australia, Britain, Canada and New Zealand emphasise the importance of government supporting the poor to be independent through the involvement of civil society (Smits, 2009, pp. 18-22).

<sup>52</sup> Most of the discussions on quota related to race, ethnicity or class are under the scope of affirmative action. For further reading on affirmative action that have been published since 2000 in the Westminster systems such as Canada, India, Britain, Ireland, Malaysia, Australia, South Africa, Nigeria, Sri Lanka see for examples Sowell (2004) and Kennedy-Dubourdieu (2006).



Reflecting on ethnic characteristics and historical experiences as the essence of public policy related to the quota system in Malaysia,<sup>53</sup> and the reservation of quotas for the Bumiputera is enshrined in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia. Article 153 prescribes quota privileges for Bumiputera in the public service, trades, business and education training and scholarship (Federal Constitution) fields. When the NEP was launched, Bumiputera equity was only 2.4 per cent. The NEP target was to increase Bumiputera's public equity ownership up to 30 per cent by 1990. The Malays have enjoyed the benefits of the quota system most in establishing themselves in business, professional fields and education. Moreover, the quota system in Malaysia is a guaranteed minimum scheme. Opportunities will be given to Bumiputera first, and the rest is allocated to others based on merit.<sup>54</sup>

Table 3.2 The Achievements of the Society Restructuring in Malaysia, 1990-2000

	1990	2000
<b>BUMIPUTERA EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR</b>	(percentage of total employment)	
Agriculture and forestry, livestock and fisheries	67.9	61.6
Mining and quarrying	51.9	57.2
Manufacturing	46.4	49.1
Construction	34.9	37.4
Electricity, gas and water	70.2	71.2
Transport, storage and communication	49.0	56.0
Wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants	34.5	38.3
Finance, insurance, real estate and business services	41.1	45.3
Other services	64.7	63.5
<b>BUMIPUTERA EMPLOYMENT IN HIGH OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES</b>		
Professional and technical	60.5	63.8
Administrative and managerial	28.7	36.9
<b>BUMIPUTERA REGISTERED PROFESSIONALS</b>		
Accountant	11.2	15.9
Architect	27.6	28.9
Doctor	27.8	36.7
Dentist	24.3	34.8
Veterinary surgeon	35.9	42.6
Engineer	13.1	26.5
Surveyor	44.7	47.8
Lawyer	22.3	31.3

Source: Review of the Second Outline Perspective Plan, 1991-2000.

<sup>53</sup> The affirmative action policy in Malaysia is similar to South Africa (Thaver, 2006). Both countries have implemented socio-economic preferential treatment for the majority groups as an instrument to redress the problem of economic inequality amongst the different ethnic groups in Malaysia and in South Africa. The South African Constitution (1996), for example, states the principle of equality to legally correct racial inequality especially in economy, public services and education. Affirmative action is a means to address the consequences of apartheid and historical experiences in South Africa "to compensate for past discrimination" (Thaver, 2006, p. 171). However, the affirmative action has created tensions and led to legal challenges in South Africa.

<sup>54</sup> If the quota is not filled by the Bumiputera, it is then opened to non-Bumiputera. If the numbers of qualified Bumiputera is larger than that guaranteed by the quota, merit is used to evaluate the Bumiputera in filling the remaining percentage. In other words, the Bumiputera can still compete on the basis of merit with other ethnic groups even after the minimum number of Bumiputera positions allocated has been met.

Between 1970 and 2000, the middle-class group has expanded significantly amongst the Bumiputera.<sup>55</sup> The restructuring of the society through the quota system in education, especially at the tertiary level, and business opportunities, have been strong factors for lifting Malays from being an almost exclusively rural working class group to becoming an increasingly urban middle class group, mainly under state-sponsored schemes (see Table 3.2). To date, the composition of a new Malay middle class in urban areas in Malaysia is largely based on the first generation of Malay peasant and fisherman families emigrating from rural areas (Abdul Rahman, 2006; Rahimah, 2012).

The discussion on the poverty eradication and the quota systems for Bumiputera, and the consequences for the Malaysian political landscape of these discussions, is pertinent. Given that the Malays and other Bumiputera ethnics combined are the largest group in Malaysia, it stands to reason that they would shape the types of deliberative practice exercised when debating this issue.

### **3.4 Civil Society and the Democracy Movement in Malaysia**

Civil society is included in this study to understand the citizen movement for better democratic legitimacy and accountability in policy-making. Moreover, it forms part of this thesis's conceptualisation of a new form of political movement in Malaysia. Civil society is seen as a means to push the government to rethink the concept of citizen engagement with parliamentary affairs. The civil society idea can be used to explore whether there has been a change over time in deliberative practices with the emergence of new actors influencing the parliament-citizen relationship. Understanding the civil society movement in Malaysia may shed light on how they have been able to gather support from citizens by involving and engaging them in policy-making, despite being under the microscope of government surveillance. Therefore, studies of civil society movement in Malaysia are useful to understand how the civil society has penetrated into the governance system to promote reforms. As Alagappa (2004, p. 4) argues,

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<sup>55</sup> The middle-class is classified into two groups – the upper middle class and the lower middle class. The upper middle class grew from 5.9 per cent (1970) to 11.2 per cent (1990) and reached at 15.2 per cent (2000). Meanwhile the lower middle class increased from 23.9 per cent (1970) to 27.1 per cent (1990) and 28.0 per cent (2000) (Rahimah, 2012, p. 35). The small percentage of increment towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century occurred because of the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997/98. Many middle class households' purchasing power was badly affected (Rahimah, 2012, p. 40).

Civil society has become a normative ideal. It is perceived as having the potential to liberate citizens from the oppressive state and to confer full economic and political freedom on them.

As an illiberal democracy, Malaysia's civil society has had access to a limited number of deliberative spheres to mobilise their agenda and influence government decision-making.<sup>56</sup> However, Weiss (2004, p. 260) argues that Malaysia is more democratic than Singapore and New Order Indonesia in providing a platform for civil society to carry out its agendas. Under constant and tight surveillance from the government, civil society organisations in Malaysia utilise different platforms such as seminars, conferences, new media and their own publications as forums to reach out and educate citizens (Weiss, 2006). In addition, a few works also indicate that the civil society in Malaysia has to some extent influenced the discourse of democracy debates and patterns in society (Alagappa, 2004; Saliha, 2003; Weiss, 2004).

Civil society is an important element that is separated from the traditional way of administering and managing a government that is based on hierarchical bureaucracy. The existence of civil society in policy-making allows interactive arrangements between different actors to tackle citizens' grievances and advocate citizens' interests (Jann, 2001). Like studies of the middle class, interest among social scientists in non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Malaysia is also a recent phenomenon. A few studies are worthy of mention here, such as Mohd Azizuddin (2011), Lim (1995), Tan and Bishan (1994), Verma (2002b) and Weiss (2006).

Mohd Azizuddin (2011) emphasises the ideas of micro-level deliberative and macro-level deliberative to understand the state-civil society relationship in the hostile and highly distrustful Malaysian environment. He analyses the civil society movement in Malaysia through the micro-level deliberative frame to study structured deliberation, and the macro-level deliberative frame to examine unstructured deliberation. Civil society in Malaysia has utilised both micro-level and macro-level deliberations to ensure their agendas would be

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<sup>56</sup> Malaysia has a range of laws that may prevent citizens from being actively involved in civil society and discourage activists who fight for human rights, freedom of speech and expression, equal rights and so forth. The Society Act 1967 governs all associations in Malaysia. A police permit must be obtained first for any gathering of the civil society or opposition parties. Often applications are rejected when the issues at stake involve public policy or public interests. Some of the laws are dated and originated from the British colonial period. They were later amended to suit the incumbent government's political strategies (Weiss, 2003, 2006, 2011).

heard or considered by the government. However, the views from civil society have been ignored by the government for decades. The inclusion of civil society (and other private sectors) in the decision-making process has been hampered by the government mentality that sees the non-states actors as the “beneficiaries of development” only (Saifuddin, 2008, pp. 45–46).

Broadly, the civil society movement in Malaysia is often analysed within the context of nation-states and globalisation (Lim, 1995; Verma, 2002b; Weiss, 2006). Within this context, the limitation of democracy in Malaysia and the ability of civil society to mobilise the citizenry are noted. Verma (2002b) explores the fragility and potential threats that face civil society in Malaysia as many groups are intertwined with agendas promoting religious fundamentalism, nationalism, communitarianism, or conservatism. She argues that these “isms” may hinder liberal democracy and the embrace of universal human rights in Malaysia. Prior to Verma’s work, Lim (1995) suggested that the nature of civil society in Malaysia can be divided into categories such as consumer groups, human rights, environment, women’s movements, and development. Meanwhile, Tan and Bishan (1994) clarify the existence of civil society in Malaysia by differentiating between issue-oriented NGOs and the large numbers of registered societies in Malaysia. The classifications of the government-organised NGOs (GONGOs) and autonomous NGOs illuminate further the nature and characteristics of the civil society in Malaysia.

The diversity of the civil society in Malaysia is also captured in Saliha’s (2002) article. Saliha posits a new dimension to civil society studies in Malaysia by focusing on the politics of NGOs as indicated by their discourses, goals, structures and activities. She examines how civil society reacts to the dominant discourses of the regime such as civil liberties, human rights, environment, corruption, nepotism and so forth. Interestingly, in analysing the topic, besides the conventional NGOs (i.e., public interest and human rights groups), Saliha also includes various NGOs that have been ignored by previous studies such as Islamic organizations like Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), AI-Arqam and Chinese societies such as Donjiaozong.

Weiss (2006), in her research on NGOs, uses the terminology civil society agents (CSAs) to examine the contributions of civil society in the *Reformasi* movement in Malaysian politics. Weiss gives special attention to the evolution of a multi-ethnic coalition of NGOs and its alliance with the opposition parties for political protest and reform in Malaysia. She argues

that CSAs and opposition parties still have some space to manoeuvre their agendas in Malaysia, but the political platforms given to them are limited in terms of allowing them to contest and challenge the government's legitimacy:

The examination reveals the complexity, nuance, and fluidity of political engagement in Malaysia, the extent to which the Malaysian state delimits the scope of activism, and the means by which popular engagement may open up and alter political space, even if it fails fundamentally to change the polity (Weiss 2004, p. 261).

According to Weiss (2006) CSAs and opposition parties have the chance to initiate and manoeuvre their agendas of reformation through lobbying via institutionalised means in Malaysia.

At the regional level, Alagappa (2004) examines the expansion and contraction of the democratic space in different Asian states. He examines the level of political change in democratic, communist, authoritarian and monarchy states by analysing different actors, both state and non-state. His exploration of the nature of civil society movement in twelve Asian states included Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and others and revealed the role of civil society in fostering legitimacy, transparency, and accountability of the state and encouraging citizen participation in state affairs. In Alagappa's view, as a quasi-democracy, Malaysia is politically stable with non-state organisations that are heavily communalised (Alagappa, 2004, pp. 18–19). This is in line with Musolf and Springer's (1979) discussion. They decided to research the Malaysian Parliament after taking into consideration the fact that such a diverse society had been effectively communalised by the elite to maintain political stability, as noted earlier in this chapter. Furthermore, civil society tries to consolidate democracy by demanding greater transparency, accountability and inclusiveness in public policy and government services (Alagappa, 2004).

All these analyses suggest NGOs' causes and objectives are heterogeneous and their long-term goals can vary. However, the flexibility of NGOs to react or co-opt with the government may weaken their goal towards a stronger civil society in Malaysia. The orientation of civil society in Malaysia is so diverse. NGOs may be in conflict with or parallel to the government agenda. In other words, not all elements of civil society in Malaysia are pro-democracy (Saliha, 2002; Weiss, 2004). The Malaysian civil society can be viewed through the lens of a

power struggle amongst civil society organisations in seeking recognition from the government. Nevertheless, since the late 1990s, democratic movements have penetrated the Malaysian society, and civil society has catalysed and consolidated the democratic transition in Malaysia. In enhancing the democratic system, the civil society has focused on delegitimising draconian laws and institutionalising the public spheres for greater public rights.

### **3.5 The Middle Class and the Transition to Democracy in Malaysia**

The so-called middle-class studies in Malaysian studies are a recent phenomenon. Although research on the middle class population has been carried out since the late 1960s, it only captured more attention from scholars in the field of Malaysian studies from the 1980s. The process of urbanisation is closely related to the creation of a large middle-class group in Malaysia (Abdul Rahman, 1996, 2006; Rahimah, 2012). This study argues that the rise of the middle class is one of the factors that has forced the Parliament to re-evaluate its political role, for example, their demands for public forums and political rights for citizens.

The growth of interest on the Malaysian middle class among the scholars is understandable. Under Mahathir, Malaysia went through a rapid transformation in many aspects of life, economically, politically and socially. Although economic growth has slowed down since the Asian Financial Crisis 1997–1998, the processes of modernisation, urbanisation, industrialisation, and to a certain extent Westernisation, continue in Malaysia. This transformation has rapidly produced new structural classes within the society. The mushrooming of civil society in Malaysia is related to the expansion of the middle class discussed earlier. Thus, in line with this evolving state and society, the coverage of the studies on the middle class in Malaysia has expanded and changed. In terms of focus, studies have expanded from cities and developed states to other towns and less-developed states in Malaysia. In terms of scope, they have broadened from studies on civil servants to the private sector. Interestingly, studies on the Malaysian middle class point out that conceptualising the middle class in the Malaysian case is rather difficult and vague, and require taking into account the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural society, and the involvement of state in the creation and maintenance of the class structure (Abdul Rahman, 2002; Crouch, 1984, 1991, 1996; Jomo, 1986, 1999; Kahn, 1996; Saravanamuttu, 2001).

Earlier studies on the Malaysian middle class prior to the 1980s mostly focused on the administrative middle class of the post-independence period. They looked at ideology and political beliefs as well as the expansion and social composition of the middle class and the new living culture that was adopted by the middle class under the decolonialisation and Malaysianisation policies (Khasnor, 1984; Scott, 1968). Scott's views as a sociologist are interesting, particularly on the Westernisation of the middle class, which eventually alienated them from the rest of Malaysians. Despite their Western education, this middle class did not hold a commitment to advance liberal democracy, assuming it was not suitable for Malaysia. Scott argues, therefore, that this has embedded paternalistic rule in Malaysian political institutions. However, the trend among the young generation has been gradually changed since the late 1990s. Malaysians are largely school-going (Leete, 2007) which has helped to educate and create the current informed society to date. Education is a catalyst for citizens' engagement in democracy (Boix & Stroke, 2003; Krishna, 2008b) and Przerworski et al. (2000) agree that education is vital in promoting and stabilising democracy even if the nation is not economically prosperous.

Studies after those periods have touched and elaborated on the more complex nature of the middle class in Malaysia, which has been closely linked with socio-economic transformation. The growth of the middle class in Malaysia has been examined since then from different approaches and has involved various actors, namely the state and capitalists. Studies by Crouch (1984, 1993, 1996), Jomo (1986, 1999), Kahn (1996), Saravanamuttu (2001), and Abdul Rahman (1996, 2002), are all worthy of mention here. They emphasise the class structure and the old and new middle class or middle classes that are linked with political movements, political consciousness, ethnicity and civil society. That is to say the discourse of the middle class in Malaysia has expanded to theoretical realm – prompting scholars to challenge one another on the approaches that have been used and definitions that have been given. For example, Kahn (1996) argues that Saravanamuttu (1989) simplified the case of the Malaysian middle class by employing the ownership approach model of 19th century capitalism and ignoring the significance of the state in establishing the middle class.

Kahn rebuffs scholars' notions of the connection between the rationality of capitalism and democratisation among the middle class in Malaysia. In his view, in the context of Malaysia, the middle class agenda is the state agenda (Kahn, 1996). Asserting his arguments via an ethnographical approach, Kahn (1996) argues that the new middle class, especially the Malay

component of this social class, is a product of the state. The presence of a middle class in Malaysia is merely the result of affirmative action policies introduced by the government that have given privileges and priority to the Malays. As the formation of middle class in Malaysia involved particularistic values of culture and ethnicity, Kahn takes the further step of rejecting the possibility that this middle class, particularly the Malays, will articulate democracy and universalism in Malaysia. Meanwhile, Crouch (1993, 1996) analyses the class structure and looks at middle class politics and its impact on future democratisation in Malaysia. Crouch's studies demonstrate that the new middle class in Malaysia has not helped in promoting and advancing democratisation in Malaysia. He argues that democracy did not thrive among the middle class as happened elsewhere in other newly industrialised countries in Asia because of the clear demarcation of ethnic lines in Malaysia. Crouch's findings contrast with those of Kahn's (1996) that claim the expansion of the Malay middle class was not at the expense of the new non-Malay middle class, especially the Chinese.

Abdul Rahman's (2002) work on the Malaysian middle class is worth reviewing here. He analyses the middle class in Malaysia through macro-historical and macro-sociological lenses based on the work of Max Weber and Karl Marx. Abdul Rahman uses the Malays as a case study and argues that the existence of a Malay middle class is a relatively new phenomenon in Malaysia. He also predicts an increasing role for the Malay middle class in civil society, which will impact on democratisation in the 21st century. The consequences of the existence of the Malay middle class on Malaysia's politics have produced a new thinking with regards to civil society's role among the Malays (Ramasamy, 2004). Although Abdul Rahman (2002) disagrees with Kahn's thesis concerning the state's role in creating the Malay middle class in Malaysia, he agrees that the state's promotion of capitalism has created a new structural class among the Malays.

Reflecting and echoing Abdul Rahman, Rahimah (2012) argues that the middle class is still in a transition period of consolidation in terms of its ethnic composition in Malaysia. Using the NEP as a point of departure for her analysis, Rahimah's work illustrates how affirmative action has generated economic growth and engineered a new multi-ethnic middle-class group that has patterned the dynamic inter-ethnic relations in the politics, economy and culture of Malaysia at present. With higher purchasing power and educated citizens, the middle-class group is transcending ethnic lines and is now visible nationwide. The large numbers of the Malay and Bumiputera middle class today was a result of the quota system (Abdul Rahman,



2006; Rahimah, 2012). Rahimah notes that the first generation of the Malaysian middle class are rightist and conservative. Most of them are BN supporters who believe in the good government concept. Although there have been recent demands from the citizenry for the government to be more transparent and accountable, the first generation of the middle class, especially the Malay component, feel it is important to honour the government that has been responsible for uplifting their standard of living. Furthermore, the strong consumerism culture amongst the middle class has also contributed to the reluctance of this group to destabilise the government, which of course could affect their businesses (Abdul Rahman, 2001; Rahimah, 2012) and economic wellbeing.

Rapid economic growth and industrialisation seems to have contributed to the emergence of new thinking amongst the middle class in relation to politics, the economy and society, especially from the 1990s (Rahimah, 2012). Whether and to what extent this new thinking has promoted or enhanced deliberative practices will be further examined in the following chapters.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

By combining an analysis of the new and burgeoning literature on the ideals and realities of the parliamentary system and exploring its relationship with citizens, this chapter has provided an updated understanding of the parliament-citizen relationship in Malaysia. More significantly, it offered broader insights into the extent to which Westminster systems can adapt and expand to incorporate shifts in values and participatory ideals over time and across cultures. The conflict of interests between the state actors and the non-state actors has led to different types of forums being established to address policy problems and provide solutions formally or informally. Because of the different political and economic power levels between the government and citizens, the deliberation forums may carry different values and thus influence the meaning of dialogue differently by pre-selecting the problems and restricting the solutions (Dodge, 2010; Fischer, 2003). Nonetheless, as an illiberal democracy that is plagued by plural ethnic division, there is always a tendency by the executive to use the development-rational discourses to prioritise the actors and arguments in deliberative forums.

This chapter has provided a clear picture of the contradictions between deliberative democracy and the characteristics of the governance system in Malaysia. This chapter also sheds light on certain elements of deliberative democracy such as the consensus norms that have been long exercised by the community in Malaysia, which suggest that deliberation can

occur in an illiberal democracy. There is a tendency to believe that the deliberative democracy criteria can apply only to liberal democracy practices. This misconception occurs because studies of deliberative democracy have concentrated theoretically and empirically on liberal democracies. A liberal democracy may provide a better foundation for deliberative democracy to take off faster. However, it does not necessarily mean that deliberation can only occur in liberal democracies only. Initially, the deliberative approaches have been conceptualised to overcome the logical flaws and inconsistencies of liberal democracies' dealing with their citizen rights (Dryzek 2006, 2000; Fishkin, 2006; Gutmann & Thompson, 2004; Leib, 2006; Lijphart, 2008; Mansbridge, 1999). In other words, although my intention to explore deliberative practices in an illiberal Westminster system democracy seems perhaps unusual, this study offers new insights into the complexity of deliberation when foreign ideas are planted in a public institution that is modelled on Western traditions. All these contradictions produce new thinking in parliamentary studies and deliberative democracy approaches and will be examined further in the remaining chapters.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Conceptual Framework, Research Design, Methods and Methodology**

This study is an exploratory examination based on a case study of the Malaysian Parliament. In examining this case study, I utilise the concept of deliberative democracy as the theoretical foundation of my thesis. This is in order to provide answers to questions regarding *whether* and *to what extent* Western ideas of deliberation have penetrated and have been practiced in the Malaysian Parliament, an institution that inherited its rationale from and is modelled after the Westminster Parliament, but established outside the Western world in an illiberal democracy. Discussion of the theoretical foundation of this study points to the appropriate research design, methods and methodology that will be used to investigate the subject in more depth. In this study, I employ a qualitative research approach in order to avoid rigid measurement and to enable a deeper and more interpretive exploration of parliament-citizen relations in particular, as well as contemporary Malaysian political development in general. Through a narrative focused on the role of MPs, I specifically seek to understand the nature of political engagement between the parliament and citizens, and the processes that mediate this engagement.

#### **4.1 Deliberative Democracy as the Theoretical Foundation**

My study focuses on deliberative practices in and outside the Malaysian Parliament. As I have stated in the introduction chapter, the exploration of deliberative practices in this study is derived from ideas related to (1) Dryzek's (2000, 2001, 2006) conceptualisation of deliberative democracy; (2) Dodge's (2010) dual strategy and tensions in deliberative practice; and (3) Mansbridge's (1999) concept of *everyday talk* in deliberative democracy. This thesis does not only build upon, but also modify the concepts, methods and methodology used by Dryzek, Dodge and Mansbridge, in order to incorporate the salient role of political and cultural values and norms in Malaysia.

Since the 1990s, the concept of deliberative democracy has gradually gained popularity amongst researchers in theorising and analysing the dynamic and ever changing citizens-state relationship in policy-making (Dryzek, 2000, 2006; Saward, 2003). Works by Fishkin (2006, 2009), Fischer (2003, 2009a, 2009b, 2010), and Dryzek (1990, 2000, 2001, 2006, 2009) on deliberative democracy (see also Saward, 2000) have been expanded theoretically and empirically by other authors. Most of the works on deliberative democracy, however, still

concentrate largely on theoretical designs and methodological problems related to deliberative institutions, and the rights and powers of citizens to participate in policy-making (Blau, 2011; Chappell, 2011; Clifford, 2012; Drake & McCulloch, 2011; Fischer, 2009a, 2009b; Landwehr, 2010; Saretzki, 2009; Thomassen, 2011).<sup>57</sup> The inclination amongst these authors to focus on theoretical designs and methodological problems is understandable because the issue of citizens' participatory rights and power are considered to be necessary elements for safeguarding the legitimacy of the decision-making process (Dryzek, 2000, 2006; Fischer, 2009a; Fung, 2006; Smith, 2009).

Beyond the theoretical and methodological discussions, existing works have not paid much attention to the socio-cultural dimension that may cause tensions and conflicts in validating deliberation (Dryzek 2000, 2006; Fischer, 2009b; Warren, 2007). Nonetheless, deliberative democracy has been taken up in empirical studies through the examination of the role of civil society and/or non-state actors, institutions or organisations (Dodge, 2010, 2009; Hendriks, 2006a, 2006b; Levine & Nierras, 2007; Montpetit et al., 2004) discussed later. The ambiguities surrounding deliberative democracy as a theory have made most empirical studies focus on *case study* or *case studies* that emphasise a specific subject or policy. In other words, the concept of deliberative democracy has been employed to analyse the political progress within a single public institution or organisation as a case study.<sup>58</sup>

In order to understand the dynamics of the state-citizen relationship in the contemporary political sphere of public institutions, deliberative theorists suggest that public policy perspectives must be analysed within the scope of deliberative democracy. There are three reasons for supporting deliberation in democracy (see Dryzek, 2006; Leib, 2006; Levine, & Nierras, 2007; Mansbridge, 1999): (1) establishing coherent public opinions through supporting discussion amongst citizens; (2) providing leaders with a better picture of citizens' concerns relating to public issues; and (3) facilitating the process whereby citizens arrange and classify opinions from the best to the worse. Gutmann and Thompson (1996, 2004) have argued that moral aspects, such as finding an acceptable form of cooperation that has been

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<sup>57</sup> Some recent works have developed new perspectives and contested the theories and methodologies of deliberative democrats (see Blau, 2011; Drake, & McCulloch, 2011; Landwehr, 2010; Munro, 2011; Thomassen, 2011). These works have attempted to "deconstruct" the concepts of deliberative democracy by re-interpreting the process and practice in deliberation using different terminologies.

<sup>58</sup> For examples - the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (Stevenson & Dryzek, 2012), environmental and economic agenda in New Mexico (Dodge, 2009, 2010), water policy in the Netherlands (van der Arend & Behagel, 2011), women and the Canadian National Action Committee (Montpetit, et al., 2004), the Indian electricity sector (Gurtoo, 2011), and the 1991 Arbitration Act in Canada (Munro, 2011) to name a few.

agreed upon by citizens, is an important element in a deliberative democracy. Bohman (1996, 1997) emphasised terms such as consent and impose in illuminating deliberative democracy. To Bohman, deliberation happens when the government does not merely impose policy but does so with consent from citizens after matters have been discussed and debated, thus reflecting the common interest. In general, deliberative democracy permits citizens to voice and advocate their views from different perspectives through the involvement and engagement in discussions and debates before deliberately making the best common decisions.

Theorists set out different criteria for deliberative democracy to take place in the political sphere.<sup>59</sup> Often the criteria used to describe deliberative democracy are normative in nature and overlap between each other. Rather than focus on criteria, I emphasize Dryzek's (2006) notion of *deliberation locations* to explore the deliberative practices in and outside the Malaysian Parliament. Dryzek (2006, pp. 24-32) suggests three different deliberation locations to increase the changes that citizen's preferences will be taken into account by the government: (1) the state institutions; (2) the designated deliberation forums for political advocates or ordinary citizens; and (3) the public sphere. First, there are the state institutions: legislatures and courts are two established state institutions that can be used as locations for deliberation. Second, there are the designated deliberation forums, which Dryzek further categorised into two spheres: (1) the lay citizen deliberation, and (2) the partisan deliberation. The former refers to forums that involve ordinary citizens who are impartial and *open minded*<sup>60</sup> in providing views related to partisans issues. The latter refers forums that involve different advocates in an adversarial political culture with obvious partisan views, but this partisanship is mitigated by an impartial moderator, facilitator or mediator to reach *consensus*.<sup>61</sup> Third, there is the so-called public sphere: different actors such as social movements, professionals, civil society, ordinary citizens, the media, political activists and so forth who are involved in discussing public issues. However, the actors involved in the public sphere "do not seek a formal share of state power" (Dryzek, 2006, p. 29). Dryzek further

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<sup>59</sup> For further reading and discussion on the different criteria that have been outlined by various theorists for deliberative democracy in terms of how it can produce better outcomes see Guttmann and Thompson (1996, 2004) and Fischer (2003).

<sup>60</sup> *Open mind* refers to the idea that participants are able to engage with the ideas in a somewhat neutral way and that they are open to the possibility of even changing their views and preferences due to persuasion or the presentation of salient information.

<sup>61</sup> *Consensus* refers to the advocates agreeing to recommendation(s) made in the issues debated. Consensus is not necessarily referring to the total agreement between all parties but more to the process of bargaining and satisficing rather than "satisfying."

suggests that the deliberative process in each location should be based on local practices without requiring a regimented universal form of validation (see also Dryzek, 2000, 2001, 2009). Dryzek's three different deliberation locations reflect the need for deliberative theorists to take into consideration citizen's everyday talk.

Mansbridge (1999, p. 214) believes that everyday talk between state and non-state actors or activists and non-activists matters in deliberation because "the personal is political."<sup>62</sup> The discussion of citizen's everyday talk originates from different sources such as media reports, activists, citizen representatives, family and so forth. In advancing her ideas that democracies must take into account citizens' everyday talk as a vital part in deliberation, Mansbridge (1999) is less concerned about the criteria that are emphasised by theorists in conceptualising deliberative democracy. In this study, I refer to everyday talk using Mansbridge's (1999) conceptualisation as being "[1] talk among formal and informal representatives in designated public forums, [2] talk back and forth between constituents and elected representatives or other representatives in politically oriented organizations, [3] talk in the media, [4] talk among political activists, [5] and everyday talk in formally private spaces about things the public ought to discuss" (p. 211).<sup>63</sup> She argues that through everyday talk that takes place in various sites such as market, hospital, school, office and so forth, citizens "...come to understand better what they want and need, individually as well as collectively" (Mansbridge, 1999, p. 211). The interaction between different actors in the public arenas eventually will filter out the good and the bad ideas through everyday talk. By considering everyday talk, all actors may come to better realise their individual and collective needs and what works for society.

Different transmission mechanisms are used to translate citizen's everyday talk from the informal macro-level deliberative forum to formal micro-level deliberative forum (I elaborate on this later in this section). During this process, conflict occurs and thus creates tensions between the actors involved in deliberation. Tensions occur because actors who participate in deliberative processes adopted a dual strategy (Dodge, 2010). In this study, a dual strategy refers to the MPs' strategy of adopting two different approaches when dealing with the

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<sup>62</sup> Mansbridge argues that everyday actions by individuals that take place in informal spheres may affect the "collective decisions" that eventually will be discussed in informal forums by others. Then they will make more "decisions" by having more interactions between them. Consequently, they need to engage more individuals in formal forums to weigh the informal decisions or views that have been made in order to reach consensus and produce a collective decision. Derived from these consequences, trivial personal experiences can become political matters.

<sup>63</sup> Numbers are added.

decision-makers (cabinet/executive) and the non-state actors (citizens) while trying to concurrently influence the decision-makers at the policy level. A dual strategy is adopted when MPs (1) use the formal micro-level deliberative forum of the state institutions (parliament sittings and/or ministerial meetings) to collaborate with the decision-makers; and at the same time (2) use both the informal macro-level deliberative forum of the public sphere (everyday talk and storytelling) and formal micro-level deliberative forums of the designated deliberation forums (dialogues, seminars, legal talks and so forth) outside the parliament to engage with the non-state actors. The former refers to actors' strategy in policy advocacy adopted a "bottom-up" approach while collaborating with the decision-makers. The latter refers to actors' strategy in policy advocacy adopted autonomous and critical approach while proposing policy ideas that are likely to be accepted by the decision-makers (Dodge, 2010, p. 385).

In addition, there are two approaches in exploring deliberative democracy in the literature, which are the macro-level deliberative and micro-level deliberative approaches. The differences between these two approaches are based on the venues and the format of deliberation. Macro-level deliberation occurs in the unorganised public sphere within unstructured deliberation such as everyday talk or storytelling at *kenduri*, funeral, school, market, and so forth. Meanwhile, micro-level deliberation follows the formality of procedure within a structured forum of the deliberation such as debates, meetings or dialogues in parliament, ministry, community hall and so forth (Dryzek, 2000; Elster, 1997, 1998; Gutmann & Thomson, 1996, 2004). In explaining the macro-level and micro-level aspects of deliberative democracy, theorists conceptualise the processes using different terminologies. Dryzek (2000) conceptualises the formal micro-level and informal macro-level deliberative forums as *transmission mechanisms*. The platforms for the transmission mechanisms can be the elections, the media or other contestation of discourses available within the society.<sup>64</sup> The transmission mechanisms allow citizens' feedback (both formal and informal) to be deliberated through structural procedurals (Dryzek, 2000) such as parliament. In this study, I use Dryzek's terminology of transmission mechanisms in examining the deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament. However, transmission mechanisms can create tension while trying to eliminate differences and reach consensus (Dodge, 2010) as I mentioned in

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<sup>64</sup> Prior to Dryzek's transmission mechanisms, in explaining *everyday talk* as part of the deliberative democracy, the two-track model has been conceptualised differently by Mansbridge (1999), using the terminology of *deliberative system* to combine the formal and informal deliberation in government-citizen relationships in policy-making.

chapter one and empirically interrogate in subsequent chapters (see also Dryzek, 2009; Montpetit et al., 2004).

Micro-level deliberative democracy emphasises reason and persuasion through face-to-face discussion that upholds the rights and equality of committed citizens participating in the forums. As democratic arenas to discuss public issues, citizens must be able to decide the agendas, suggest solutions and provide alternative resolutions. The procedural norms for the forums are communicative, reflective, rational and impartial. Therefore, any intention to target a set strategic plan prior to the forum that leads to manipulation, intimidation and deception will defy the purposes of deliberation (Bickford, 1996; Elster, 1998). In micro-level deliberation, citizens who participate in the forum must be able to listen to others and be open to different views and ideals in a communicative environment. Mutual understanding is important to reduce the asymmetries of opinions and thus merge the preferences for better and acceptable solutions. Young (2000, 2001), however, have argued that micro-level deliberation excludes many citizens at grass root level from participating in debates and discussions spontaneously as the nature of deliberation is exclusionary and highlights the formality and rationality of the issues.

Dryzek (2000) advances the notion that deliberation will have a better result when states practise at the macro-level. As unstructured and informal arenas of deliberation, macro-level deliberation values the overlapping but engaging discussions and debates amongst the citizens. *Sense* in the macro-level deliberative arena is embedded via issues that reflect the views, notions, facts, norms, values and myths in the society. Citizens are democratically free to express and form public opinion when issues occur, without establishing a formal procedure in order to be heard. The spontaneous, unconstrained or unpredictable deliberative discussions or debates eventually will be institutionalised in a public institution such as parliament or court. However, the concept of inclusiveness of the macro-level deliberative democracy can be problematic if we want to measure the quality of deliberation. Since it involves unstructured venues for citizens to participate and deliberate their views in the public sphere, the inequalities amongst citizens in terms of opportunity, power, and resources may distort the *common* decisions and solutions, which often occur in Malaysia's democracy as discussed previously in chapter three.



#### **4.1.1 Deliberative Democracy: Enhancing the Parliament's Legitimacy and Accountability**

Deliberative democracy has emerged in the democracy discourse and has been taken up empirically in an attempt to solve a puzzle related to enhancing the good governance concepts in democracies. Since the last decade, the good governance concept has been used widely in Malaysia's political discourse to explain the interconnection and interdependence of the government and the citizens (public, private and community) in designing, formulating and implementing public policy and enhancing democracy practices as I elaborated earlier in chapter three. The co-arrangement of relationships between the state and citizens has made the engagement between state and non-state actors more complicated, which has eliminated to a certain extent the sole role played by the state in the public domain (Jann, 2001). Deliberative democracy is one of the democratic innovations that suit the contemporary development of society in the area of good governance (Saward, 2000, 2003). Through the lens of deliberative democracy, the proponents focus on political reforms and co-ordination to increase citizen engagement within the political sphere of both micro-level and macro-level forums of deliberation. The relationships between actors in political spheres of a deliberative democracy are far more complex in advocating, steering and influencing the outcome of public policy than in an electoral democracy or participation democracy.

The legitimacy of public policy and the government's accountability to citizens are two subjects of focus that have been given a great deal of space in examining deliberative democracy. Ideally, deliberative democracy only occurs when all actors involved in society reach a rational consensus after a series of dialogues or debates. Deliberative democracy is purported to be the new remedy to overcome the problems relating to parliament legitimacy and government accountability to citizens, especially as election results and representative systems may easily be overshadowed by majority vote representing only a particular group, low turnout during election, vote aggregation and so forth (Saward, 2000, 2003; Uhr, 1998). For deliberative theorists, using voting as a proxy for citizen involvement in decision-making is problematic as deliberative democracy goes beyond voting preferences. Deliberative theorists, in particular deliberative democrats, assert that deliberation can only be meaningful when citizens are allowed to participate throughout the process of policy-making rather than only being able to express voting preferences as a symbolic agreement with authority. If the MPs consider citizens' votes given to the ruling government as a licence to act on behalf of them, then that is not deliberative but aggregative democracy (Farrelly, 2004; Young, 2000).

As Farrelly (2004) and Young (2000) argue, aggregative democracy simplifies citizens' preferences in decision-making when disagreements occur through majority votes, which often have been the case in Malaysia as I discussed in the previous chapter. Candidates behave strategically in an attempt to influence the preferences of the different competing actors involved in policy-making. Deliberative democracy emphasises legitimacy as the essence to justify the decisions that have been made. The ability to participate in collective decisions is the core element to legitimise policy-making.

Legitimacy in deliberative democracy highlights the authenticity of the mandate given by the government engaging and involving the citizens substantively in policy-making for the public. In other words, it goes beyond respect for the symbolic elements of election, interest aggregation and legal rights (Dryzek, 2001). Deliberation is authentic when citizens are not coerced by authorities to decide their preferences. Any attempts to indoctrinate, manipulate, threaten, impose power dominance, and spread propaganda will make the collective decisions illegitimate. Actors with superior power should not be allowed to distort subordinate actors through the limiting of the process, such as in the utilisation of "carrots and sticks" (Dryzek, 1990) as suggested by realists. In Dryzek's (2000, p.1) view,

Deliberation as a social process is distinguished from other kinds of communication in that deliberators are amenable to changing their judgements, preferences, and views during the course of their interactions, which involve persuasion rather than coercion, manipulation, or deception.

The flaw of using majority preferences as a proxy for legitimacy is that it does not consider the shortcomings or disadvantages inherent in why the minority rejected the majority preferences in the first place. Deliberative democracy allows the minority to justify their rejections by giving them a venue to explain, discuss and debate the rationale for rejecting policies and proposing an alternative agenda or preferences. Using majority vote to legitimate one's preferences indicates the failure of authority to be more sensitive towards race, ethnic, cultural or physical limitations. Based on Uhr's (1998) work, deliberative democracy allows parliament to translate citizens' voices that go beyond gender, age, race, class and boundaries in policy-making through the parliament committee as detailed previously in chapter two. Deliberative democracy emphasises discussion and debate as a solution to find alternative preferences and thus accommodate those who may be excluded totally if the majority vote is

used as an indicator to design and make policy. Discussion and debate allow divergent views amongst the citizens to be a source for gaining new information, learning about other problems or overcoming prejudices and misunderstandings about issues occurring through the transformative process (Young, 2000). Agreeing to disagree in deliberative practices may enlighten citizens to find some common ground, in particular when involving delicate matters such as ethnic relations, and religious and cultural rights.

Deliberative theory emphasises the harmonious relationships between the government and the citizens. The proponents of the direct involvement and engagement of citizens in policy-making argue that it would enhance the legitimacy, accountability and transparency of state governance (Uhr, 1998). Based on the literature available on parliamentary democracy, there are two different understandings relating to the institutionalised parliamentary system especially in advanced democracies. Firstly, parliament can be a valuable mechanism in deliberative democracy. It creates networks and linkages between government and citizens via the representatives as a way of making, implementing and evaluating public policies (Uhr, 1998). Secondly, parliament can be the bastion to keep democracy alive. It creates mechanisms that can channel and protect citizens' interests (the most common is elections), and to constrain executive power when it becomes too dominant and irresponsible (Norton, 1993, 2005). Interestingly, the flexibility of parliamentary democracy has made political leaders or governments learn the people's needs quickly in the form of being accountable and being responsive, which has allowed them to maintain power. In his study of the parliament of the Australian national government, Uhr (1998) emphasises a few types of accountabilities such as *arenas of accountability* and *instruments of accountability* as part of the package of deliberative democracy (Uhr, 1998, p. 158).

Contrary to the parliaments in liberal democracies, the Malaysian Parliament has been established without having a permanent parliamentary committee, which is crucial for examining and weighing citizens' concerns and interests in a deliberative democracy. Taking into account this aspect, I also elaborate on a question related to the legitimacy and accountability of the Malaysian Parliament to its citizens later in subsequent chapters.

#### **4.1.2 Deliberative Democracy: Promoting the Non-State Actor Roles**

From the perspectives of deliberative democracy, the involvement of non-state actors in influencing and regularising the outcomes of public policy have been expanded since the concept of good governance emerged (Norton, 2002; Saward, 2000, 2003). With the pressure of non-state actors, many liberal democracies have shifted from the hierarchical mode of policy making to the interactions of state-citizens in steering regulations (Jann, 2001; Smith, 2009). The arguments are based on the shifting mode of state-citizens interactions towards dialogue, debate, negotiation, indirect steering, bottom-up policy-making and decentralised self-regulation, rather than hierarchies, confrontation, direct control, top-down and centralised power (Dodge, 2010; Norton, 2002; Smith 2009). Deliberative democracy suggests that in the changing environment of the public sphere in democracies, the perspective that is confined to the notion that the state has exclusive power in formatting and implementing public policy is rather obsolete. In deliberative democracy, state-citizen interactions as described by deliberative theorists are based on meaningful bargaining and interdependent engagement, collective bargaining and consensus that have penetrated into the public domain to break the traditional mechanism of central control by parliament in policy-making.

Debate over the extent of citizen engagement in influencing public policy has always been a subject of interest for many scholars. The idea and movement towards the citizen having more influence in policy-making in parliaments in Asia is a phenomenon that has been influenced by the third wave of democracy (Alagappa, 2004; Norton, 1998a). The third wave of democracy notions, such as direct democracy, participant democracy, and deliberative democracy, have also caught the attention and penetrated into the civil society movement in Southeast Asia - from the nations that have consistently changed the ruling governments such as the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand, to the nations that have the same ruling parties in place since independence such as Malaysia and Singapore (Beeson, 2009; Weiss, 2006, 2010; Welsh, 2009). In deliberative democracy, civil society fills the gap between the government and citizens (Fischer, 2009a, 2009b; Dodge, 2009, 2010; Dryzek, 2000, 2006). Often the everyday talk and storytelling of unorganised voices from “below” is represented by civil society, which in turn links them to the authority. The vital role played by civil society in deliberative politics is acknowledged in the deliberative literature but its role and contribution

are yet to be analysed more extensively (see also Chetkovich & Kunreuther, 2006; Fischer, 2006; Hendriks, 2006a; Levine & Nierras, 2007; Young, 2001).

The theoretical framework allows us to better understand the relations that citizens as constituents, voters and members of interests groups have with the parliament through the MPs. As indicated earlier in this chapter and previously in chapter one, this study uses deliberative democracy as a point of departure in exploring the deliberative practices in and outside the Malaysian Parliament as a case study that I present in the subsequent sections.

#### **4.2 Research Design: A Case Study**

In a case study, keeping in mind the words *whether* and *to what extent* as identified in the main research question is vital to avoid the researcher's subconscious assumptions and perceptions clouding the analysis in qualitative research and enforce a greater degree of discipline and focus (King, 2004). Analysis is drawn from an empirical investigation of how the MPs perceived the deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament. In exploring the research subject, the researcher is the main instrument in gathering, interpreting and analysing the data (Simons, 2009; Yin, 1994, 2009). Exploration and examination of the study is based upon the theoretical perspective of interpretivism (King, & Horrocks, 2010). In other words, data interpretation is inductive, subjective and interpretive (Hendricks, 2007; King, & Horrocks, 2010; McNabb, 2004; Odendahl, & Shaw, 2002).

Different authors from different disciplines in social science use the term case study differently – as a strategy, method or approach (Simons, 2009). The use of a case study suits the exploratory nature of this thesis investigation (Yin, 1994, 2009). The selection of a case study in a qualitative research approach often involves in-depth familiarity with the subject (Seawright, & Gerring 2008). Yin (1994, 2009) argues that it is difficult to identify a clear line between the phenomenon and context in a case study as they are closely knitted and intertwined. The case study allows this thesis to identify a common interest of the subject investigated by using a specific case or a small number of cases (McNabb, 2004). In other words, a case study can be an individual or a group case (Gillham, 2000). The use of a few policies in this study enables me to link the cases with deliberative practices. Studying cases within a case is acceptable in the political science methodology (McNabb, 2004).

In order to understand the particularity of a case study, researchers are required to examine various types of data. Multiple sources of data are needed to utilise and strengthen some

evidence and balance the weaknesses (Gerring, 2007; Yin, 1994, 2009). Understanding the context from collected evidence will be utilised to make sense of the subject. Rather than controlling the variables to manufacture the “scientific evidence,” commonly used in quantitative research prior to experiments, a case study works backward, that is to say, by reasoning, defining and testing evidence as part of judging the case (Gillham, 2000, p.3). Flexibility, subjectivity, and reflexivity are relevant qualities in case studies (Gerring, 2007; Gillham, 2000; King, 2004; Philips, 1998; Simons, 2009). Furthermore, using a case study allows the researcher to gain a better understanding of the uniqueness and particularity of the subject.

Although case study embraces flexibility, the data must not be gathered on an ad-hoc basis. Systematic and structured data collection needs to be carefully anticipated to avoid insufficient evidence in exploring the particularity of the case (Yin, 1994, 2009). As this study is problem-driven in nature, to understand the parliament-citizen relation, rather than a method driven study, the mixture of different qualitative research methods to generate findings is acceptable (Krook, & Squires, 2006). Primary data (interviews and government documents) and secondary sources (newspapers, internet portals, journals and books) are key sources that have been gathered from interviewees and various resource centres, archives and libraries, both in Malaysia and New Zealand. I gathered primary data using interviews and other public documents, primarily the Parliament Hansard.

Case study requires researchers to integrate subjective data. Interpretation and analysis of the data are important in order to gain better insights of the case. A case study relies on a coherent story by integrating inferences and interpreting the puzzle of the “story of the case” (Simons, 2009, p.5) as a whole. To understand the essence of stories in interviews, researchers must be able to arrange into a coherent structure the elements of the case which may not necessary be in chronological order. Often process tracing is used to establish a case. Process tracing in Yin’s (1994, 2009) and Gerring’s (2007) studies involve the *detective work* approach. Meanwhile, Simons (2009) refers to it as a *judicial case*. The collected data are filtered to separate the relevant and non-relevant evidences. The archival data such as the Parliament Hansard and other government documents fit well with the technique of process tracing in a case study. Process tracing is valuable to understand the sequence of events, and is well established in a case study (McNabb, 2004).

Reflexivity is vital when examining a case study. Reflexivity refers to an awareness and understanding of the researcher's own values, beliefs, preferences, biases and action that may shape the entire research from start to end. By understanding the importance of reflexivity, the researcher's values and biases will, in theory, lessen the prejudice in a study (Simons, 2009). Reflexivity offers some protection to researchers in terms of avoiding the manufacturing of findings merely based on pre-existing values and biases. The transferability of the case study in qualitative research involves recognising the processes and context of the knowledge and ideas being addressed. . The generalisability of the case focuses on the "theoretical propositions not about populations" that also recognise particularity in the processes and contexts that might determine the behaviours and actions of the case (Hartley, 2004, p. 331). Gerring (2007, p. 78) argues, "No case study (so called) denies the importance of the case under special focus, and no case study forswears the generalizing impulse altogether. So the particularizing/generalizing distinction is rightly understood as a continuum, not a dichotomy."

A case study can produce "insights" that capture "the complexity of social behaviour" (Gerring, 2007, p.4) which researchers figure out from the "unknown quality" of data gathered (Gerring, 2007, p.7). As the only elected representatives in Malaysia, MPs are the ideal key informants who have "situated knowledge" (Mintrom, 2003, p.72) in providing unique and research-worthy insights into the parliament-citizen relationship. They can provide the interviewer with specific knowledge and insights of the subject investigated (I elaborate on this further below).

As this study does not employ a mixed-methods approach, the numerical measurement of statistical data gathered from existing government reports and literature are used as supplementary information as part of the proposition process that determined the main findings for subject under study as suggested by McNabb (2004). The statistical data presented in the text is not the focal point of the research design but supplements the qualitative analysis gained from the investigation into the case. Although the statistical data is important, it is only "complementary" to the discussion in this thesis. It is not the aim for this study to prove the "truth" about the current socio-economic and socio-political development in Malaysia using quantitative data. The perceptions of the MPs are, however, relevant. What matters here is how and why the views of the MPs may reflect and define deliberative practices in parliament. Their perceptions also would influence the contents of parliamentary debates in advocating the citizen's concerns and demands. This study also

highlights other citizens' concerns such as the environment, security, and housing. These additional case examples are included into the investigation, borrowing Gerring (2007, p.23), as peripheral cases that draw from secondary resources. Although peripheral cases are not central to the specific research design, the comparison will contribute to understanding salient similarities and/or allow a contrast between formal cases and informal cases.

### 4.3 Recruiting Participants

A case study does not require a large sample (Gerring, 2007). The sampling method of this study is non-representative sample of a population. The sample<sup>65</sup> is divided into two categories, based on the political allegiances of the participants. One category relates to those who are with the ruling coalition party – BN, and the second are those with the opposition coalition party - PR, thereby providing a realistic reflection of the realities of the current Malaysian Parliament. For the 12<sup>th</sup> Parliament, BN had 13 political parties that formed the coalition. Most of the parties were closely tied to ethnic interests. Parties that formed the coalition in the 12<sup>th</sup> Parliament were UMNO, MCA, MIC, Gerakan, LDP, PBB, PPP, PBS, PBRS, PRS, SUPP, SPDP, and UPKO. Since its establishment, BN has always been led by UMNO with significant influences from three other parties MCA, MIC and Gerakan as well. Meanwhile PAS, DAP and PKR represent the opposition coalition of PR.

The participants for this study were the MPs of the Malaysian Parliament from the House of Representatives only and the Assemblypersons from different State Legislative Assemblies of the 12<sup>th</sup> parliamentary term. Key informants who were speakers, deputy speakers, ministers, deputy ministers, senators, *menteri besar*<sup>66</sup> and parliament secretaries have been excluded from participation. This is for three reasons: first, it is assumed that such participants are likely to spend less time in their constituency; secondly, their duties at constituency level are assisted by civil servants; and thirdly their portfolio responsibilities would skew the results.<sup>67</sup>

Out of the total 222 MPs, two, 57, and 31 members were the deputy speakers, cabinet members, and former cabinet members/parliament secretaries/*menteri besar*, respectively

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<sup>65</sup> I use the terms participants, key informants and interviewees interchangeably.

<sup>66</sup> *Menteri Besar* (literally Great Minister) is a state chief executive for a state with a Sultan such as Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak, Perlis, Selangor, and Terengganu. Meanwhile, Chief Minister (*Ketua Menteri*) is a state chief executive for a state without a Sultan such as Malacca, Penang, Sabah and Sarawak.

<sup>67</sup> All assemblypersons interviewed had never contested a parliamentary seat. As the state legislative assembly is unicameral and smaller in size, however, two out of three participants were the state executive members (EXCO).



(see appendix VII, VIII), (see also Table 4.1 below). The MP constituencies and their positions in government are accurate as of the time the data were gathered for this thesis. All of the 90 cabinet members and former cabinet members/parliament secretaries/*menteri besar* were excluded from the interview in this research project. Fifteen out of the 132 eligible MPs agreed to participate in this study.<sup>68</sup>

Table 4.1 Number of Male and Female Representatives based on Political Parties in the House of Representative of the 12<sup>th</sup> Parliament Term

Number of Male and Female Representatives			
		MALE	FEMALE
Minister	25	24	1
Deputy Minister	32	28	4
Deputy Speaker	2	2	
Backbencher	78	70	8
Opposition*	78	69	9
Independent	6	5	1
TOTAL	221	198	23

Source: Parlimen Malaysia, <http://www.parlimen.gov.my> retrieved 19 June, 2012

Notes:

1. The total of seats in the House of Representatives was 222. However, one seat was empty.
2. The rows for “Opposition” and “Independent” have been re-arranged from the original source of the Malaysian Parliament website.
3. SAPP and KITA are treated as “Opposition” in this table rather than “Independent” (No Party) as shown in the Malaysian Parliament website.
4. All Ministers, deputy ministers, deputy speakers and backbenchers were the MPs of BN
5. \* DAP, PAS, PKR, PSM, SAPP and KITA.

In addition, five Assemblypersons were also recruited. Therefore, the total participants for this study were 20 persons. The 20 participants that I had recruited in this study were recruited on a voluntary basis. I identified the potential participants in early 2010. It took ten months to recruit 20 participants from throughout Malaysia for this study.

Out of the 20 participants, 14 and six were male and female participants, respectively. All participants from the state legislative assemblies were male. Generally, the female MPs were more responsive when approached for interview by giving me more time to interview them

<sup>68</sup> Although Chamil (2009) provides a list of the Members of Parliament from the first general election to the 12<sup>th</sup> general elections, the lists of the 10<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup> general elections are inaccurate and incomplete. See appendices III-VIII. These appendices help readers to understand the contexts and provide a clear picture of the case presented in this study. The Malaysian cabinet had been reshuffled rather substantively a few times by the government under the study period without dissolving the parliament, in particular in the tenth and the 12<sup>th</sup> parliamentary terms. The “sudden” change in the government policy and the different direction of the national agenda, especially related to the affirmative action policies can be understood better by referring to the appendices that state the tenure of each Prime Minister. Appendices III-VI show the *transition period* of the incumbent government after Mahathir Mohamed resigned as Prime Minister (October 2003) to his successor, Abdullah Badawi and later after Abdullah Badawi resigned as Prime Minister (April 2009) to his successor, Najib Razak. The appendices also list the names of MPs that have been appointed as the cabinet members, speakers, deputy speakers, parliament secretaries, and *Menteri Besars* who have been excluded from this study.

and answering more questions. They also invited me to attend other events to give me further insights on the MP-citizen relationship beyond the parliament. Interviews with five assemblypersons were undertaken to complement and provide a counterpoint to the views of MPs. The use of Assemblypersons is acceptable as the case study allows process tracing from different views such as “the MPs said this”, “the Minister said that” and so forth (Gerring, 2007; Simons, 2009). The names of the potential key informants that I had invited to participate are publicly available from the parliament and the state legislative websites. Two participants were from the Federal Territory (Kuala Lumpur) and the rest were from nine states in Malaysia (Kelantan, Terengganu, Penang, Perak, Pahang, Selangor, Malacca, Sabah and Sarawak).

As I mentioned earlier, I divided the 20 participants into two categories, based on their political allegiances: 10 were from BN, while the remaining 10 were from PR. The 20 participants were from six out of the 18 political parties that won parliament seats in the 12<sup>th</sup> Malaysian Parliament. They were from UMNO, MCA, PBB, DAP, PAS and PKR (see Appendix V). I divided participants further into two sub-categories: eight were from urban constituencies, while the other twelve represented the rural constituencies. This sample shows that I managed to gather a reasonably balanced sample in terms of the different salient characteristics.

The location, venue, date and time for each interview was suggested by participants. Most of the interviews were undertaken outside the parliament. Five out of the twenty participants were interviewed twice. Therefore, 25 interviews were undertaken throughout the fieldwork in Malaysia. Interviews were held in various venues such as in the parliament lobby and cafeteria (5), MP’s office/community service (7), hotel lobby (1), restaurant (7), golf club (1), community hall (2), airport (1) and participant’s house (1). Because of financial constraints, most of the participants were from Peninsular Malaysia. I only interviewed the participants from Sabah and Sarawak during the parliamentary sittings in Kuala Lumpur. However, the imbalances on the number of participants from West Malaysia and East Malaysia has no real significance to this study as Hansard records have been referred to in attempting to understand the issues that have been raised by MPs.

#### 4.4 Interviewing Participants

One of the most common methods to collect data in qualitative research is through interviews (King, 2004). Many authors suggest that interview is a perfect qualitative method to pin down empirical findings (Gerring, 2007; King, 2004; Philips, 1998; Simons, 2009; Yin, 1994, 2009). The interviewer-interviewee relationship determines the characteristics and outcome of qualitative research interviews. The interviewee is not treated as “a research subject” with a “relationship free” disposition toward the researcher, existing only for the sake of accurate information extraction such as they might in quantitative-orientated structured interview. The interviewer in qualitative research approach treats the interviewee as a *participant*, which means the participation is involved directly in establishing the contexts and contents of the subject investigated while answering the pre-set questions prepared by interviewer (King & Horrocks, 2010). As participants, the interviewees also had been given power in this study to withdraw from the participation without any repercussions accruing to them.

A rather lengthy discussion is provided in this section to reveal the difficulties associated with undertaking an empirical study of politicians as participants in Malaysia. One of the difficulties is explained through the obstacle to interview participants. The existing academic works in Malaysia, as I elaborated previously in chapter three, have the tendency to use questionnaires in analysing Malaysian politicians and politics.

I attempt to explore how the MPs perceived their role as elected representatives to understand parliament-citizen relations. To achieve the goals of this study, I undertook a series of elite-focused interviews. The advantages of elite interviewing have been touted by many authors in different fields of social science (for details see Berry, 2002; Kezar, 2003; King, 2004; Moses & Knutsen, 2007; Odendahl & Shaw, 2002; Philips, 1998). Interviews were undertaken from July 2010 to May 2011. All the interviews for this study were carried out face-to-face. Using the interview method to collect primary data is time consuming and costly (both direct costs and opportunity costs). The actual interview is normally short but interview preparation and establishing contact and organising appointments takes a lot of time (King, 2004; Mintrom, 2003; Phillip, 1998).

The analysis of this study is derived from in-depth personal interview with participants. The primary goal of conducting in-depth interviews is to depict the “human interaction” of the research subject that might not being able to be captured through questionnaires. In-depth

personal interviews with elites provide rich data for analysing their behaviours, actions, tendency and so forth in terms of political perceptions and perspectives (King, 2004; Mintrom, 2003; Phillip, 1998; Wood, 2006). It allows the interviewer to be more flexible in gaining “point-of-point perspectives” by asking *why* and *how* (Mintrom 2003, p. 71). I interpreted the interaction and situations as well as analysed what the participants’ perceived. In-depth interviews allowed the researcher to comprehend how the MPs perceived their roles, responsibility and accountability. Interviews that are conducted with the key participants are vital for “empirical reality” to the “knowledge flows” for better understandings of the subject (Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2004, p.xviii). The interviews with the Assemblypersons were complementary, allowed crosschecking and grounded the different views that may occur when practising deliberation in Malaysia. Personal interviews allowed me to capture the diversity of parliament-citizen relationship beyond the formal venue of the House of Representatives. The interviews provided better context of how MPs are engaging their constituents locally before advocating for them at the federal level.

As researchers must adhere to ethical research guidelines, interviewees must be given the opportunity to filter and verify the interview contents. This is done by sending back the interview transcripts to participants before examining the data. The importance of sending back the transcripts to participants for editing is to empower the participants by giving them the opportunity to control the information given (Simons, 2009). Only two participants asked to review the interview transcripts. However, neither returned the transcripts for correction. Other participants put trust in me to portray their views impartially.

Elite interviews are structured with open-ended questions to elicit the interviewees’ subjective views (Odendahl & Shaw, 2002). Open-ended questions are the best method to obtain reliable and valid answers in elite interviewing (Berry, 2002). In exploring the parliament-citizen relationship, I analysed the participants’ views from 20 semi-structured interviews and focused on their personal experiences with citizens. The semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions allow interviewers to understand complicated political environments better than other techniques of data gathering (Johnson & Reynolds, 2005). In general, the relevance of the issues discussed during the interviews is based on interviewees’ perspectives and perceptions.

Using an open-ended style without leading questions naturally minimises the impact of the interviewer’s restricted and preconceived ideas on interview outcomes (King, & Horrocks,

2010). Participants' answers and responses to questions may prompt the interviewer to ask additional questions in gathering further information thus allowing flexibility to pursue new insights arising during the research collection process itself. As the interviews were carried out without a concrete hypothesis in mind, the answers given by the participants were not coded into specific parameters as they would be in quantitative variables analysis. A non-standardised manner was used (Johnson, & Reynolds, 2005) that involved open-ended questions that comprised general questions and issues. This allowed me to capture emerging perspectives and gained better insights regarding the actual elements that shape deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament.

Inserting new emerging topics into research does not jeopardise the integrity of the research study. The flexibility in a case study means propositions can be changed with time. Flexibility allows researchers to re-formulate the research design based on the emergent issues articulated by participants (Hartley, 2004). Through open-ended questions, the boundaries of subjects investigated can be expanded (Gerring, 2007). That is to say that in the use of a qualitative research approach, it is acceptable for the data to lead the evolution of how the subject is understood by the researcher. Researchers have flexibility because the approach to the subject of interest is undertaken "with little or no preconceived assumption" (McNabb, 2004, p.342; see also Kezar, 2003; King, 2004). From the standpoint of a case study, this is acceptable and useful.

The interview questions prepared prior to the undertaking of research fieldwork (appendix IX) were used only as a guide for exploring participants' views and experiences in dealing with citizens. I did not necessarily ask all questions to all participants. It is worth mentioning here of Robert Peabody of John Hopkins University's statement on elite interview, "the best interviewer is not one who writes the best questions. Rather, excellent interviewers are excellent conversationalists" (Berry, 2002, p. 679). Often I asked the participants general questions first, such as their roles as elected representatives, and ended with what were considered as politically "sensitive questions" in Malaysia such as the quota system.

I introduced myself briefly before interviewing the participants. I then briefly explained the goals and objectives of the study.<sup>69</sup> The length for each interview was agreed upon by the participants. The shortest interview was about 15 minutes and the longest was one hour. This

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<sup>69</sup> The entire process as stated in the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) (appendix X) and the Consent Form (CF) (appendix XI) were explained to participants.

is a common situation faced by interviewers when the interviewees are elite. Susan Silberman, Research Analyst for the American Association of Retired Persons, Washington D.C. said, "...When I am interviewing people who are extremely busy I ask fewer questions, and I make those questions short and to the point" (Mintrom, 2003, p. 71). Some interviews took longer as some participants were interested in knowing my education and family background. A few participants were more responsive and welcoming after learning about my background. Besides Malay and English, I also used Terengganese and Kelantanese dialects to interview participants.<sup>70</sup>

Given the sensitivity of the topics discussed, as well as the MPs' positions, respect for participant's privacy was an essential consideration. Anonymity is a major factor researchers must consider when investigating sensitive issues. Thus, it is highly recommended that the visibility of participants is protected (King, & Horrocks, 2010; Simons, 2009). Pseudonyms are common and acceptable in case studies to anonymise participants to protect their identity. However, in a small sample population of participants like this study, attempts to anonymise participants are not always successful as it may still be possible for well-informed readers to identify key actors based on their words (Philips, 1998; Walford, 2005). I nevertheless resolve to do my best to minimise the reporting of any obvious identifying information in the final write-up of this project.

Some participants decided to keep their identity anonymous. For the purpose of protecting the identity of the participants who had asked to remain anonymous, and to reduce confusion when presenting the data, pseudonyms are used to replace the real identity of the participants. I used "YB" to represent the participants and referred to them as YB1 through YB20 in this study.<sup>71</sup> Participants are coded as YB1, YB2, YB3, and so forth in the text to safeguard their anonymity.<sup>72</sup> Any words that may reveal the participants' identity such as ethnicity, district, town or village have been removed from the quotations.

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<sup>70</sup> Terengganese and Kelantanese dialects are two distinctive Malay dialects of the standard *Bahasa Melayu* (Malay language).

<sup>71</sup> MP names in this study if the quotation/citations are used from the Parliament Hansard.

<sup>72</sup> "YB" is used officially as a term of address to all elected representatives in Malaysia, both for the MPs in the Malaysian Parliament and the state Assemblypersons in the State Legislative Assembly. Literally it means 'the honourable.'

## 4.5 Evaluating Hansard

It is important to emphasise here that the archival data of the Malaysian Parliament Hansard are also a key primary source for this study. Hansard records are under-utilised in the examination of legislative policy-making and citizen-parliament relations in Malaysian politics but provide a rich source of data that reveal the way in which Malaysian parliamentarians articulate their positions in key policy debates. Often, procedural rules are used to understand or examine the Malaysian Parliament or public policy discourse in Malaysia. Hansard is a parliament report that contains parliament debates in verbatim during a parliament sitting. In this study, parliamentary debates refer to the debates in the House of Representatives. I do not use the Hansard of the Senate in this study. The Malaysian Parliament Hansard contains the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong's* speech, bills and acts tabled, the attendance of the MPs, the questions and answers of the parliament sittings, MPs' votes and so forth.

The Hansard is used in this study to explore deeper insights gained from interviews and to address any gaps in interviews relating to questions that had not been answered or only partially answered by participants. As the national language, only the Malay language is allowed to be used in the Malaysian Parliament. Therefore, all Hansard records are in Malay. Researchers must have a good command of both colloquial and formal Malay language in order to examine the records. As the fieldwork was carried out in 2010, a few of the Hansard records referred during the parliament sessions in 2010 were unedited versions. The unedited Hansard is a version that has not been grammatically checked in terms of spelling and its layout. However, the contents of the Hansard are valid.

Hansard provides valuable data and an opportunity to examine and validate what has been said by participants and to ensure that such statements are consistent with their statements during interviews. In general, all MPs were consistent in their statements and political views when considered in the context of their statements as revealed by the Parliament Hansard. Hansard is a valuable source for analysis, in particular of the challenges and constraints that Malaysian MPs face in voicing citizens' concerns and interests. As verbatim format is applied when producing Hansard records, they thus provide the "raw emotion and feeling" of MPs when voicing citizens' concerns, requests or interests. The well documented verbatim transcripts of the parliamentary debates in Hansard offer better insights regarding whether and to what extent the legislator has the ability and capacity to debate and advocate for

citizens' interests and concerns. Hansard records reveal whether the MPs are standing for political party or citizens when raising issues in parliament, to what extent are citizens' voices are taken into consideration by the MPs, the degree of engagement between the MPs and citizens, the behaviour of the MPs in parliament and so forth. The contents of Hansard may enlighten studies that aim to understand legislators' stands on public policy from *inside* the parliament prior to decision-making. Hansard records show there is resistance amongst the MPs to executive agendas. MPs have their own ways of interacting with locals, which contrasts with ministers and bureaucrats in Putrajaya who have little contact with the wider community.

By examining Hansard, it enriches our understanding more than voting patterns because MPs may still vote for legislation even as they protest some elements of the executive agenda. This is a point of difference for this study, and contradicts the monotonous argument that the MPs' functions are merely as a rubber stamp. For example, often, to validate the argument of "rubber stamp" culture in the Malaysian Parliament, the sources that are referred to by other researchers are based on government practices via executive power, the Constitution, Statute Paper, Parliament Standing Orders, Parliament Order Papers, and Parliament Proceedings. Because of the "novelty" of the Constitution and other governance documents related to parliamentary affairs, often *the* conclusion made becomes too legalistic without "human soul" or sufficient consideration of the complex human relationships that are given voice during the process. However, the "conflicting interests" between personal views and party obligations are captured and unveiled through the analysis of Hansard. The Parliament Hansard, thus, does greater justice for the reluctant MPs who have been forced to accommodate, rather than voluntarily embrace legislation that may appear to be simply a function of the rubber stamp culture in the Malaysian Parliament. If the study only concentrates on MP votes in the parliament, it does not reveal much of the process involved earlier in deliberation and thus may not necessarily reflect the outcome made by the legislative body (Gamble, 2007). Gamble's argument is validated by looking at voting patterns in the Westminster-style parliaments. In general, MPs in both liberal and illiberal democracies with Westminster systems are restrained by party obligation that has been well analysed scholarly as I noted in chapters one to three. However, the Malaysian Parliament Hansard enlightens us as to why the issues are raised and the purposes for issues being raised.



Taking into consideration the different styles of Hansard documentation in the British, Australian or New Zealand parliaments, the text citation and reference style utilised in using the Malaysian Parliament Hansard has been modified and standardised differently in this thesis. For example, if the MP is a Minister/Deputy Minister, his or her position in the cabinet is mentioned. His or her role in the House of Representatives is thus, a reflection and representation of the cabinet rather than as elected citizen representatives. In general, the modification and standardisation are made here to differentiate the citizens' voices and government decision making. This is also to differentiate the 90 "excluded MPs" from the other MPs as mentioned earlier in this chapter. The quotations cited from Hansard are not necessary reflecting the views of the interviewees in this study as all "non-excluded" MPs' voices are given due consideration in the analysis of Hansard.

#### **4.6 Data Triangulation**

Triangulation is vital to validate data in qualitative research if "the subject [is] of considerable dispute in the literature" (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 164), in order to generate scientific findings and conclusion. Since case studies involve multiple methods of data gathering, triangulation is expected (Hartley, 2004). Triangulation here refers to triangulation of data from interviews, Hansard and media reports. Triangulation produces better understandings that deliberative practices by parliamentarians in illiberal democracies such as Malaysia are not absent. However, the deliberative practices are not as easily identified, hence the importance of data triangulation.

Triangulation is vital in applying and validating an interpretivist approach to understanding qualitative data. This study employs a common triangulation approach in the political science field which is the cross-checking of findings with other findings (McNabb, 2004). The underlying rationale for data triangulation is to mix and combine multiple sources of primary data (interviews, Hansard, government documents) and secondary data (newspapers and internet portals) to allow a greater range of insights than would be acquired from relying just on one kind of research source. It also allows the researcher to use different sources of data to lend credibility to other collected data. Data triangulation is vital when answers to questions asked in interviews are unrevealing. Data triangulation helps researchers to overcome the problem that the interviewees may have other intentions, or hidden agenda, when agreeing to be interviewed. Berry (2002, p. 680) argues, "Interviewers must always keep in mind that it is not the obligation of a subject to be objective and to tell the truth."

Triangulation from multiple data sources is a step to narrow the bias and gap that may exist in interpreting and analysing the data. The arguments advanced in this study can be validated and strengthened. Data triangulation allows me to examine the parliament-citizen patterns of interaction, the balancing of views, and to gain an understanding whether, and to what degree, deliberative practices in the Malaysia have taken hold. The combination of different primary resources that are mutually enlightening and illuminating allows the “untold” episodes within parliamentary affairs to come out, belying the stereotypical image of legislators existing only as a procedural “rubber stamp” in the lower house.

Interviews were used as the main method of conducting research to collect primary data. I also captured four participants’ views on the research subject in different *ceramah* and/or dialogues between them and citizens that were organised by MP’s office/community service and/or civil society. In addition to the interviews, government documents that are relevant to the study subject and various ministry websites were collected and the insights were used to support the thesis’ arguments. The use of government documents strengthened and complemented the interviews. Besides books and journal articles, other secondary sources were newspapers, internet portals, and various government agency websites. I also relied on media reports as part of the data triangulation process to answer the research questions that were insufficiently answered by the interviews and Hansard. In particular, I examined media reports such as the commentaries made by the MPs and the government to explore further the influence of deliberative practices. I compared the interview findings with other sources of government documents and media reports.

Triangulation is also useful to thematically analyse the data. Themes refer to the common and different issues (that may overlap) that have been articulated by participants repeatedly. King and Harrocks (2010) note that: “Themes are recurrent and distinctive features of participants’ account, characterising particular perceptions and/or experiences, which the researcher sees as relevant to the research question” (p. 149). Thematic analysis allows researchers to interpret the contents of the interviews and then later decide to include or exclude some data. The participants’ accounts have been systematically compared and organised thematically before examining the case. Quotations in this study are arranged thematically to understand the case. Simons (2009) argues that quotations without thematic structure will fail “to convey the meaning of story” (p. 118). In doing thematic analysis, I followed steps suggested by King and Horrocks (2010), which are (1) descriptive coding, (2) interpretive coding, and (3) overarching themes (pp.152-158). Quotes are incorporated into the thesis as evidence to

support the analysis and to characterise the theme. Some quotations have been modified on a few occasions by using square brackets for example, when grammar errors were obvious, when shortening long sentences with a few repetitions but with substantially the same meaning, or when there was a sentence in between that did not contribute any meaning to the theme under consideration. Subsequently, thematic analysis also assisted me in differentiating the different deliberation locations in order to understand how and why everyday talk and storytelling, and formal debates of the macro-level and micro-level deliberative forums are intertwined and thus create tensions between the different actors involved.

#### **4.7 Challenges**

Intellectually and emotionally, using a case study as part of a qualitative method is challenging. Yin (1994, p. 55) states that “the demands on a person’s intellect, ego and emotions are far greater than those of any other research strategy.” On an intellectual basis, researchers must be able to understand the emerging issues articulated by participants “concurrently rather than sequentially” (Hartley, 2004, p. 332) with the theory and data that have been gathered. On an emotional basis, participants’ behaviours and ethical requirements may affect the researcher’s own emotions, particularly as they apply to carrying out the research in a responsible way that avoids future damage to all parties, most of all the researchers and the participants.

To embark on this research project, I must fulfil the ethical requirements of the University of Auckland (UoA). Researchers must observe the morality, integrity and accountability of the research process. The ethical recruitment of participants can be stressful, especially for inexperienced researchers. The presence of ethical issues in interviewing participants can only be anticipated vaguely. But the ethical issue may stimulate the researcher to become alert to unforeseen circumstances (Simons, 2009). The research ethics application is designed to show how the researcher would respect privacy and protect potential participants from being exploited by the researcher. Two documents, the Personal Information Sheet (PIS) (appendix X) and the Consent Form (CF) (appendix XI), as well as interview questions were submitted to the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) before undertaking research fieldwork in Malaysia. The PIS and CF outlined the research objectives and elaborated the steps the researcher had taken to secure informants’ anonymity. Ethical procedures that the researcher would have to observe may cause constant dilemmas

for interviewers in asking sensitive questions. That is to say that such discussion may cause participants to feel vulnerable towards the researcher (Philips, 1998).

A difficulty in gaining access to interview participants in academic research, however, is not uncommon. As Gummesson (1991) argues, the biggest problem in qualitative research is uncertainty in access to participants. The interviewer is always filtered by institutional gatekeepers before gaining access to the key participants (Whitley, 1984). In this study, often I had to convince the MPs' personal assistants or special officers, who acted as gatekeepers, before gaining access to potential participants. In addition, time, cost and preparation are factors that limit researchers to gain access to them (see Gummesson, 1991; Macdonald & Hellgren, 2004). Convincing the gatekeepers about the importance of interviewing the key informants for this case study were costly and time consuming. I arranged research project briefings with the MPs' personal assistants more times than interviewing the MPs. In addition, I also attempted to recruit participants by using insider contacts to gain access to the MPs' offices. However, this strategy was not always successful. Only three out of the 10 potential participants responded to my invitations using this strategy. Prior to that, I sent the documents using conventional mails and e-mails to potential participants. I then made follow-up calls to potential respondents through their offices. I received only a few replies from the potential participants. A few declined the invitation politely for various reasons.

As the turn-out of the participants agreeing to participate in the study was far too low, I adopted George and Glegg's (1997, p.1017) suggestion, "...to try all possible ways to evince interest from respondents because it will generate better result than merely following 'a script.'" I had to change my strategy without compromising the integrity of UoA ethical procedures. The most successful strategy was to approach the potential participants directly in informal settings within the parliament. As stated earlier, the total key informants that I eventually recruited numbered 20 participants.

It is very important for researchers to be flexible when the participants are an elite group. The participant's time constraints and unforeseen events may obstruct the interview schedule. There is always the possibility that the interview may be re-scheduled or the interview venue may be changed. As I noted earlier, the participant decided the location and venue for interview and so the surrounding and physical environment could be challenging and created difficulties to undertake the interview smoothly. Most of the interviews I that conducted in public spaces, especially in cafes and restaurants were interrupted by the presence of

individuals, lay citizens or businessmen who made complaints, invited to *kenduri*, or attempted to make an appointment with the participants.

Another challenge that I faced during the fieldwork was the numerous by-elections held in Malaysia (see Table 4.2). The 12<sup>th</sup> general election showed the highest number of by-elections in Malaysian history. By January 2012, there were 15 by-elections nationwide (SPR 2012; “Endless polls?” 2011). There were six by-elections while I was undertaking my research fieldwork in Malaysia. Whenever I approached the MPs’ offices to set an appointment, my request appeared to raise the notions of “doubt” and “distrust” about my intentions amongst the gatekeepers and some potential participants. In a highly “trust-deficient” political system such as Malaysia, any attempt to interview politicians would create suspicions amongst them particularly during election time (Mohd Azizuddin, 2009, 2011). In addition, a few appointments were rescheduled at the last minute because the MPs engaged in *turun padang* to support and campaign the party candidate in the by-elections.

Table 4.2 By-elections since March 2008

Parliament Seats	Date	State Seats	Date
Batu Sapi, Sabah	04/11/2010	Merlimau, Malacca	06/03/2011
Sibu, Sarawak	16/05/2010	Kerdau, Pahang	06/03/2011
Hulu Selangor, Selangor	25/04/ 2010	Tenang, Johor	30/01/2011
Bukit Gantang, Perak	07/04/ 2009	Galas , Kelantan	04/11/2010
Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu	17/01/ 2009	Bagan Pinang, Negeri Sembilan	11/10/2009
Permatang Pauh, Penang	26/08/ 2008	Permatang Pasir, Penang	25/08/2009
		Manek Urai, Kelantan	14/07/2009
		Penanti, Penang	31/05/2009
		Bukit Selambau, Kedah	07/04/2009
		Batang Ai, Sarawak	07/04/2009

Sources: The Star, 21/01/2011; 06/03/2011; 17/03/2011

## 4.8 Conclusion

A great deal of effort is put in by any researcher in the process of undertaking qualitative research. To avoid mere description of my findings, I took into account the context and nature of the governance system in the Malaysian Parliament in employing the research design. *Whether and to what extent* were the key frames kept in mind to allow the researcher to dig out the essence of deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament. Such questions may be overlooked or not able to be captured by only analysing the regimented top-down procedure of policy-making in Malaysia. Interviews, Hansard and media reports all provide better details that may not be captured in a questionnaire-oriented approach in answering the

*whether and to what extent* deliberative practices have been taken up within the context of Malaysian parliamentary practices. Data triangulation from various sources may generate new findings or at least to re-generate new thinking to understand existing findings on the study of the Malaysian Parliament.<sup>73</sup> It may illuminate a new perspective about citizen engagement with the parliament in illiberal democracies.

The presence of a regimented system of governing a parliament in illiberal democracy, one which is perceived to subordinate the will of the legislature to executive commands and will, cannot be used as a way of excluding the possibility that deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament do, however, take place. Therefore, examining the different deliberation locations of deliberative democracy as suggested by Dryzek (2006) may shed light on a better understanding of deliberative practices that infuse the policy-making process in the Malaysian Parliament. As suggested by the idea that a dual strategy (Dodge, 2010) is adopted by MPs in and outside parliament, MPs do engage with citizens in different spheres through informal everyday talk in designated deliberation forums or in the public sphere, as well as in the formal structured forums of the state institutions. However, the intertwining issues talked about in the different deliberation locations often create tensions in deliberative practices. These insights will be elaborated in the following empirical chapters of this study.

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<sup>73</sup> While there is no concrete “proof” to validate the questionnaire survey findings (within the Malaysian context of surveying politicians’ perceptions), I can only speculate my intuition based on personal experiences in dealing with the potential participants for this study. A few of the potential participants were reluctant and refused to be interviewed. However, they suggested me to prepare a set of questionnaire (online or printed) and casually said that their personal assistants would answer the questionnaire on behalf of them.

## **Chapter Five**

### **The Members of Parliament Roles: Implications for Deliberative Practices**

This chapter focuses on the roles of MPs that go beyond their official duties. The multiple roles that MPs carry out in fulfilling their duties to citizens, to some extent, overlap. In this chapter, I present thematically how and why each role has led to the establishment of different types of deliberative practices. In carrying out their roles, MPs have used different modes of engagement and utilised both the designated and locally existing deliberation locations that have been used as community forums by the state and citizens for decades. In addition, I also explore the different ways and the extent to which civil society has reframed the roles played by MPs and changed deliberation locations in narrowing the formal and informal forums of the parliamentary affairs between the parliament and citizens.

#### **5.1 The Roles of Members of Parliament**

The interviews, Hansard and other research suggest that MPs' roles can be divided into four categories: legislator, advocate, mediator and social worker. Thematically, I arrange and explain the MPs' unofficial roles first and then end with the official role as follows: (1) a social worker, (2) a mediator, (3) an advocate, and (4) a legislator. The reverse order from unofficial to official roles of MPs is done on purpose. This reverse arrangement is made because MPs' unofficial roles outside the parliament, as argued by this study, are more significant than the official roles in parliament, particularly in the eyes of Malaysian citizens. This reverse order also allows us to understand better the types of deliberation that have been practiced and their consequences in and outside the parliament.

The multiple roles of MPs in Malaysia can be better understood through examples, such as the interviews extracted from the Nut Graph's Project.<sup>74</sup> Lo Lo Mohamad Ghazali, the Titiwangsa MP said of being a good MP,

Like other MPs, my role is mainly to participate in debates and to vote on legislation in Parliament. I also representing my constituents' voice in the Dewan Rakyat....[But I] serve more like a district or welfare officer than a legislator... I

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<sup>74</sup> Since the 12<sup>th</sup> parliament, *the Nut Graph* a Malaysian onlinenews has taken the initiative to educate citizens about the Malaysian Parliament by conducting a project called the *MP Watch*. The survey has been disseminated online and published as a handbook. In addition, the Bar Council, Malaysia's constitutional law committee also has launched the *MyConstitution Campaign* to educate citizens of the governance system in Malaysia related to the parliament ([www.thenutgraph.com](http://www.thenutgraph.com), February, 2013)

give advice to my constituents on all sorts of things and address matters which should be handled by agencies.... (Loh & Surin, 2011, p.369)

R. Sivarasa, the Subang MP defined his role as an MP as such,

My role as an elected MP has different aspects. I represent the people in my constituency of Subang and function as a voice for their issues and problems, which can take place at different forums, and levels of government....In Parliament, I represent the party as well and play a role in articulating the concerns and positions of PKR as well as Pakatan Rakyat (Loh & Surin, 2011, p. 335)

In the Nut Graph Project, all participants were asked who the MPs represented and what their roles were. The answers were generic in that all believed they represented citizens generally and their constituents specifically. However, interviews indicate that the MPs' focus was more at the constituency levels (19 interviewees). The perceptions that MPs were the persons that constituents should approach for all individual and community problems is prevalent because citizens have never been given an explanation of the actual role that MPs play. MPs also respond to citizens without educating the constituents about their actual role (Loh & Surin, 2011; Malike, 2010).

To monitor and evaluate MPs' service performance to citizens, the code of work ethics for MPs was introduced on 19 April, 2004 by Abdullah Badawi, the fourth Prime Minister. The code provides a code of conduct of the official duties and responsibility of MPs. The code, called the Guidelines for Official Duties and Responsibilities of Members of Parliament, outlines ten criteria to measure their performances. The performances are measured based on MPs' participation and involvement inside and outside parliament. For the parliamentary sessions, the MPs must (1) attend parliament sittings, (2) be involved in parliamentary debates, and (3) ask oral and/or written questions in parliamentary sessions. Beyond parliamentary sessions, MPs must (1) meet the citizens, (2) organise and oversee citizen programmes and projects, (3) attend discussions and engage in dialogue with associations or society leaders, (4) liaise with government agencies, (5) attend to the complaints/inquiries/requests from citizens, (6) attend committee meetings if the MP has been appointed as a chairman or member of a particular committee,<sup>75</sup> and (7) declare their assets. The code,

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<sup>75</sup> As elaborated in chapter one, the House of Representatives by default is the parliament committee. The parliament does not have a select parliament committee to study bills in details. The committee here refers to



however, is only applied to government MPs. Every MP is required to submit a report on the constituency activities to the Prime Minister's Department (Saifuddin, 2008, pp. 37-38; JKR, 2004). Ahmad Atory (2010) argues that the introduction of the code has helped government MPs to carry out their tasks better, as most of them did not previously understand what the expected tasks were.

### 5.1.1 Social Worker

As social workers, MPs are required to devote a lot of time to solving citizens' *trivial issues*, in particular those of the working class groups. Using Mansbridge's approach of deliberative democracy, citizens' trivial issues are classified as citizens' everyday talk including storytelling as mentioned previously in chapter four. In other words, the social works that MPs have been devoted to in Malaysia occur in informal macro-level deliberative forums. Constituents made complaints, raised the issues and communicated to each other in the public sphere (Dryzek, 2006) during *kenduri*, funeral, jogging session and so forth. The mechanisms that have been used by MPs to solve these issues were often straightforward. Often, the problems can be solved by going and liaising with a specific government agency and thus there is no urgency for the MPs to employ a dual strategy to tackle these matters.

Politician involvement in social work or related to social activities is understood to be a symbolic gesture to citizens. The politician's symbolic role inspires and motivates citizens as the presence of the representative in everyday life is felt by them especially in the *kampung* (village) of the rural constituencies. Similar to the MPs in other Westminster systems, Malaysian MPs also have devoted a lot of their time to solving local issues. Data findings suggest that in Malaysia, the MPs' symbolic role in devoting their energy to social work is determined and defined by the sociological background of the constituency that pattern the types of social work that must be conducted and is expected of MPs.<sup>76</sup>

According to the interviews I conducted, MPs from the poor states, especially from the rural constituencies, felt that they had more of a burden compared to the MPs from the rich states and urban constituencies in solving issues relating to *kampung* social needs and issues. MPs

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the committee that is unrelated and outside the parliament but of the government programmes at the ministerial, department, constituency or local government levels.

<sup>76</sup> For example, interview data indicate that in the rural constituencies dominated by Muslims, visiting mosques and musollahs was important to the constituency. However, regardless of citizens race, religion or constituency setting (urban or rural), constituents appreciated their MPs if they visited sick persons, attended funerals or wedding receptions or participated in football matches and so forth.

claimed that attending to constituents' needs became the major task. "Being an MP means converting oneself to a one stop complaint centre for citizens" (YB8). Although being involved in local programmes and solving local issues took up MPs' time, they felt obligated to help and were content when their constituents' needs were fulfilled, for example,

Any MPs who are involved in politics must have in their minds that politics is welfare (YB1).

So many MPs actually spend a lot of time solving local issues. Sometimes you have no choice but you have to do it because there is no avenue [for citizens] to make a complaint (YB5).

MPs work for citizens. Being an MP in Malaysia is different than the MPs in other countries especially in the West. I mean we here do welfare work more than acting as legislators. Citizens sometimes don't understand the role of the MPs. They expect us to do all kinds of work like providing them with financial support, helping them to get houses, roads, toilets, and drainage. Some also ask for money for medical treatment etc (YB20).

Constituents sometimes sought help from MPs even though the problems such as the confiscation of their passports, problems with the social security organisation (SOCSSO), the employment provident fund (EPF) and so forth, should be handled directly by themselves. It was seen by some that the MPs' were responsible for helping people get assistance from the Department of Welfare, to help single mothers find jobs, to recommend scholarships for students, and so forth. As YB2 argued, "so to me it is not so much what we should or we should not do, it is how much is to be done!" Often constituents would go straight to their MPs asking questions such as "YB, I have this problem, which department do I seek help from?" (YB2). In other words, citizens looked to someone close to them, which was the MPs. They knew the locations of MP's office and even the MP's residence.

Most often MPs had to deal with complaints made by constituents that fell under the purview and jurisdiction of local government such as parking lots, the market and sewage as well as problems such as money, divorce, land title, clogged drains and so forth. A significant number of MPs argued they had to devote more of their time attending to matters at the constituency level as local governments and councils failed to attend to the needs of residents. YB13 said,

“When I started as an MP, I didn't know that I was expected to do more [social work] than that [making law]!” MPs agreed however that if the system was efficient and effective in providing welfare to citizens, their burden of handling social work would be less.

I think they [local governments] need a lot of improvement, in reaching out [to citizens]....Because my constituents consist mainly of the *kampung baru*,<sup>77</sup> the senior citizens would come to me for assistance when they face problems (YB13).

Nonetheless, interviews also indicate that solving the constituents' day-to-day problems was important for MPs to remain significant at the constituency level, according to the standards “set-up” by the parties. As YB2 said, “there are no limits when it comes to citizens' expectations of their MPs.” Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar, the Santubong MP on MP's cost of serving the constituents:

There are always people coming to see you and weddings, funerals and *kenduri* to attend. In Malaysian politics, if you don't attend, you are condemned by the people....If you only give RM10 people say you are a stingy MP. The minimum you can give is RM50. And when people take your envelope, they don't put it in the same pocket with the others. They put it in a different pocket because they want to see how much they received from their MPs (Chew, 2011).

YB2 argued that the involvement of MPs in social work was common for an elected representative in any country, “It's not unique. I think everywhere is the same....” Constituents sought help from the MPs to deal with their daily problems because of the discrepancies in effectiveness of the authorities. When constituents faced such a problem, they sought the elected representative to help them to rectify it. For example, the traders in a wet market at Pasar Baru, Bukit Bintang, sought help from the MP to solve and negotiate with the DBKL (the Kuala Lumpur City Hall) to take faster action to brighten streetlights and trim the trees around the market. Bukit Bintang MP, Fong Kui Lun said, “I will request them to change to brighter bulbs and also to trim the trees” (Lim, 2010).

Nonetheless, all the MPs agreed that the amount of social work involved in “fire fighting” with the authorities on behalf of their constituencies reflected the weaknesses of the

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<sup>77</sup> *Kampung baru* refers to villages that were opened by the British from the 1940s to 1960s to combat communists in Malaya. Many of them were located in the remote areas. Since then many of the *kampung baru* have gradually expanded and became towns in Malaysia.

parliament. The more the system is required for “fire fighting,” the more time MPs have to devote to social work. Interviews revealed that MPs felt that if Malaysia had a good system to respond systematically to citizens’ daily problems, MPs would not have to be burdened with delivering on trivial issues. When the trivial issues have become prominent and required more sophisticated practices in approaching the federal government, then MPs would also act as mediators on top of being social workers.

### **5.1.2 Mediator**

The role of a mediator to some extent overlaps with the MP’s role as a social worker. However as mediators, MPs were expected to deal with more complicated issues and tasks when communicating and engaging with citizens. This included often both the middle class and working class in urban and rural constituencies. The role of mediators required MPs to act as “educators” and “messengers” as well. Besides trying to solve citizens’ problems, MPs also disseminated and educated the citizens on what options were available for them. Ramanathan (2003), and Malike and Musliza (2010) argue that MPs are important actors for mediating the citizens’ concerns to the government in parliament or communicating the government’s agenda to citizens. MPs act as agents of parliament to mediate the needs and interests of citizen to the government (Ramanathan, 2003) or vice-versa. This insight from the literature is validated as YB10 said,

The actual role of MPs is as a mediator between citizens and government. All the people’s problems would be delivered to the government from small to big problems, from localised to national issues. We have to help the citizens. Political ideology is only during the election campaign. If we side-line or marginalise the people from other parties, that is discrimination and is unfair to them.

Interviews show that all MPs disseminated information to their constituencies about public policy that would impact negatively or positively upon the citizens. Disseminating information to constituents was a must for MPs, as YB4 said, “If I don't tell them, they wouldn't know.” MPs informed citizens about public policy during formal functions or events organised by the government, party or association/interest groups, as conceptualised in Dryzek’s second deliberation location of designated deliberation forums (both at the lay

citizen deliberation and the partisan deliberation) such as *ceramah*,<sup>78</sup> dialogues, and meetings. MPs talked to citizens to ensure they understood the impacts and circumstances of government policies, for example the e-Kasih and the housing scheme related to poverty eradication policy (details in chapters six and seven). Unlike their role as social workers, being mediators required the MPs to engage in the more specific and organised sphere of micro-level deliberative forums. However, tensions may occur while educating citizens about what is available to them because mediators did not have a final say on who would ultimately be the eligible recipients of government assistance and could not directly influence the decision-making of elites, thus exposing them to disappointing their constituents.

A few MPs, especially from Sabah and Sarawak, claimed that they seldom talked about politics to their constituents before attending to their basic needs. As YB12 claimed, “MPs have two tasks. The first is to look after the citizens. The second is to bring development to citizens, physically and spiritually.” Meanwhile, YB4 argued,

Why do [*kampung*] people bother about politics if they still need to be helped?  
[The most important thing is to tell them] what is in there [the relevant policy] for them!

The information on policies that MPs shared with citizens depended on the target groups. Both urban and rural MPs perceived that urban constituencies were more fortunate as the constituents were more educated, although they could be difficult to deal with. In urban constituencies, MPs must prepare more carefully before sitting down for dialogues, meetings or discussions on matters that were brought up in designated deliberation for lay citizens and interest in MPs’ office/community centre, community hall, club house and so forth. In rural constituencies, MPs often used *ceramah* (i.e., less-structured type of formal micro-level deliberative forum than dialogue or meeting) that were held in *balai raya* (small community hall in *kampung*) or *padang* (community playground/football field). The way issues were brought up by urban constituents was more organised in comparison with the approach of rural constituents, as the excerpts below suggest,

Citizens only talk about their dissatisfaction. They won’t say anything [about policy]. They are just the followers. They don’t understand the system (YB11).

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<sup>78</sup> *Ceramah* (public gathering) and other traditional political ways of sending out messages are still being largely practised to reach out to the public especially in *kampung* of the rural constituencies.

Assistance provided is based on needs and what the citizens have asked for. Issues of poverty [eradication] involve the state and federal government. We [at constituency level] try to solve the citizens' needs as much as we can. Most of the poor citizens don't understand the procedures or are information illiterate (YB1).

Fishermen don't know how to organise their ideas to make complaints. They only talk amongst themselves. I have to feel what they've said before lobbying at the ministry level, at the federal government and raise their concerns in parliament (YB12).

The interviews suggest that MPs from rural constituencies devoted more time to mediating citizen's needs because there were a lot of things that had not yet been achieved in their areas. YB4 argued,

I find that with my role in parliament, in addition to being a law maker, we are also here to voice the needs of people [in our constituencies] because this is where [the House of Representatives] the power to distribute projects is.

When constituents sought help from MPs, the MPs would then go on to arrange meetings with the government agencies or ministries to solve the problems, hoping that they would not only address that particular issue but also look into related regulations. If the government agencies or ministries are not able to solve the issues, then the MPs would have no choice but to raise them in parliament, acting as advocate on behalf of their constituents specifically, or citizens generally.

### **5.1.3 Advocate**

Advocating here refers to MPs' commitment to engage and support the citizens' concerns in dialogues, discussions and meetings outside parliament before advocating them in parliament. The MPs' role as advocates is seen in forums both in parliament (the parliamentary sittings) and outside parliament (dialogues, legal talks, workshops, meetings and discussions). Policy advocacy by MPs required highly organised mechanisms to transmit citizens' concerns to the government. Hence, advocacy is only practiced in the Dryzek's first and second deliberation locations, the state institution (parliament) and the designated deliberation forum for both political advocates and lay citizens (community hall, local council, school, MPs' office and so forth), respectively. Policy advocacy is always a highly contested arena between the

society and authority, and thus MPs have always adopted a dual-strategy when they advocate for the interests of citizens (I examine in detail in chapter seven).

The difference in MPs' advocacy roles in comparison with mediator or social worker roles is that advocating often involves a formal micro-level deliberative forum with specific objectives, both in and outside parliament using the community associations such as *Rukun Tetangga* (neighbourhood watch) or *Persatuan Ibubapa dan Guru* (PIBG) (Parent-Teacher Association), or civil society groups such as the *1M Malaysia Reject 100-storey Mega Tower*, the *Save Malaysia*, *Stop Lynas* and *Bersih* (the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections). The role of an advocate, to some extent, overlaps with the MPs' role as legislators. Contrary to their role as legislators however, MPs acting as advocates tend to have a coherent view in advocating for citizens' interests outside parliament, for example, on issues such as poverty eradication, education and security.

Interview data indicate that all MPs believed that one of their major roles was to give voice to citizens' concerns and advocate on their behalf. The Parliament was seen to be the forum for MPs preventing the government from abusing citizens' rights. In Malaysia, advocacy often takes place after the government has announced certain programmes or projects in the country. In other words, the government proceeds with the agenda even though citizens require better explanations of government intentions, and require greater reassurance regarding accountability and transparency of certain projects. For better policy advocacy in such situations, MPs may organise different activities such as legal talks, dialogues and so forth to reach out to the different target groups in their constituencies.<sup>79</sup>

As the political sphere in Malaysia lacks press freedom and the main media are perceived as a government tool (Weiss, 2004, 2006), the MPs have become the best means of channelling citizens' grievances and frustrations with government policy in and outside parliament. The MPs are the only hope for citizens to contest the decision-making of cabinet when citizens feel that they have been marginalised. There were a few cases in 2011 such as the Warisan Merdeka Project,<sup>80</sup> and the Lynas plant for processing rare earth materials, where civil

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<sup>79</sup> MPs organise legal talks involving lawyers to understand bills and constitution, and consequences of their actions.

<sup>80</sup> Based on the Facebook account created for 1M Malaysians Reject 100-storey Mega Tower, which has 308,047 "likes" as of 21 Sept, 2012. The 1M Malaysians Reject 100-storey Mega Tower has developed into a more complex issue beyond the Warisan Merdeka Project, as stated on Facebook: "concerned Malaysians who care about their tax money. We're against corruption, violence, pollution and racism, not just a Mega Tower." The project was announced in the 2011 Budget. Hansard shows that only the opposition MPs questioned the cabinet of the rationales of the Warisan Merdeka Tower. The project was cancelled after massive support from

society led the citizens and was backed up by MPs to contest the projects after the government was perceived to have ignored the citizens' concerns regarding these projects.

In the case of the federal government's Warisan Merdeka Project, opposition to the project was led by the 1M Malaysians Reject 100-storey Mega Tower community group, and supported by a few MPs, mostly from the opposition. After strong opposition from citizens, the project was abandoned or revised or postponed by the government. The MPs of Kota Kinabalu, Bachok and Lembah Pantai for example, criticised the government's intention to carry out a project which citizens in general deemed to be another "wasteful white elephant project." The Kota Kinabalu MP Hiew King Cheu wanted to know the rationale for the government's willingness to invest RM5 billion to build the tallest building in Malaysia, when the Petronas Twin Towers was still the tallest twin towers in the world and had become a Kuala Lumpur icon, when it was reluctant to invest in East Malaysia (Hiew King Cheu, DR.20.10.2011). The Bachok MP and the Lembah Pantai MP asked Putrajaya to cancel the project and required the cabinet to inform the parliament of the specific aim of building a 100-storey tower when many citizens still could not afford to own houses after years of working (Nasharuddin Mat Isa, DR.20.10.2011; Nurul Izzah Anwar, DR.20.10.2011). However, interviews reveal that party obligation may restrict the government MPs from advocating too strongly for citizens' perspectives on public policy and government projects in parliament. YB7 claimed,

Even some BN MPs raise the unhappiness of their constituents in the House of Representatives. However, they still do not support the opposition's motions even though we have the same issues relating to the citizens.

Another issue related to citizens' concerns was the Lynas plant for processing rare earth materials in Gebeng, Kuantan. The Lynas plant was opposed by the residents of Kuantan who were being supported by civil society organisations. This project was protested by the Save Malaysia, Stop Lynas community group that began in 2011. They demanded that the government blocks the rare earth plant from operating. The Kuantan MP was in the front line, advocating for citizens' concerns and lobbying for the government to cancel the project.

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ordinary citizens through Facebook, asking the government to abandon the project. Pressures from civil society and Facebook was used to scrap the government project, the Warisan Merdeka Tower, that was estimated to cost RM5 billion and scheduled to be completed in 2015. Citizens questioned the rationale as all the mega projects in Malaysia have been initiated by the government and only involved GLCs' investment. In other words, the investments did not come from the private sector and therefore, most of the mega projects have been perceived prone to nourishing cronyism amongst the government elite politicians.



Various meetings, dialogues and discussions had been organised to gather opinions and support the voices of the affected residents nearby the proposed plant.

Surprisingly, the Prime Minister's Department agreed to the establishment of a Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) to study the impact of the Lynas plant on the safety and health of the residents in Gebeng on 16 March, 2012. It was rather an unusual decision made by the government as hardly any parliamentary select committee had been established to study proposed government policies and agendas previously. The PSC was established to engage the citizens in relation to the rare earth plant. The PSC was chaired by the Minister of Higher Education, Khalid Nordin, with other eight MPs, four from BN, three from PR, and an independent party member. As was reported on the issue,

It has to do with the process of engagement with the people and for them (PSC) to look at all aspects of the project, especially the safety factor and any possible threats to health....On the Lynas issue, we feel there are still certain things that we need to fulfil, that is, the engagement process, so that we can convince the groups who are still suspicious whether the project is safe or otherwise ("PSC To Increase Public Awareness on Lynas Issues- Najib," 2012).

However, Koh Tsu Koon, the Gerakan President, urged the government to take views from the experts on the Lynas issue rather than from politicians and activists ("PSC to Increase Public Awareness on Lynas Issues- Najib," 2012). The Kuantan residents' group, Save Malaysia, Stop Lynas, however, was sceptical about the government's intentions although the cabinet announced that it would not compromise the safety and health of citizens (Mazwin, 2011; Ong, 2011; "PSC To Increase Public Awareness on Lynas Issues- Najib," 2012). However, there is no concrete statement that has been made by PSC related to this to date.

The interviews, however, indicate that not every MP is an advocate in Malaysia. Often, policy advocacy is driven by the opposition MPs. Since the legislator functions in parliament have been co-opted and overshadowed by executive power, MPs then have used other deliberation locations to undertake policy advocacy outside parliament in addition to the opportunity to pressure the cabinet about issues in parliamentary sittings. As mentioned earlier, policy advocacy occurs within the spheres of the designated deliberation forums before advocating takes place in the state institution (parliament), where the task is then carried out by MPs in their role as legislators.

#### 5.1.4 Legislator

The House of Representatives is the forum for MPs to play their fundamental formal and official role as the legislators in Malaysia. MPs who are elected by citizens from any party are given a mandate to represent the citizens. In theory, with the mandate from citizens, the MPs have the power to draft and debate bills in parliament. They have the will power to support, oppose or remain neutral in any deliberation of bills that have been tabled. However, there are some differences between the theory and the reality of being a legislator in Malaysia.

Interview data show that MPs understood that their official task was law-making but some of them felt that their role as a legislator had been marginalised,

Not that I hate it but I think my role, my potential, my contributions are larger than looking at the drainage problem (YB8).

Ideally, we are legislators. However, Malaysia is rather different in a few things. The government party is very dominant in Parliament. The legislature's functions are more as a rubberstamp [amongst others]. The whip can be imposed on government MPs under the code of conduct if they go against the will of the party. The patronage culture system has become deeply rooted (YB9).

The tradition of ensuring that legislators' voices are in alignment with the party is a common feature across Westminster systems, both in liberal and illiberal democracies. In liberal democracies, the parliament select committee is used as a forum for legislators to study the proposed bills or government agenda as elaborated in chapter two.

The scenario in Malaysia is different however, as presented in chapter one, because the House of Representatives is by default the parliamentary committee. Based on interviews and Hansard data findings, the House of Representatives as the *only* "citizen" formal micro-level deliberative forum of the state institution (Dryzek's first deliberation location) has been weakened gradually in its capacity to check and balance executive power. This has been the case since the 1980s when the executive broadened its power after what is called the "judiciary crisis" in Malaysia (see also Abdul Aziz, 2006; Harding, 1993; Harding & Lee, 2007; Malike, 2010; Milne & Mauzy, 1999). This weakness has resulted from the long-

standing trend of a two-thirds majority of BN as the ruling government since 1957<sup>81</sup> and the repeal of the Parliamentary Services Act (1963).<sup>82</sup> A few MPs, thus, unsurprisingly stated that the gradual centralisation of the federal system to Putrajaya was an obstacle to the MPs' ability to effectively voice citizen concerns in parliament. Although MPs raised citizens' concerns in parliament, they did not in reality have the power to influence the final decision of the cabinet. YB8 said, "What parliament practises today is not parliamentary supremacy but cabinet supremacy. With the current practices, the parliament is the cabinet's puppet." The scenario above has produced constant tensions that required MPs to employ a dual strategy effectively in order to "co-operate" citizens' concerns in the policy-making made by the executive (see chapter seven).

In September 2006, MPs were puzzled over the accountability of ministries to parliament when cabinet members refused to answer questions posed to them before the House of Representatives. Ministers refused to respond to questions and clarify issues pertaining to public interests during the parliamentary debates on the 2006 Budget ("Parliament must conduct itself properly," 2006). However, with the strong presence of opposition MPs in the 12<sup>th</sup> parliament, ministers were forced to answer and clarify some of the controversial decision-making made by the cabinet. The opposition MPs felt that the presence of the ministers and their deputies were important to make sure the cabinet heard and listened to citizens' concerns in parliament as they did not have the opportunity to lobby the ministries in a closed door meeting like the government MPs did.<sup>83</sup> Since the number of the opposition seats has increased in the 12<sup>th</sup> parliament, all participants interviewed agreed that it was good for Parliament. Those MPs who are cabinet members have not taken the parliament sittings

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<sup>81</sup> Eighty nine per cent of the bills that the cabinet endorsed from 1990 to 1995 were passed "without amendments to a single comma or full-stop." Unlike the House of Commons in the British Parliament, it is almost unheard of for the House of Representatives to reject the bills tabled by the cabinet. The executive withdrew and re-examined about 15 per cent of the bills tabled because of the input provided by MPs and NGOs or international pressure. The government only cooperated in about five per cent of the total bills tabled in parliament by taking into consideration the legislators' suggestions. The Constitution of Malaysia has been amended many times. From 1957 through 2005, the parliament has made 42 amendments without counting the clauses. If each clause is counted separately, as practised in most liberal democracies, the Malaysian Parliament has amended about 650 of the provisions in the constitution (Zainon & Phang, 2005).

<sup>82</sup> This act provided the Malaysian Parliament to control and conduct its own administration, financing and staffing but was repealed in 1992. This act was removed from the book by the Speaker of the House of Representatives unilaterally in 1992 (Abdul Aziz, 2006; Chamil, 2010; Faruqi, 2008). See also my explanation in pages 12 and 18-19.

<sup>83</sup> Ministries are responsible and accountable to parliament. However, most of the ministers were absent from parliamentary sittings. Prior to 2006, often the questions for ministers were answered by the deputy minister or the parliamentary secretary. For example, Rafidah Aziz, the former minister of MITI only attended the parliament sittings twice in 2005 and only once answered one question related to her ministry from 1999 through 2005. MPs have complained about the quality of answers given by the ministers (Zainon, 2005).

for granted. Parliament has been attended regularly by the ministers and deputy ministers. The opposition MPs raised the issue of the absence of ministers or deputy ministers during the parliament sitting.

The minister then can hear personally the issue raised by us instead of relying on notes or what is written down by the civil servants. I think it is a good thing!  
(YB13).

Nur Jazlan Mohamed, the Pulai MP, expressed his concern over executive practices related to parliament in policy-making and labelled them as unhealthy and a risk to the stability of politics and the economy in the long term. He used, as an example, the free-trade agreement (FTA) between Malaysia and the United States that was inked in 2008 without informing the parliament. He criticised the government's failure to legitimise the policy by tabling the results of the negotiation in parliament. He argued that, in comparison, the White House tabled the results of negotiations before getting the approval of Congress to protect the Americans' interests.

I reckon that the way government handled the negotiations [with the White House] has completely sidelined the citizens' interests. Citizens have no voice at all to determine public policy that has huge impacts on them (Nur Jazlan Mohamed, DR. 2.7.2008).

The main lesson here is that the formality of the forums is based on the MP's roles, where the deliberations have taken place, and the types of actors involved. Thus through deliberation, certain aspects of micro-level (for example formal procedures) and macro-level (for example informal citizens' voices) will be excluded to reflect and to propose more ideal, coherent and realistic conditions for deliberation that may not necessarily comply with the liberal democratic criteria. Besides the inadequate sites for citizens to engage in policy-making with the government directly at state institution level, some criteria in practising deliberation in the Westminster liberal democracies are neglected because of the differences in modes of engagement in Malaysia that I discuss below.

## **5.2 Modes of Engagement**

Whether MPs perceive themselves as legislators, advocates, mediators or social workers, these roles require some degree of engagement with the citizens. Interviews and new media

data reveal that MPs used two modes of engagement as means to link the parliament to citizens. The modes of engagement were (1) the media, and (2) MPs meeting the citizens face-to-face.

### 5.2.1 Media

Deliberative democracy needs the media to support its functions. In Malaysia, the mainstream media has been heavily controlled and guided by the government, and therefore, positive coverage has only been given to government MPs (Lim, 2012).<sup>84</sup> YB7 argued,

The system is there. [But] I think government should give more freedom to media to cover the opposition parties. How am I to be responsive if you don't get an equal level playing-field?

Contacting mainstream media such as television, radio and newspapers to get attention from the authorities and politicians has been practised by citizens for decades. Even if citizens approach often, the media self-censors acts as a gatekeeper to the ruling government political interests. MPs often responded immediately if a case has been covered by the media and has caught the public attention. However, only the government MPs will get the coverage in main media when they provide support and aids to citizens.

To overcome biased coverage, the opposition MPs have started using the new media such as the internet portals, tweets and blogs, as well as party publications to make their policies known and to express their opinions, hoping to get attention and reaction from the government.<sup>85</sup> The opposition MPs used new media as venues to reflect on and to echo citizens' concerns as they did not receive enough coverage from conventional mainstream media, which are the main TV channels and newspapers.<sup>86</sup> They used the new media to attract

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<sup>84</sup> To date, Malaysia still imposes a few restrictions on topics that can be discussed in public. The government has banned a few issues from being discussed on television as they have been deemed "sensitive and controversial" such as the role of the opposition party, the monarchy, current developments on political and moral values, sex education, ethnicity, language and religion (Gan, 2009; Weiss, 2006, 2011).

<sup>85</sup> As opposition parties, such PAS, PKR, and DAP have never been given, and are unlikely to get permission from the government to use the mainstream media for their political campaigns, they utilise YouTube, blogs and news portals to disseminate their political ideology, agenda and manifestos. The 12<sup>th</sup> general election was used as an indication of how powerful the online media, both in Malay and English, were in penetrating and shaping the political mentality of the young generation and the middle class in Malaysia across ethnic boundaries. MPs such as Lim Kit Siang (the Ipoh Timur MP), Anwar Ibrahim (the Permatang Pauh MP), and Tony Pua (the Petaling Jaya Utara MP) are examples of active MP bloggers. Unlike the opposition parties who were constantly updating their websites and blogs, BN did not have online campaigns for the 12<sup>th</sup> general election (Lee, 2008).

<sup>86</sup> All conventional television channels such as TV1, TV2, TV3, NTV7, TV9, TV al-Hijrah and cable TV Astro are controlled by the government. The conventional printed media that are distributed nationwide such as

the attention of government and the main media. Popularised by the opposition, the practice of using the internet to interact with citizens was also eventually embraced by government MPs, who are in particular well represented on Facebook. When issues are discussed by citizens at large, MPs then raised the issues again in parliament, echoing citizens' concerns. MPs often tackled the matters by visiting the location or the party involved after receiving reports or hearing about the issues.

### **5.2.2 MPs Meeting Citizens**

The essence of citizens' concerns has been captured by MPs through meetings in both the informal macro-level deliberative forums and formal micro-level deliberative forums. The informal macro-level deliberative forum is face-to-face contact in the public sphere such as *kenduri*, *turun padang*, funerals, wedding receptions and so forth. Meanwhile, formal micro-level deliberative forums are the meetings, dialogues or discussions that take place in designated deliberation locations for lay citizens, interest groups and political advocates.

In addition, interview data findings indicate that citizen-MP communication and engagement approaches can be further divided into two categories based on the demographic groups. The first category relates to the urban and rural constituencies and the second category relates to the younger and older generations. In the urban constituencies, constituents' everyday talk that mattered the most were housing, security, education, traffic and so forth. Meanwhile, in the rural constituencies, constituents' everyday talk was focused on basic infrastructure and poverty. To a certain extent their concerns reflected the issues of Malaysia's economic growth since the 1980s. For the second category, the young generation emphasised issues of good governance and democratic participation. The older generation was more concerned about issues of good government alone.

Face-to-face contact involving lay citizens often raised local issues specific to an MP's constituency during *turun padang*, *kenduri*, religious celebrations, funerals or other community social events. These methods of face-to-face contact are inclining towards *kampung*-style but provide useful information for MPs. These informal macro-level deliberative forums within the community were considered by MPs to be the mechanisms for understanding the "ground" better than sitting in their offices, with face-to-face meetings

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Utusan Malaysia, Berita Harian, the New Straits Times and The Star are also controlled by the government. Thus, blogs and online new portals become alternative sources for citizens to get news.

being practiced often in the rural constituencies. Face-to-face contact allowed citizens to engage in everyday talk and for them to take the chance to articulate their grievances and make complaints to their MPs directly. Through face-to-face contact, MPs identified the issues that most concerned their constituents.

Interview data overwhelmingly indicate that citizens prefer their MPs (19 out of the 20 participants) to engage with them in an informal sphere like jogging in the park, going to food bazaars during Ramadan (fasting month), visiting ill persons, attending funerals or wedding receptions, and so forth, in order to meet and mingle with the constituents.<sup>87</sup> The *turun padang* as a symbolic political gesture was important to make citizens feel the presence of their MPs. MPs visited their constituents from two to five times a week if there was no parliament sitting especially in the low cost areas and rural constituencies. It provided MPs clear pictures about their constituents and surroundings. It also gave opportunities for the constituents to talk to their MPs directly. If a case needed to be solved properly, the MPs may ask the person to go to their office or have their staff to visit the person.

Formal micro-deliberative forums such as dialogues, discussions and meetings with society, organisation or association such as PIBG, *Rukun Tetangga*, NGOs and GONGOs provided better structured system for citizens to articulate their perspectives and ideas officially. These forums provided inputs which would allow MPs to reflect on the issues before bringing the matters to the minister or parliament. In general, MPs' offices were responsible for organising dialogues or meetings, but some were proposed by the constituents or associations/societies. Dialogues with constituents, societies/associations and the police were an essential activity of MPs in urban constituencies.

### **5.3 Local Issues: Nothing is Trivial**

Local issues seem trivial *only* if we assume that policy-making is discussed and decision-making is made in the formal micro-level deliberative forums of state institutions and assume that it is *the* sole formal deliberation location in an illiberal democracy. However, as local issues were discussed at a combination of various local sites (in the markets, schools, hospitals, malls and so forth), and involved everyday talk about socio-economy and socio-politics of local communities, they were considered significant to the MPs, especially when

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<sup>87</sup> One participant in a rural constituency visited 2,700 households and attended 700 funerals since becoming an MP, which is highly valued and appreciated by the community especially the ethnic Malays.

citizens felt they have been neglected by authorities and the issues have grown organically bigger than what had been initially expected by elites in government. When the everyday talk grew and was picked up by the mass public, local issues could not be simply treated as trivial in Malaysian politics. In other words, the process of transformation occurred when everyday talk amongst the locals became the basis for deliberation debates in the parliament. A transformative process occurs when the MPs become involved in trivial issues that have been regularly complained by the citizens. Farrelly (2004) suggests that seemingly trivial issues, such as those initiated during everyday talk (Mansbridge, 1999), can become catalyst for a person establishing his or her preferences by considering the concerns of other individuals.

A few MPs argued that many MPs were not keen to spend time on federal matters because there was no incentive for them to work on national issues. Ultimately after being elected, an MP had to consolidate their base in their own constituency as social workers and mediators in preparation for the next election. Despite the presence of State Assemblypersons at the state level, it was very important for MPs to make sure their presence was felt by the locals. YB5 argued “I don't think the public really appreciate that,” referring to those MPs who devoted themselves to the national and international agendas that would affect the nation. YB5 argued that there were a few senior MPs (non-cabinet members) who were known as “the national MPs” and their roles were appreciated by the public but it would not be easy for any MP to emulate them. Therefore, they emphasised local issues specific to their constituency, as claimed by YB5, “You basically bulldozer it [the local issues] in the Parliament.” MPs would raise the local issues in the parliamentary sittings whenever they had an opportunity in doing so without necessarily following the proceedings. Therefore, there is no assurance that the government would listen to the issues seriously.

In parliament there are so many [local] issues raised repeatedly, highlighted in parliament concerning the public, concerning the system, concerning the law, yet they have not been addressed (YB13).

MPs used two methods to engage the citizens in trying to solve local concerns. First, the MPs' staff members were responsible for updating them daily about the issues, problems, or current developments in their constituencies. Second, MPs also discussed issues at the party level. If the issues involved the federal government, MPs liaised with the respective agencies that handled the cases or issues. Besides advocating their constituents' concerns in the Parliament, government MPs also had closed-door meetings at ministerial levels.



In the Malaysian Parliament, a top-down approach has been practiced by the executive since it gained independence from the British. However, MPs have raised the citizens' concerns in parliament, as this study argues, from a "bottom-up" perspective that required them to apply a dual strategy to reduce or if possible eliminate the tensions between the various political actors they engaged with and in terms of the different roles expected of them as MPs.

### 5.3.1 Outside Parliament

Outside parliament, if MPs dealt with the concerns of the middle class/upper class groups, generally, the issues were solved based on negotiation and consensual agreement in the formal micro-level deliberative practices of the designated deliberation forums. Meeting or dialogue was arranged at a specific arena such as the community hall, club house, or the MP's office to discuss the local issues between the citizens and MPs. Whether and to what extent MPs must act as advocates or mediators was based on issues raised by citizens: (1) lay citizen deliberation would be used if the issue was one like access to or the right to live in a gated community, or traffic problem caused by the *pasar malam* (night market) near their neighbourhood; or (2) partisan deliberation would be used if the issues were ones such as the government's plan to build an MRT underground system or acquire land for government projects in their neighbourhood. MPs then advocated the issues to the media to disseminate citizens' concerns and voiced them in the lower house, as legislators, in asking clarification from the relevant ministries.

For the working-class, in general, the issues involved were the citizens' everyday talk based on individual needs, and thus reflected the informal macro-level deliberative forums of the public sphere such as *kenduri*, wedding receptions, funerals and so forth. Even, if they made complaints in the designated deliberation location (e.g., the MP's office/community service), they often went to MPs' offices individually when each case was distinctive to another. MPs or their staff then listened to their complaints, grievances, problems, and so forth, acting like social workers or mediators before examining the trend or pattern of the issues being raised.

I try my level best to help them. Some cases are very specific and individual and some cases can be solved by liaising with the government departments (YB7).

The urban and rural MPs carried out their tasks differently. Interview data findings indicate that the citizens in rural constituencies often did not practise or engage in, dialogues, meetings and so forth. When they had a problem, they went directly to see the MPs, often acted on

individual basis. That is to say that citizen made complaints whenever they had a chance to do so - be it in the market, mosque, temple, wedding reception and so forth, and did not see it as necessary to wait for a formal deliberation occasion.

MPs' main task is to make law. In reality, MPs have to do more. There are different views concerning development, social issues and politics. MPs have to ensure the continuity of development and the social stability for the citizens (YB19).

Some issues could be solved immediately by referring the cases to the specific government agencies such as the welfare department, local council, school, and district office. However, when the MPs could see the patterns of significant citizens' concerns that had been accumulated over time, MPs then discussed the issues in closed door meetings with ministers, acting as mediators; or circulated the issues in the media, acting as advocates; or raised them in parliament, acting as legislators.

### **5.3.2 In Parliament**

In parliament, citizens' concerns were localised when debating a national agenda that touched upon a particular issue related to a local constituency. As many MPs suggested, the localised issues that they advocated in parliament sittings were echoing, to some extent, citizen demands. Often in the remote or poor rural constituencies, MPs' efforts to raise local issues would be praised and appreciated more by their constituents than participating in debates about national agendas. YB5 argued, "[To citizens] whether you're a good MP or not, [depends on] how you cater to local concerns." Interestingly, Hansard records show that most of the matters in the urban constituencies also tended to concentrate more on local concerns. The citizens responded to national issues when they were promoted by the MPs, but they were more interested in solving their immediate problems first. Thus, MPs had to be able to champion their issues in broader ways:

I'm here to represent them. Therefore I must speak for them. That's why these are localised [the issues]....If they are not happy, I won't be here! ...They won't want to vote for me anymore (YB4).

Local issues raised in parliament often involved the physical development, construction, and upgrading of infrastructure and facilities specific to the constituency. Often the vast gap or

unequal development between West Malaysia and East Malaysia was raised by MPs to justify their local issues as deserving to be heard. MPs of East Malaysia were concerned about providing physical development. Meanwhile, the MPs of West Malaysia were concerned about upgrading physical development (see Appendix XII for examples of issues raised in parliamentary sittings). The similarity here is that most of the MPs in rural constituencies said that citizens considered development to be measured in terms of physical development. For them, only the physical development meant development. MPs must bring physical development to their constituencies to make sure the constituents are happy, as YB12 said, “This is what citizens want.”

Abdul Ghapur Salleh, the Kalabakan MP, claimed that citizens felt that the development gap between the states in West Malaysia and Sabah was huge. He felt that Sabah has been sidelined by the federal government although Sabah had been part of Malaysia for 45 years. Such concerns were also raised by other government MPs from Sabah, such as the MPs of Kimanis, Silam, Kota Belud and Kinabatangan. Abdul Ghapur argued that the problem with BN leaders was that they did not like the government MPs of Sabah telling the truth about citizens’ concerns. He said although the MPs of Sabah had, on many occasions, raised these issues regarding the current stage of development in Sabah since the 11<sup>th</sup> term of Parliament, Putrajaya had taken Sabah for granted (Abdul Ghapur Salleh, DR.12.05.2008).

Maybe people say that the Kalabakan MP *bercerita* (the telling of a story) in the chamber is like being in opposition. Actually I’m not the opposition. I’ve told more stories (*bercerita*) in the past when there were previously only 20 opposition MPs in the chamber” (Abdul Ghapur Salleh, DR.12.05.2008).

MPs felt that they should focus on a national agenda that would benefit the nation directly or indirectly instead of the local issues, but they had no choice.

[I speak up] because my constituents were fed up [with the empty promises given to them]. I have no choice but to fight for them (YB12).

MPs agreed that they raised local issues in parliament in order to get attention from the government. As mentioned by YB13,

To me there is no right or wrong [on emphasising local issues]....whenever there is a space, I would raise it. Why? Because I’ve been trying to raise it with the

department officers [nothing happened]! I've written to ministry, no reply! What other options do I have to bring issues to the attention of the top authority or the minister in charge?

YB13 further claimed,

Some cases take months until I've raised them in Parliament. Only then do you get officers from the ministry come to me and say "please pass me the information."

Although Parliament has become the last resort to raise local issues, it is a perfect and legitimate forum for many MPs who felt that their constituencies had been left behind, unnoticed by the government, to raise local concerns repeatedly. However, some MPs claimed that they did not raise an issue that was not under the Federal government jurisdiction.

I don't simply bring the issues and raise them in the parliament, [unless], it is related to the law or its policy from Putrajaya (YB15).

[Through attending the citizen sessions and *turun padang*] I can see what has been done and what needs to be done. I voice their needs, concerns and interests in the parliament...When involved with citizens' interests all MPs should go beyond political ideology. Any citizens who need help, we must help them (YB1).

I must say in Malaysia, we are very democratic! We've never been penalised for what we've said in the *Dewan Rakyat*. It's even worse when we have our session in a closed door meeting where we really hit [*sic.*] ["fight"] them [the ministers], like if things that are meant to be for our people are not given to them on time. We really hit [*sic.*] ["fight"] them. And nothing has happened to us. We are not penalised. So that shows that there is maturity in our political system. There is already political maturity in our system (YB14).

Many MPs felt that because of the lack of transparency and biased coverage in the main media, the Parliament had become the perfect venue to emphasise local agendas that were specific to a particular constituency. As the main media were controlled and dominated by the government, the opposition MPs had no opportunity to make or issue a press statement to

disseminate information about what had been and needed to be done with regard to the constituents or citizens.

[Unfortunately], there is a lack of media space in this country! So, MPs have a tendency to voice local issues in the Parliament (YB2).

All the MPs from the opposition agreed that the localised agenda in parliament could be reduced to a minimum level if the government did not control the media in Malaysia. The citizens' voices were filtered first before being aired on TV or printed in the newspapers however, and there was no transparency in airing citizens' concerns. The government only published news that would help them to win over the citizen's sentiments toward the government. For example, many MPs from Sabah and Sarawak raised local issues in parliament because the venues for them were limited compared to the MPs from the Peninsular. News in the mainstream media hardly covered Sabah and Sarawak. They had to speak out in parliament to make sure that the federal government was aware of the situation there. Therefore, voicing the needs of their constituencies for the basic needs became compulsory in order to be heard by the federal government.

When I raise it in the parliament, I raise it for my people. I just ask for what I think citizens in my constituency deserve. I'm not against the party. You see, everywhere in Peninsular [Malaysia] has roads, highways – world class standard. But if you go to rural Sabah and Sarawak, many areas are not accessible to land transportation. People are heavily dependent on rivers. Don't talk about the digital era etc. You tell me how to have IT *celik* [literacy] if there is no proper electricity supply. This is what I've raised in Parliament, for example....The government has done a lot to eradicate poverty but mostly the projects have been concentrated in Peninsular [Malaysia] (YB20).

They felt that there was no point in talking about “abstract” matters of political ideology when the basic needs of their constituencies were lacking, compared with the urban or rural constituencies on the Malaysian Peninsular.

Providing and establishing basic infrastructure like roads, electricity and treated water are “politics” matters for them [the villagers] (YB19).

Interview data indicate that most of the MPs said that they had to raise these basic infrastructure matters in parliament and mention them repeatedly until the federal government took note of the matters they addressed.

I can't afford to keep quiet ....[E]ven though I understand the limitations, I still have to play my role in voicing it. Because otherwise if we do not voice it, the government may think that it's ok, you know! (YB4).

In stark contrast, all the government MPs from the Peninsular agreed that the top-bottom approach to policy-making implemented by the government did not hamper their duty as MPs. YB18 said, “We attend to the citizens’ concerns after we have a mandate from the party.” They felt that Putrajaya always supported them. They claimed many of the constituents’ concerns were solved by consensus at the executive level as traditionally has been the practice in other Westminster-style parliaments in the Western and non-Western world.

This section illuminates that there were two groups that MPs dealt with in and outside parliament, the middle-class and the working class. Depending on who they were dealing with, the MPs then changed their roles, that is, they would switch from acting as social workers, mediators or advocates depending on the target groups, political actors, and the issues they were dealing with. Socio-economic factors thus determined the types of deliberative practices undertaken and the locations where deliberation take place.

#### **5.4 Parliament Governance System: Implications to the Members of Parliament Roles**

Using commercial airlines as a metaphor, the Malaysian Parliament resembles the “class” system in an airline operation, such as first class, business class and economy class. The treatment given to MPs is based on their posts in the cabinet, seniority and political alliances. The cabinet members are equivalent to the first class. The senior backbenchers and senior MPs are equivalent to the business class. Finally, the opposition and junior MPs are equivalent to the economy class. The prioritisation of MPs’ concerns often depends on seniority. This is the practice in the parliament, in the party organisations, and even when dealing with the public sector.

However brilliant you are as a national thinker, if you are not elected by your division as a chief, you will go nowhere...[U]nless you are a minister. Otherwise you have no reason not to go to *kenduri* (YB5).

The hierarchical system in parliament can be the factor that hinders MPs from performing their roles effectively as legislators and for policy advocacy in parliament. MPs claimed that many practices in Malaysian politics were very hierarchical, “We have to respect our seniors when it comes to decision-making” (YB7). This can be an “obstacle” for new MPs.

Besides enhancing MP duties as outlined in the code of conduct, the minister in-charge for parliament affairs in the Prime Minister’s Department, Nazri Aziz, in 2005 also proposed that the parliament should govern its administration autonomously from the Prime Minister’s Department to make it a “first world parliament”. Nazri Aziz suggested that the first step that needed to be taken was reviving the Parliamentary Services Act (1963) and re-installing parliament as an autonomous body.<sup>88</sup> Ironically, the Prime Minister’s Department did not consult the MPs and neglected their views about the motion to re-install parliament’s “independence.”<sup>89</sup> The opposition leader, Lim Kit Siang said, “By right, MPs should be involved from the beginning, or what other countries call the Green Paper stage,” such as in the British Parliament, in which the parliament will be informed and involved (Chow, 2005).

In an interview with the Sun in 2005, Shad Saleem Faruqi an expert in the Malaysian Constitution, claimed that “the idea that Parliament makes law is a beautiful folklore of democracy, it is a democratic myth....The stark reality is that Parliament legitimates. It does not legislate” (Chow, 2005). In other interviews, he also argued that the legislative process in the Malaysian Parliament was functionally an executive process. As described in chapter one, the practice in Malaysia is that the Attorney-General’s Chambers draft the bills, the ministers table the bills in parliament and finally Putrajaya decides when the bills should become laws.

So you can actually say that the centre of gravity of the entire legislative process has shifted from Parliament to Putrajaya....And Parliament does not sit every day. So it’s more like a part-time institution. Whereas the government works 24 hours

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<sup>88</sup> Previously, under the Parliamentary Services Act (1963), the Parliament was allowed to administer parliament’s affairs, recruit staff and control its own budget.

<sup>89</sup> Technically, the parliament cannot practise the separation of powers because it is an institution under the oversight and surveillance of the Prime Minister’s Department. The parliament staff and speaker’s promotion and leave are subject to the Public Services Department. The Parliament also depends on the Treasury for its annual budget.

a day and its tentacles spread everywhere. How can a part-time institution control an over-time institution? The executive is an over-time institution (Zainon & Phang, 2005, pp.8-9).

In 2011, the cabinet rejected the suggestion made by the Seputeh MP, Teresa Kok, on the need to establish a committee system within the parliament that included MPs from both sides of the parliamentary divide to formulate and study public policies. Nazri Aziz argued that the current parliamentary system was “good enough” and thus rejected Teresa Kok’s suggestion (Nazri Aziz, DR.16.03.2011). Under the current system, MPs are allowed to offer suggestions without having a final say or influence over the formation of policies.

Many people see the role of MP as a constituency worker....[B]ecause Parliament has no committee system. So there is no avenue for you to participate at policy level. The only thing available is the lower house. In the lower house, the louder you shout, the easier you get [attention] (YB5).

Without a committee system, Shad Saleem Faruqi argued that the changes and potential for cabinet to abuse power on behalf of the ruling party is huge. He said, “The debates in the House can touch on policy matters. The committee is the body which goes through the nitty-gritty. It has to be done in a non-partisan way” (Chow, 2005).

The nature of the debates can be classified into three categories. Firstly, MP debates often have been blinded and dominated by the political ideology, acting more like mediators who have been occupied to “educate” each side of the political divide. Secondly, MPs have been more concerned about technical issues, such as “points of order,” acting more like advocates who opposed each other across the political divide. Third, debates have been concentrated on local issues, pushing MPs to act more like social workers who are occupied with citizens’ everyday talk. Debates in the 8<sup>th</sup> parliament to the 11<sup>th</sup> parliament (1990-2008) were dominated by the senior MPs (especially from the government). However, the opposition MPs had more prominent presence in the debates in the 12<sup>th</sup> parliament (2008 - Mac 2013). In general, from the 8<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup> parliaments, half of the debates were on issues that were merely concerned with the party’s interests and ideology. MPs were keen on “self-crediting” their “good works” and verbally attacking each other across the divide, based on political ideology rather than arguing based on facts or citizens’ concerns. Broadly, the issues that were brought by the MPs from East Malaysia (Sabah and Sarawak) can be characterised as “local” while the issues that were raised by the MPs from West Malaysia can be characterised



as national or global in nature. The MPs of the urban constituencies were more concerned about issues of economy and security while the MPs of the rural constituencies were more concerned about the physical development of infrastructure.

Interestingly, some MPs felt that they were already channelling the citizens' voices by giving the mandate to cabinet for making decisions.<sup>90</sup> A government MP argued that the cabinet had already considered the citizens' concerns and interests when tabling the bills in the House of Representatives. In other words, the democratic notion amongst government MPs reflects that of the electorate democracy (Saward, 2000, 2003), which only aggregates the voice of the majority in parliament.

If [BN] doesn't listen to citizens, I reckon BN wouldn't have [been able to] run Malaysia since independence. When citizens choose BN, it means they have given the mandate to BN to represent their interests, administrating the development and their welfare (YB18).

In other words, the government MPs only "echoed" the voices of the cabinet, instead of influencing the government decision-making. The former is a command characteristic of the Westminster systems. Often, the political ideology overshadowed the issues that have been advocated and the substance of the parliamentary debates. The lower house, as the ultimate formal micro-level deliberative forum at the federal level in reflecting citizens' concerns, was often used as an arena for MPs from across the divide to contest and champion their political ideology. As Bung Moktar Radin, the Kinabatangan MP said,

[B]esides talking politics, we don't have priority. In the US after the election, the representatives from government and opposition sit down together to discuss. Maybe the American system is better than ours. We are immediately after election continuing to fight, nothing but keep fighting from time to time [in the parliament]" (Bung Moktar Radin, DR.18.02.2009).

YB2 suggested that the Malaysian Parliament should have a practice of free votes (as opposed to party bloc votes) to enhance its legitimacy and accountability towards citizen

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<sup>90</sup> The Malaysian Parliament's political culture, as Saifuddin (2008, p. 26) claims, is "totally detrimental to the people who are being represented" as the legislators can be blinded by their party's interest and thus become defensive.

concerns. Therefore, the parliamentary governance system must be changed to break down its rigidity. YB2 further suggested that the voting system should be based on an MP's belief, not based on vote conformity with the party agenda. YB4 claimed that the government MPs can only object and criticise the bill but do not have the option not to vote for it. The government MPs were only safe if they do not vote against the government bills and motions that the cabinet proposes in parliament nor give their support to the opposition MPs' views in parliament. Some of the opposition MPs agreed that many of the government MPs (as social workers, mediators and advocates) were in line with the opposition on certain issues, like poverty, ethnic relations, sustainable development, and education, when outside the parliament in the public sphere of deliberation location. However inside parliament party discipline is strictly enforced. YB8 claimed, "We discuss these in the lobby. But that's it!" With the whip system, as the legislators of the ruling government, MPs would not be able to go against any cabinet proposals.

When BN lost a two-thirds majority, parliament had difficulty adjusting to the practices and norms in question-and-answer sessions. For example, in the first parliamentary sitting of the first term after the 12<sup>th</sup> general election, a few opposition and independent MPs requested additional questions to ask the Prime Minister but were denied by the speaker.<sup>91</sup> The speaker allowed the government MPs to ask additional questions but not the opposition MPs. Lim Kit Siang of DAP argued that it was the first time in the history of the Malaysian Parliament that additional questions were not allowed and this was considered unprecedented (Lim Kit Siang, DR.30.04.2008). However, the speaker only allowed the opposition MPs of Jelutong, Marang and the independent MP of Pasir Mas to ask additional questions after the Prime Minister requested the speaker to do so (Abdullah Badawi, DR.30.04.2008).

As most of the opposition MPs were denied the opportunity to ask additional questions, the Ipoh Timur MP made a direct remark in parliament that the Prime Minister's vision of transforming this institution into "a first world class parliament" would be merely an illusion as the speaker was taking sides during parliamentary sittings. Lim Kit Siang suggested the way debates were conducted in the House of Representatives indicated that the Malaysian Parliament was only as good as the parliament in "a tenth world class parliament" (Lim Kit Siang, DR.30.04.2008). Batu Gajah MP, Fong Ko Kuan proposed that the government should

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<sup>91</sup> Hansard records indicate that opposition MPs of DAP, PAS, and PKR were more active in participating in the debates during the first sitting of the 12<sup>th</sup> parliamentary debates, which shows that 23 opposition MPs and one independent MP had attempted to participate in debates against six government MPs.

reform the governing system in Parliament. She suggested that the duration for parliamentary sittings in the House of Representatives should be longer because more MPs could voice citizens' concerns and problems in parliament. She urged all MPs to support her suggestion. Fong Ko Kuan also suggested that parliament should establish a "house business standing committee" to ensure that every question posed by MPs will be answered in the House of Representatives. She felt that debate sessions were not long enough to accommodate proper debate between the MPs (Fong Ko Kuan, DR.21.02.2000).

Interview data indicate that none of the government MPs participants conceived of their roles in terms of acting as a check and balance to the cabinet/government. The opposition MPs strongly felt that it was their duty to scrutinise government policies and to make sure the government fulfilled their promises. "We have to make sure that law that we've passed reflects the citizens' interests" (YB2). As checks and balances in parliament were weak, the executive often overruled the procedures. With weak checks and balance mechanisms, the one-way "express" communication by the government in initiating policy had further isolated citizens in the policy-making process.

Of course, the executive decisions are overshadowed by the BN MPs decision-making. [But] the scenario is changing. Today, since the BN doesn't have a two thirds majority in the House of Representatives, the voices of citizens have been taken more seriously by the executive (YB7).

For so many years, the way parliament conducted debates was not questioned. Consequently, the new culture of insisting the lower house to provide more rigorous explanation on tabled bills was resisted by the Speaker who often showed partisanship inclination by taking side with the government MPs. For example, the Speaker, Pandikar Amin Mulia of the House of Representatives rejected the attempts of opposition MPs, Azan Ismail (the Indera Mahkota MP) and Yusmadi Yusoff (the Balik Pulau MP) to proclaim the Green Technology, Energy and Water Supplementary Supply Bill unconstitutional because of the failure of the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water to include RM133 million discrepancies in the bill, in the parliament sitting on 30 March, 2011. They argued that it was the parliament's responsibility and obligation to oversee the taxpayers' money spent by the ministry. The speaker, however, argued that it was not in the interest of the parliament to debate the excess expenditure for development as the ministry was accountable for putting the motion in parliament. Pandikar said, "This has been practised [i.e. the excessive expenditure has never

been debated] for many years until Balik Pulau and Indera Mahkota raised it” (Pandikar Amin Mulia, DR.30.03.2011). In other words, according to the Speaker, the minister did not have to comply and answer to questions raised by MPs in parliamentary sittings.

In sum, the governance system of the Malaysian Parliament has direct implication for the quality of parliamentary debates in Malaysia. In this section, I showed how and why MPs as legislators combined their other roles as advocates, mediators and social workers in raising citizens’ concerns in parliament. Ideally, the lower house, as the only formal micro-level deliberative forum of the state institution whose members are democratically elected by citizens at the federal level, should concentrate on law-making related to the national and international interests of Malaysia. However, often the MPs’ roles in the House of Representatives mirror their roles outside the parliament as social workers, mediators and advocates while *acting* as legislators in parliament.

### **5.5 Civil Society: Reframing MP-Citizen Deliberative Practices**

Deliberative democracy emphasises the importance of having a consensus that has been agreed upon by citizens to protect the public from being manipulated by the government. The qualities of accountability (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; Uhr, 1998) and legitimacy (Elster, 1998) in weighing issues discussed and debated during the production of meaningful consensus in deliberative activities, are also actually embraced within the context of the Asian Values conceptualisation. If the concept on consensual decision-making of *muafakat* and *musyawarah* are valuable elements in the Asian Values that have been adopted in the Malay Archipelago for centuries, therefore, the question is where the Asian Values have “gone wrong.” Why are the so-called Asian Values perceived by civil society to be an obstacle to the advancement of democratic ideas in Malaysia, despite elements of traditional culture being aligned with the concept of consensual decision-making in politics?

One of the reasons, as this study argues, is the former Prime Minister Mahathir. Although Malaysia under Mahathir (1981-2003) promoted the Asian Values, his paternalistic and technocratic style and top-down approach in governing Malaysia left little room for civil society to be taken seriously in policy-making (Weiss, 2004, 2006, 2011). In other words, Mahathir’s good government approach focused on consensual of communal decision-making qualities in so far that it applied to the forging of consensus between the leaders of the different component parties of BN. This provided only little space for civil society to be

engaged with the government as well as the political opposition (Milne, & Mauzy, 1999; Mohd Azizuddin, 2011; Ramasamy, 2004; Verma, 2002b; Weiss, 2004, 2006). Mahathir is a true believer of the concept that places too much emphasis on political rights in governing a nation as a recipe for disaster in terms of state unity and harmony, especially for a state like Malaysia that embraces a communitarian culture in order to unite its multi-ethnic citizens (Safar, 1996; Verma, 2002b). The environment, however, has gradually shifted to allow civil society to become more effective in influencing government policy-making since Abdullah Badawi (Mohd Azizuddin, 2009). As the government has always propagated the somewhat paranoid idea that the opposition and the international agencies are the “invisible hands” behind civil society, it is often believed their movement must therefore, be curbed for the public good (Mohd Azizuddin, 2011, p. 8399).

Civil society organisations in Malaysia such as NGOs can be categorised into two groups: the government-sponsored NGOs (GONGOs) and the private-sponsored NGOs.<sup>92</sup> Although the NGOs that have been established under the government umbrella are considered to be “apolitical” organisations, the objectives of their establishment are questionable.<sup>93</sup> Often they are perceived as a means for the government to indoctrinate the public with its propaganda. On the other hand, the NGOs that have been funded by the private sector are considered to be pro-opposition<sup>94</sup> or “agents” of a third party,<sup>95</sup> most often the West.<sup>96</sup> Generally, the non-political civil society movements in Malaysia are often successful in advocating for their agenda and thus influencing government policy-making (Verma, 2002b). But the situation is different for the civil societies that are critical of government policies. NGOs that are not much concerned about human rights, democracy and good governance have higher chances

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<sup>92</sup> The Societies Act 1966 (1988) regulates the establishment and programmes of civil society and political parties in Malaysia. The Minister of Home Affairs has the power and upon his discretion to decide and restrict the activities run by civil society.

<sup>93</sup> For examples the Malaysian Youth Council (MBM – Majlis Belia Malaysia), Gabungan Penulis Nasional (GAPENA) and Gabungan Pelajar Melayu Semenanjung (GPMS).

<sup>94</sup> The government considers civil society to be the agent for the opposition as there has been a trend that activists join opposition parties to lobby for their agenda. For example Charles Santiago (DAP) was the coordinator of the Coalition against Privatisation of water, Tian Chua and Sivarasa Rasiah (PKR) were with SUARAM, Elizabeth Wong (assembly person for PKR) was with HAKAM. The trend is for NGO activists to join political parties as they find it difficult to be heard at the government level if their agenda is political, and thus their views will be rejected as they are considered to be anti-establishment, sponsored by foreign agencies that have a hidden or malicious agenda (Ramasamy, 2004).

<sup>95</sup> For examples SUARAM, ALIRAN, HAKAM, ABIM, JIM (Jemaah Islah Malaysia), Dongjiaozong and JUST (Just World Trust).

<sup>96</sup> Mahathir believed that civil society is contentious to public order and thus their movements and activities must be monitored by the state. Under Mahathir, civil society movements were seen as “communist” first but with the end of the cold war, they were labelled as “Western agents” that envied the political stability and ethnic harmony in Malaysia (Mahathir, 1982; Milne & Mauzy, 1999; Mohd Azizuddin, 2011; Tan & Bishan, 1994).

for influencing government policies such as the Federation of Malaysian Consumer Association (FOMCA), the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS), the World Wide Fund Nature for Malaysia (WWF), and the Malaysian AIDS Council. NGOs for human rights like Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM), Aliran Kesedaran Negara (ALIRAN) and the Human Rights Association of Malaysia (HAKAM) are NGOs that have been involved in discussing and providing feedback to the Malaysian Human Rights Commission (SUHAKAM). These NGOs often fight for human rights, judicial reform, press freedom, cultural rights and democracy in Malaysia.<sup>97</sup> However, the government often ignores their demands with the most common reason for marginalising them being the potential threat to the national unity and internal security (“NGOs demand NST apology for foreign plot claim,” 2012; “Political demonstration in Malaysia,” 2011; Verma, 2002a, 2002b).

The government is not at all proactive when it comes to taking into account the demands of civil society. However, the government, to some extent, addresses public concerns when the pressure comes from civil society, albeit indirectly. For example, this happened in the cases of the Warisan Merdeka Project and the Lynas Plant mentioned earlier in this chapter. Often, however, the government considers only those civil society demands that do not represent the wider citizenry’s views and interests (Mohd Azizuddin, 2011). Those “partial” civil society views that are actually taken into account in public policy can be described as “selected deliberation.” The government does practise favouritism in inviting certain civil society groups in the making of public policy. There is also a tendency for the involvement of civil society organisations in consultations to be for show and for the purpose of legitimising the agenda.<sup>98</sup> This predictable pattern indicates the success of the regime in dictating,

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<sup>97</sup> SUHAKAM has been advocating that the government should re-establish the judicial review to review laws that prevent citizens from challenging the executive decision-making in court. The chairman of SUHAKAM, Abu Talib Othman said,

Every legal power must have legal limits, otherwise there is a dictatorship. And we do not want a dictatorship. The court is the last bastion of liberty. If we are prevented from going to court to seek justice, where do we go? (“Time for judicial review,” 2006).

<sup>98</sup> When the government has used the term “engaging civil society in policy-making” as they wish without understanding its purpose, manipulation, exploitation and confusion has become obvious. Saifuddin has refuted the level of involvement of civil society and interest groups in government policy by using a few terms such as tokenism, cosmetic or window dressing, manipulation, participative management, dumping, and delegation (Saifuddin, 2008, pp. 65-66): (1) tokenism refers to the government only inviting civil societies who agree to be involved without questioning the government decisions at all stages of the programme; (2) cosmetic or window dressing describes the government’s intention to build a good image by including civil society in the programme without them being able to contribute anything; (3) manipulation happens when the government involves civil society without knowing what their roles are; (4) participative management refers to the involvement of civil society in managing the government programmes without having any power to influence the decisions; (5) dumping describes the government agenda being handed over to civil society without any help or supervision;

manipulating or restricting the public from taking part in contesting government decisions via civil society. However, since the *Reformasi*, the demands from the civil society to revise, change, amend or repeal some policies (e.g., election, judiciary, UUCA and ISA) have increased. The efforts of the government to detach and isolate citizens from expressing their views informally has been gradually contested and resisted by citizens (see Weiss 2004, 2006, 2011).

Civil society movements have entered a new era in Malaysia because of the strong support from the youth and the middle class. Young voters under 30 across ethnic groups and the educated, internet savvy and open minded middle class have less preference for ethnic-based politics, which was the factor that caused BN to lose many seats in the recent general election and by-elections. The young and middle class voters believed that BN's public policy had alienated the citizens with their illusion of a multi-ethnic and harmonious state. The defensiveness of the government in protecting some sectors and individuals has made citizens question the legitimacy of some legislation that has been passed by parliament (Saifuddin, 2008). Amongst them, for example, the non-Malays of these two groups felt that the affirmative action programme had marginalised them and only benefited the Malays and the young and middle class Malays were concerned about human rights and good governance as opposed to what they perceived as corrupted UMNO politicians who only practise cronyism and desire wealth. Amongst the new generation and middle class, there is a strong will to demand government for transparency, accountability, and integrity beyond the rhetoric. Fears of engaging civil society and the citizens at large in policy-making are, however, embedded amongst "the old-school politicians" in the government, who do not seem to be able to grasp and understand the changing political landscape in Malaysia (Saifuddin, 2008, p. 70), suggesting a generational divide that will open up Malaysia's politics that could be as consequential as ethnic divides in the past.

With the changes in demographic patterns, citizens' perspectives on the Malaysian government have also changed. Analysis of media reports indicates that citizens have been gradually disengaging themselves from the authorities and have turned to civil society to advocate their views. By advocating for citizens outside the political arena, civil society has been able to put pressure on the state for political reform. Civil society uses the new media to gain citizens' support through activities such as the signing of online petitions before

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and (6) delegation refers to civil society members being appointed to represent the government without any intention of involving them directly in policy-making.

delivering them to the respective authority in Malaysia. For example, controversial clauses were removed from the Societies Act 1981 when petitions signed by 70,000 individuals were submitted to the government (Mohd Azizuddin, 2011, p. 8406).

Amongst the heated debates was the proposal to amend and/or repeal some acts that are considered draconian or violate citizens' rights to be involved in politics, such as the University and University College Act (UUCA). The UUCA was an act that outlined the blueprint for the establishment and management of universities and college universities in Malaysia.<sup>99</sup> The UUCA has been argued by civil society activists to be a contentious law that has prevented students from being involved in any political activity and was considered a violation of the freedom of expression rights amongst students who wish to be vocal about government policies. Under the UUCA, university students who showed support for a political party would be suspended from their studies. However, the UUCA, to some extent, did not completely deprive students from challenging government policy (Weiss, 2011). The civil society campaigns, pressures and lobbying for the government to repeal this act were finally successful. The Minister of Higher Education, in 2006, organised brainstorm sessions to gain feedback from MPs outside the Parliament to give their views about the UUCA in an attempt to improve the law governing university students (Teoh & Surin, 2006; Weiss, 2011).

An interesting question to ponder is to the extent to which civil society has been able to reframe MP-citizen deliberative practices in Malaysia. On the one hand, as the views of ordinary citizens in the informal deliberative sphere are often unstructured, civil society's role in filling the gap between the public and the state has been vital to channel the views into structured formal forums. On the other hand, as civil society organisations have no platform to channel their views directly to parliament, the MPs have been the perfect "bridge" to ensure that the government would consider their voices.

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<sup>99</sup> Besides the opposition MPs, the government MPs who are committed and dedicated to speaking their minds are Tengku Razeleigh Hamzah of Gua Musang, Shahril Samad of Johor Bahru and Saifuddin Abdullah of Temerloh. Saifuddin is one of the MPs and cabinet members in the Malaysian government who has been committed and dedicated to lobbying the federal government to amend the UUCA, a view that is parallel to those of many civil societies in Malaysia as it was considered to suppress the freedom of students and human rights. Many MPs have been lobbying the government to repeal or amend a few acts that are considered draconian and outdated, to have better democratic practices in Malaysia.



## 5.6 Conclusion

The Malaysian MPs have carried out duties beyond their roles as legislators. Besides the advocacy role, MPs have exercised roughly the same roles since independence (Musolf & Springer, 1979). Findings overwhelmingly indicate that MPs have handled many issues beyond their official parliamentary duties (see also Loh & Surin, 2011). Citizens may have different notions about the actual role of MPs that they voted for. MPs are expected to serve the public through non-parliamentary tasks. A great MP, in the eyes of citizens, is a multi-tasking person. As stated by all participants, MPs in Malaysia play a role in politics, development, socioeconomics, administration of government organisations and NGOs, community, and religious activities. MPs have to establish development and to look after the welfare and security of citizens and in particular their local constituents.

The concept of “agree to disagree” prevails in describing the parliamentary debates related to the citizens’ concerns. Similar to other Westminster systems, government MPs have a tendency to produce coherent decision-making by supporting and voting on cabinet initiatives. Practices of listening to constituents’ needs and demands occurred in fulfilling their day-to-day problems, yet there has been a missing link in terms of cabinet willingness to attend to citizens’ concerns that are advocated by the MPs in Parliament. The perpetuation of centralised power in cabinet and the excessive influence of the executive in policy-making have marginalised citizens’ concerns and have thus indirectly undermined the rights of citizens to have their voices reflected in public policy.

As for civil society organisations, their potential to insert themselves into government agenda-making, and to play a role in the negotiation of policies through state decision-making processes is yet to be seen. The collaboration between civil society and MPs extends across multiple dimensions and includes areas such as the economy, politics, the environment, social issues, gender, youth, health, transportation, human rights and so forth. However, civil society’s connection to parliament can be described as resembling more of a courtesy extended to them by the government rather than a fundamental right. Institutional changes must be made to enhance “bottom-up” governance systems in order to effectively involve the full range of civil society voices in parliamentary deliberation. As elaborated in chapters one and three, the Malaysian Parliament does not have a committee system. Therefore, previous suggestions to only reform the administrative processes would not ultimately make Malaysia’s parliament functions like other Westminster-style parliaments in

liberal democracies. It is important for the Malaysian Parliament to also set up a select parliament committee that includes members across the political divide to examine bills in order to enhance transparency and ensure accountability in policy-making.

Nonetheless, the willingness of the MPs to listen and engage in the deliberation process without rejecting what has been expressed by citizens and giving them due consideration alongside existing preferences that have been established by the state, cabinet and ruling party, show that deliberative practices do occur in different forms based on the different problems communities faced and the different values they observed. MPs' willingness to listen and accommodate citizens' trivial issues and their everyday talk by switching between different roles and engaging with citizens in different deliberation locations is parallel to the ideas of deliberative democracy seen to be a salient practice of liberal democracies (see also Dryzek, 2006, 2000; Farrelly, 2004; Mansbridge, 1999).

## **Chapter Six**

### **Poverty and Quota Polemics in Malaysia: Old Wine in New Bottles?**

Poverty eradication and the quota system for Bumiputeras are used as cases within a case study to understand the deliberative practices in policy-making in this study. Strikingly, so many claims have been made about the successes and failures of Malaysia in eradicating poverty and restructuring society through the quota system for Bumiputeras in education, economic equity and public sector, that these issues have been (re)-visited continuously in the parliament sittings to date. By examining Hansard records, this study shows that in every parliament session since the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) (1971-1990), the issues of poverty and quotas have always been raised by MPs. These issues have been intensifying since the 12<sup>th</sup> parliament as the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) denied a two thirds majority to the Barisan Nasional (BN) for the first time. Poverty and quota issues are becoming more prominent in the Malaysian Parliament.

The lengthy discussions on poverty and quota issues in this study are divided into two chapters (chapters six and seven). This is done for two reasons. Firstly, this study offers new insights into the poverty and quota polemics in Malaysia, exploring insiders' perspectives (mainly the MPs') of the parliamentary discourse via interviews and Hansard as well as newspaper reports, in order to better understand deliberative practices in Malaysia. Therefore, it is logical to present fresh insights and descriptions on the poverty eradication and the quota system in one chapter first, before empirically examining the policies related to these cases. In other words, the first part of these discussions is the "re-introduction" of poverty and quota system policies in Malaysia by refreshing and revisiting the views of existing works on these two policies, utilising the underutilised but pertinent resources, in particular the parliamentary Hansard. Secondly, the following chapter seven analyses deliberative practices in Malaysia by utilising new insights from this chapter about the poverty and quota system, gathered from data that have been ignored previously, to investigate whether and to what extent MPs are and could play a role in solving these endless polemics by employing a dual strategy.

#### **6.1 The New Economic Policy and the Embeddedness of Deliberative Practices**

Poverty eradication programme and the quota system for Bumiputera are related to affirmative action policies in Malaysia. To grasp the essence and underlying causes of the endless polemics on poverty and quotas in the Malaysian Parliament, we must understand the

chronology of various socio-economic plans in Malaysia. Starting with the NEP, affirmative action policies have been continuously employed to restructure economic inequality amongst the different ethnics in modern Malaysia. The time framework for this study begins in the year that the NEP ended. However, the roots of the endless polemics on poverty eradication and quota system for Bumiputera in the Malaysian Parliament to date cannot be studied without revisiting the NEP. Ultimately, other affirmative action policies introduced after the NEP ended in 1990, to some extent, have mirrored NEP objectives, in particular as they apply to quota allocations for Bumiputera.

Any attempt to understand the deliberative practices in and outside the Malaysian Parliament would not be complete without exploring and explaining the embeddedness of the NEP in almost every aspect of Malaysia's socio-economic and socio-politics. The consequences of the NEP, and its correlation with Malaysian socio-economic and socio-politics, have been examined by many authors from different disciplines in the social sciences. During the period of 1990 through 2012, MPs were the important government agents, acting as mediators to disseminate information about government agenda, especially amongst Malays and other Bumiputera in the rural constituencies. MPs' roles in the first decade after the NEP was introduced concentrated on carrying out socio-economic development for the benefit of citizens, which was the main priority for many citizens and thus a basis of their electoral support and legitimacy (Musolf & Springer, 1979).

The embeddedness of the NEP in today's Malaysia was well articulated by Nazir Razak, the CIMB Group Chief Executive Officer, during a question-and-answer session at the *Chinese Economic Congress 2010* in Kuala Lumpur. The *New Sunday Times* reported that Nazir Razak said,

I've strong opinions on how the NEP has been bastardised over the years since 1971....[NEP] is so embedded in everything we do, in every part of government and business, that it has become a problem....We need to address what kind of affirmative action we are going for. Currently, it is so infused in everything. But one day we will need to confront it one way or another ("NEP bastardised, say CIMB's Nazir," 2010)

In his keynote address at a symposium on *The Malay Dilemma: Perspective and Conclusion* in February 2011, Mahathir suggested that Putrajaya should continue the NEP agenda for the

benefit and interest of the Malays. Although he agreed that many Malays misused the opportunities of the quota allocations given to them (especially in business), he argued that the flaw of the NEP was its implementation rather than the policy itself. He suggested that the selection process for quota allocation to Bumiputera should be carried out more rigorously so as to benefit “deserving individuals” only (“NEP must continue, says Dr M,” 2011). Six years earlier, in the UMNO General Assembly 2005, the UMNO Youth Head, Hishammuddin Hussein also urged the government to keep the spirit of NEP in policy-making processes to protect the Malays’ interests (Kumar, 2005).

In November 2005, the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI), an independent think-tank in Malaysia, sparked a controversy over its report on Bumiputera equity. ASLI’s findings stated that the Bumiputera corporate equity was higher than government data. The ASLI report put the figure at 45 per cent, in contrast with the government figure of only 18.9 per cent. The ASLI report, entitled the *Proposal for the Ninth Malaysian Plan (9MP)*, was submitted to the government for consideration. ASLI’s report concluded that the NEP target of 30 per cent Bumiputera equity exceeded what was proposed by the Economic Planning Unit (EPU), a government agency under the Prime Minister Department’s. The report stated that the 45 per cent equity included the “selective patronage” that only benefited a few Malays that had been excluded by the EPU. ASLI suggested that any public policy that had the intention of continuing the NEP agenda would only promote cronyism and increase the stereotype of negative perceptions towards the Bumiputera amongst the citizens (Surin et al., 2006).

The ASLI report, prepared by the Centre for Public Studies, captured the attention of MPs, especially the UMNO MPs. The findings created uneasiness amongst the UMNO MPs. They were under attack from the UMNO leaders and the Malay groups, which forced ASLI President, Mirzan Mahathir, to make a press statement saying that the methodology used was flawed. The cabinet members amongst UMNO made a clear statement that the validity of data and methodology used was part of a plot by those who had the malicious intention of disturbing ethnic harmony in the country. The Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) backed the EPU by making a statement that the data provided were accurate.<sup>100</sup> Putrajaya made a

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<sup>100</sup> The use of terminologies and variables are often a source to question the validity of data. The ambiguity of statistical data related to the quota preferential also occurred, for example, in Canada, the United States, Britain, and New Zealand because the term “others” is used to combine different categories as one and thus hides

statement that the government was willing to reveal the methodology used by the EPU in calculating Bumiputera equity (Ram & Lau, 2006).

ASLI's findings that Bumiputera GLCs' corporate equity had promoted cronyism and favouritism had caused the government to label the report as "baseless," "inaccurate" and "irresponsible" (Siti Mariam & Saifulizam, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c; William, 2006). UMNO MPs were against ASLI's suggestion to abandon the underlying logic of the NEP in development policy in Malaysia. However, the non-Bumiputera political parties in BN, such as MCA and Gerakan, urged the government to be more transparent with the methodology used to calculate Bumiputera equity. This has coincidentally opened more doors for citizens to participate in forums that took place outside the parliament (see chapter seven). Lim Keng Yaik, the Gerakan President, urged the government to reveal the methodology used by the EPU to restore government integrity (Ram & Lau, 2006).

Lim Teck Ghee, the director of ASLI's Centre for Public Policy Studies resigned after the report findings sparked controversy in Malaysia. Lim Teck Ghee said,

It is the fundamental right of the Malaysian public to question all government statistics and policies, more so when these are not transparent or defensible (Surin et al., 2006).

The report suggested that the government should restructure five areas in Malaysia, namely the civil service, educational reform, low income communities, marginalised communities and corporate equity (I will elaborate on this further in chapter seven). The NGO Aliran also made a press statement condemning the government's reluctance to be transparent and for using ethnic rhetoric to politically demean ASLI's findings,

Putting a stop to discussions and dialogue on the pretext that it is a 'sensitive' or 'seditious' issue suggests that the government is unable to defend its figures and stand by them (Ram & Lau, 2006).

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empirical evidence. For example in Britain, 'Chinese' is categorised as "black" together with Indians, Pakistanis and others. In New Zealand, Asian immigrant success was found in the government document on Maori Development. In Canada, all Asian Canadians in Toronto were categorised under the "non-European group" for a poverty survey which made them 200 per cent poorer than Europeans and the Canadians. In reality the Japanese Canadians' quality of life was far better than the Canadians' and Europeans' (Sandal, 2001; Sowell, 2004).

A senior UMNO MP and a former Finance Minister, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah of Gua Musang, backed up the NGO's views and suggested that the government should review the methodology employed in measuring Bumiputera equity. UMNO Deputy President, Muhyiddin Yassin, however, asked ASLI to retract its research findings of Malays owning 45 per cent of national equity (Siti Mariam, & Saifulizam, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c). In an interview with the Sun, Lim Teck Ghee justified his stand that affirmative action in Malaysia needed a new approach that was more race-neutral than race-based. He said,

There are many poor Malays and they continue to be poor. And we should prioritise this issue but continuing with the system of corporate equity distribution doesn't help the poor Malays. Giving places in the elite schools, scholarships to middle-class and upper-class, the children of middle-class and upper-class Malays who have benefited from the NEP do not help the poor Malays (Surin & Pua, 2006).

However, Lim Teck Ghee agreed that the NEP was successful in restructuring the society in Malaysia, especially in uplifting the Malays' political, economic and social positions. He stated,

I'd like to stress that, in no other country in the world, has a marginalised community such as the Malays come up so quickly and attained this economic and social and political position. I wouldn't use the word 'dominance' but success (Surin & Pua, 2006).

The NEP remains a point of contention in Malaysia and also affects the parliament-citizen relationship in Malaysia. In particular, the embeddedness of NEP in the national development agenda can be seen in the government rebranding the NEP and in other affirmative action policies, as discussed next.

## **6.2 The New Economic Policy Rebranding**

Malaysia is a planned economy whereby its socio-economic governance has been structured through different affirmative action policies such as the New Economic Policy (NEP), the National Development Policy (NDP), the New Vision Policy (NVP), the National Mission Policy (NMP) and the New Economic Model (NEM). Although Malaysia is a federal state, its economic plans have been heavily centralised and controlled by the federal government through the government agencies under the Prime Minister's Department, in particular the

EPU and PMO, and the Ministry of Finance (MoF). Affirmative action policies in Malaysia are imposed by the federal government on to the state governments. Although the plans and policies have been named differently, the main objective of each socio-economic agenda has remained the same. Much like other former British colonies such as India and Nigeria, this objective is simple – that of “national unity” (Sowell, 2004).

In addition to affirmative action policies, the parliament has endorsed various long-term and short-term socio-economic plans. The long-term economic plan, known as the *Outline Perspective Plan* (OPP), is over a 10 to 20 year period, and the short term socio-economic plan, known as the *Malaysia Plan*, is focused on a five year period.<sup>101</sup> The Malaysia Plan is used to evaluate, assess, measure and monitor the government’s multi-sectoral development plans. It is also used as a mid-term review for the government’s projects or programmes. Mid-term review is used by the cabinet to study the impacts of government development plans on state and citizens. The mid-term review provides a better platform for MPs to raise the citizens’ concerns in Dryzek’s first deliberation location, in this case, the House of Representatives (state institution) or his second deliberation location, the closed meetings at ministerial level (designated partisan deliberation forum).

The affirmative action policies within this timeframe span the NDP (1991-2000), the NVP (2001-2010), the NMP (2006-2020) and the NEM (2011-2020) under the vision umbrellas of *Wawasan 2020* (Vision 2020) and *1Malaysia*.<sup>102</sup> The NVP was replaced by the NMP when Abdullah Badawi became the Prime Minister. Later when Najib Razak was appointed Prime Minister, he replaced NMP with NEM. The NVP and NMP are less known amongst the citizens. These two national policies had a short “life-span” as a result of “internal political and leadership crises” within UMNO and BN. Mahathir Mohamad resigned as Prime Minister in 2003 and was replaced by his successor, Abdullah Badawi. Later, Abdullah Badawi resigned in 2009 and was replaced by Najib Razak. Under the Najib Razak administration, the *Wawasan 2020* plan has been less emphasised. The Prime Minister has been promoting the new concept of *1Malaysia* in advancing his mission and vision for directing Malaysia towards becoming a high-income developed nation. Under the *1Malaysia*

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<sup>101</sup> Specifically the period of focus for this thesis spans the socio-economic plans of the Second Outline Perspective Plan (OPP2), the Third Outline Perspective Plan (OPP3), the Sixth Malaysia Plan (1990-1995) (6MP), and the Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011-2015) (10MP), respectively.

<sup>102</sup> Data constructed from various Malaysian government websites such as the Prime Minister’s Department, the Prime Minister’s Office, the Economic Planning Unit, the Ministry of Finance, and *Penyata Rasmi Parlimen Malaysia*, Dewan Rakyat (The Malaysian Parliament Hansard, House of Representatives) 1990-2010.



concept, NEM is subjected to the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) and the Government Transformation Programme (GTP).

The First Outline Perspective Plan (OPP1) (1970-1990) was introduced in 1971 to set a target in quantitative terms of 30 per cent Bumiputera equity as stated in the NEP. When the NEP ended in 1990, the parliament endorsed the NDP (1991-2000) as the successor plan. The NDP outlined the same objectives as the NEP, but incorporated Mahathir's new vision of *Wawasan 2020* into its framework.<sup>103</sup> The NDP became the basis for the socio-economic development in the OPP2 (1991-2000). Mahathir envisaged the NDP as one of the components for achieving his long term-goal of making Malaysia a fully developed nation through "its own way," as visualised within the Asian Values framework. The NDP was essentially a rebranding of the NEP, without any major policy changes. The 30 per cent Bumiputera equity, the poverty eradication focus, and the quotas for Bumiputera in business, commerce and industry, all remained the same. After the NDP, the government introduced the NVP (2001-2010). *Wawasan 2020* was still the foundation for the NVP within the framework and scope of the OPP3 (2001-2010).

The NVP was replaced by the NMP (2006-2020) when Abdullah Badawi became the Prime Minister. The NMP still focused on generating socio-economic balance between citizens through poverty eradication and quota preferential allocations to Bumiputera, which involve the protection of the Malay preferential interests by the government (Abdullah Badawi, DR.31.03.2006). Abdullah's notion was backed up Najib Razak, the then Deputy Prime Minister, in the Johor UMNO convention in 2006. He emphasised that Malays were at the centre of the nation building in Malaysia. He stressed that the government was committed to help the Malays and would not impose a definite time limit on preferential treatment. As such, the Malay Agenda was still inserted in the 9MP (Abdul Razak, 2006). A few MPs such as Lim Kit Siang (Ipoh Timur), Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (Permatang Pauh) and K. Devamany (Cameron Highlands) did, however, urged the government to emphasise the concept of *Bangsa Malaysia* (the Malaysian nation) rather than "Malayness" in continuing the affirmative action and developing the economy (Samy, 2006).

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<sup>103</sup> One of the distinctive elements of the *Wawasan 2020* is the creation of *Bangsa Malaysia* (the Malaysian nation), which has not been clearly emphasised previously in other government plans and policies. See Oii (2006) for further insights on *Bangsa Malaysia*.

The NMP, however, was buried after Najib Razak became the Prime Minister. It was replaced by the NEM (2010-2020). The NEM's main objective is to generate economic growth faster if Malaysia is to be a high income developed state in which Mahathir, UMNO and Perkasa (an NGO) have considered would weaken the Malay preferential treatment. The NEM was announced in parliament in 2010 during the Budget 2011 presentation.<sup>104</sup> The embeddedness of NEP in the NEM still can be seen when the Deputy Prime Minister, Muhyiddin Yassin reaffirmed the Malay agenda in the NEM. He said,

Many Bumiputera entrepreneurs have asked me where the Malay agenda is in the NEM. I assure them that the NEM is committed to the involvement of the community in the country's economic activities (Zuhrin, 2010).

At *The Chinese Economic Congress 2010* in Kuala Lumpur, Chua Soi Lek, the MCA President, emphasised his stand on quota allocations for Bumiputera in Malaysia. He said,

We must develop a caring society in which the poor are looked after. It is clear that preferential treatment must be given according to needs rather than race (Ng, 2010).

Chua Soi Lek challenged BN to walk the talk of the Government Transformation Programme (GTP). He argued that the era of lip service was over as the political landscape in Malaysia had changed and citizens' awareness about political transparency and fairness had increased. Chua said,

We find it is time for the government to understand its policies have to be more transparent and that there is a need to embody all races in policies that aim to help the poor....The policies should use meritocracy and need as the standard instead of race (Giam, 2010).

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<sup>104</sup> The NEM is derived from 12 key sectors under the National Key Economic Areas (NKEA) of the ETP - oil, gas and energy, palm oil, financial service, wholesale, retail and distribution, tourism, telecommunications, education, electrical and electronic, business services, health services, agriculture, and the Greater Kuala Lumpur to stimulate the socio-economy of the nation. There are seven projects under the ETP that are estimated to be worth RM115 billion, creating about 3.3 million jobs by 2020. The aims of the ETP is to triple Malaysia's Gross National Income (GNI) from RM660 billion (2009) to RM1.7 trillion (2020). The government expects that more than 60 per cent of the jobs available in the market will cater for the medium-income and high-income salary earners and thus provide better prospect for low-income groups to mobilise themselves economically ("RM115bil start," 2010).

Commenting on the NEM, Chua Soi Lek proposed that the government should allow GLCs to open up procurement to all SMEs based on merit. For example, only the Bumiputera contractors are allowed to apply for a Class F licence (“Level playing field sought,” 2010). Chua Soi Lek said, “We re-affirm that affirmative action should be based on need and merit, and be market-friendly” (Lee, 2010). For the proponents of laissez faire individualism as well as many in civil society, Chua Soi Lek’s standpoint was welcomed. They suggested that Malaysia should go back to the free market system adopted prior to the introduction of the NEP (Tunku Zain, 2011). The participants of *The Economic Transformation Programme: The View from the Private Sector*, a conference that was held on 21 September, 2010, urged the government to be more transparent and to diminish the state’s role in business (“Govt’s role in business should diminish,” 2010). Wan Saiful Wan Jan, the Chief Executive of the Institute of Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS), an independent think-tank in Malaysia, suggested that the government should go back to the free market to eradicate poverty and inequality amongst citizens. Wan Saiful Wan Jan said,

We come from an ideological standpoint that a free market is better....But we believe that it is the only system that works well in Malaysia....I don’t think the government can plan to restructure society. We have seen 30 years of the NEP and it did not work. Poverty is still there, for one. It proves that the government cannot solve the problem, so why not give the market a chance. We have not had the opportunity. We have let the government try for 30 years, so maybe it’s time for the government to step back and let the market take over (Hariati, 2011)

As the direct consequences of the ETP, 27 service sub-sectors that previously were under the purview of 30 per cent Bumiputera equity requirement were abolished by the government. Besides the ETP, the parliament also endorsed the government’s strategy to transform the public sectors through the GTP.<sup>105</sup> The GTP aims at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector to support the ETP. Under the GTP, there are new

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<sup>105</sup> The government asked for support from the non-Bumiputera NGOs to recruit non-Bumiputera to join the public service and armed forces (Faruqi, 2010). The number of Chinese Malaysians who joined the civil service rose by 100 per cent from 1,323 appointments in 2007 to 2,600 appointments in 2009. However, the number is comparatively small compared to 1.29 million civil servants in 2009. The Malays represents 77 per cent of the total number of civil servants. The other 23 per cent comprises *Bumiputera* of Sabah and Sarawak at 8.7 per cent, the Chinese at 6.0 per cent, the Indians at 4.0 per cent and the others at 4.3 per cent (“More Chinese join civil service,” 2010).

measurements to evaluate the performance of the public sector, namely the Ministerial Key Results Areas (MKRAs) and Ministerial Key Performance Indicators (MKPIs). Through these two new measurements, the government puts more emphasis on impacts and outcomes, rather than inputs and outputs, to support the delivery, efficiency and effectiveness of public service provision to citizens (“New steps being introduced to increase efficiency,” 2010).

Affirmative action is perceived as a direct government intervention in the market system by independent think tanks in Malaysia, such as ASLI and IDEAS. The controversy surrounding government intervention in eradicating poverty in the Malaysian case is not unique and isolated. Malaysia provides an interesting intersection example as a case study to the question of the extent to which deliberative democracy approach attempt to counterbalance the inconsistencies and the logical flaws of liberal democratic methods (Dryzek, 2000, 2006; Leib, 2006) in solving problems such as these that many Westminster systems have faced.

### **6.3 Poverty and Quota: The Endless Debates in Parliament**

Sowell’s (2004) notion on poverty in Malaysia is interesting. He argues that poverty in Malaysia is more about perception rather than “hunger or grinding poverty” (Sowell, 2004, p. 63). Sowell suggests that perceptions about poverty matter a lot in Malaysia. If they do matter, MPs’ perceptions are analysed in this thesis using interviews and Hansard records. Existing works (see Gomez, 1990, 1991, 1996; Gomez & Jomo, 1999; Jomo, 1994; Rahimah, 2012; Tan, 1982; Zainal, 2001) do not use Hansard and interviews to unveil how regimented the top-down approach has been in relation to policy-making on poverty issues in Malaysia. The exclusion of Hansard records for example, has left the “reality” of debates in parliament unnoticed. These sources could be very useful for understanding the political context of poverty issues in Malaysia.

Since the implementation of the NEP, according to official government statistics, the poverty rate in Malaysia has significantly fallen from 49.3 per cent (1970) to 29.2 per cent (1980) to 16.5 per cent (1990), and even lower to 5.7 per cent (2004) (Rahimah, 2012, p. 38). The indigenous ethnic groups in Sabah and Sarawak have remained the poorest groups in Malaysia. In the parliament sitting on 14 May 2008, the lower house was informed that there were 54,977 hard core poor families in Malaysia (Najib Razak, DR.14.05.2008). Based on e-Kasih records, the number was decreased to 44,463 families registered by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development by August 2010. Households that earn less

than RM960 in urban areas and RM540 in rural areas fall under the hardcore poor category (Chan, 2011).

The construction of affirmative action policies and the economic plans do not involve MPs' views. Fundamentally, economic policy in Malaysia is prepared by government bureaucrats working under the oversight of the EPU, PMO and MoF. Hence, as this study argues, prior to the 12<sup>th</sup> Parliament, MPs attended the parliament sittings often merely for the purpose of "briefing sessions" and "ritual ceremony." Prior to the 12<sup>th</sup> Parliament, the issues raised by the MPs, in general, reflected their roles as social workers and mediators of government agendas (with exception of the opposition MPs). The 12th Parliament was significant as opposition MPs became prominent in questioning the government on poverty and quota issues in parliament.

The NEP outcomes and their consequences were still being debated in parliament, two decades after the first incarnation of the policy officially ended. For example, Khalid Abdul Samad asked the government as recently as 2010 to explain the reasons why the NEP failed to meet its objectives (Khalid Abdul Samad, DR.14.12.2010). The polemics have centred on a new need for a policy approach that is inclusive due to many of the perceived consequences and flaws that have arisen from the implementation of the NEP. The NEP has been debated because of the government's failure to reach targets to eradicate poverty and increase Bumiputera equity. The interviews and Hansard data establish the notion that the NEP has contributed to what MPs perceived as "new problems" in Malaysia, such as the increasing gap between the poor and rich amongst the citizens, and the growing and increasing relative poverty amongst citizens.

I think the voice of the younger Malays are not heard in Parliament or not captured in the system. Therefore [the parliament adopted] very old ways of seeing things where poverty is only in rural areas and Malays are poor! As a result [parliament keeps practising] very bad public policy making, which I think is a time bomb for the nation! (YB5).

Furthermore, some MPs perceived that affirmative action also contributed to the Bumiputera being unproductive and lacking competitiveness, as well as the abuse of public procurements, projects and loans. Interview and Hansard data indicate that MPs believed that these

problems occurred because the government allowed cronyism and nepotism during the implementation of the NEP and this has continued as a culture amongst the elite up until the present time (see chapter seven). What MPs perceived is also supported by empirical studies conducted on this topic. Critics have argued that the implementation of the NEP has been abused by the politicians and has indeed fostered cronyism and nepotism in Malaysia (Gomez, 1990, 1991, 1996; Gomez & Jomo, 1999). The gap between the rich and the poor Malays has also certainly been widened and contributed to greater economic inequality amongst the ethnic groups (Ho, 2003; Jomo, 1994), and nourished a complacent attitude amongst some Malays and thus made them less competitive in developing survival skills (Gomez & Jomo, 1999; Mahathir, 2011; Plate, 2011).

Data from interviews, Hansard and the media indicate that debates about affirmative action are focused on the privileges given to the Bumiputera under Article 153. This article has been used to justify the strategy to increase Bumiputera equity. Ibrahim Ali, the Pasir Mas MP, questioned the rationales of the NEM and the ETP as he believed that they were not sufficient to protect Malay privileges as stated in Article 153 of the Constitution (Ibrahim Ali, DR.14.12.2010). Ibrahim Ali, an independent MP and the President of Perkasa (an ethnic Malay NGO), was against the idea of dropping 30 per cent Bumiputera equity ownership as proposed in the NEM. He was one of the MPs that have advocated for quota allocations for Bumiputera remaining in the NEM. Strong opposition from UMNO and Perkasa has made the National Economic Advisory Council (NEAC) to amend the original version of the NEM to protect the Malays' interests. However, opposition MPs argued that it was about time that Article 153 was re-examined.

One of the pillars in the Constitution is the privileges of the Malays and Bumiputera. [But I'm questioning] the method used here. We use the Malay and Bumiputera privileges only to enrich a few leaders and give a very small portion to the ordinary citizens. Therefore, it is acceptable for us to study article 153 again (Anwar Ibrahim, Dr.19.2.2009).

Any attempt to reduce or eliminate poverty shouldn't be politicised. I mean those who are qualified to get the assistance, should get it, regardless of their race. There shouldn't be a special privilege given to a particular group only (YB8).

Another problem is the competing and overlapping tasks between different ministries.<sup>106</sup> This has caused confusion especially on data validity and the actual government agency that is accountable for decision-making, tasks and resources. The multiple agencies that are involved in a given government programme also, to some extent, has created difficulties to MPs in the execution of their tasks.<sup>107</sup> The more government agencies that MPs had to deal with, the more they are required to camouflage their roles whether as social workers, mediators, advocates or legislators when dealing with government agencies. MPs changed their roles based on the political hierarchical of the government agents that they have to deal with - at department, agency or ministry, and deliberation locations - at village, constituency, district, state or federal. For example the ministries and government agencies involved in poverty eradication are the PMO, the EPU, the MoF, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MoWFCD), the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development (MoRRD), the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MoHLG), Majlis Perundingan Ekonomi Melayu (MAPEM), Majlis Perundingan Ekonomi Negara (MAPEN), YBK, Amanah Ikhtiar and so forth.

Zuraida Kamaruddin, the Ampang MP, asked the government to explain the reasons why the one-off administrative service expenses of the welfare department was bigger than the assistance provided. She argued that the government should reduce the red-tape, and overlapping and unnecessary bureaucracy, to improve the delivery system and the resources available to providing welfare to citizens. In the Auditor General's Report 2009, low income individuals in Tawau, Sabah, had to wait for two to eight months to get the assistance from

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<sup>106</sup> An example involving bureaucracy and red-tape is the 1AZAM programme of e-Kasih to eradicate hardcore poverty by 2010. e-Kasih is a government programme to register poor households nationwide. e-Kasih's target is the poor family, single or sick elderly person, ill family members that need treatment, disabled persons, and so forth. Under e-Kasih, the government has created a few platforms to facilitate or/and create jobs for citizens through the 1AZAM programme. The 1AZAM programme can be divided into four sub-programmes which are the AZAM Kerja (labour sector), the AZAM Tani (agriculture sector), the AZAM Niaga (business sector), and the AZAM Khidmat (services sector). The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development is responsible for co-ordinating the 1AZAM programmes of e-Kasih that are conducted by the different ministries and government agencies such as the Ministry of Human Resources for AZAM Kerja, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry for AZAM Tani, the Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia for AZAM Niaga and AZAM Khidmat. Meanwhile, in East Malaysia, the state governments appointed their own agencies. In Sarawak the agencies responsible for the 1AZAM programme are the Department of Agriculture, the Bintulu Development Authority, the Sarawak Bumiputera Development Unit, the Sarawak Timber Industry Development, FAMA, LKIM, GIAT MARA and the Sarawak Labour Department. In Sabah, the agencies involved are Sabah Usaha Maju Foundation, the Department of Agriculture Sabah, the Sabah Fishermen Cooperation, the Sabah Rural Development Cooperation, the Department of Fisheries Sabah, and the Department of Women Affairs Sabah (Hen Seai Kie, DR.09.12.2010).

<sup>107</sup> Nancy Shukri, the Batang Sadong MP, raised the issue related to the effectiveness of the 1AZAM programme since it involved different ministries and multiple government agencies at federal and state levels (Nancy Shukri, DR.09.12.2010).

government agencies. Zuraida claimed that the government took from 17 to 500 days to channel the allocation of RM2.4 million to the deserving recipients (Zuraida Kamaruddin, DR.8.12.2010).

Abdul Hadi Awang, the Marang MP, questioned the methods used by the government in implementing some policies to enhance the socio-economic status of poor citizens. He argued that budget allocation was not good enough if the body that managed the programme failed to deliver it. He maintained that MAPEN had not carried out their duties effectively. He argued that the modus operandi of MAPEN was different from what had been agreed upon during the policy-making process, which had involved engagement between different stakeholders such as government agencies, opposition parties, academicians and NGOs (Abdul Hadi Awang, DR.30.04.2008). The Kuala Lipis MP, Mohamad Shahrum Osman, also questioned the validity of the hard core poverty statistics that were provided by the government. He argued that there were two different statistics provided by the EPU and MoRRD (Mohamad Shahrum Osman, DR.18.02.2009).

The competing agencies amongst the ministries were perceived by MPs as a mechanism for the politicians to get more government projects through the government programmes. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, the Permatang Pauh MP, agreed that the NEP had contributed to the development and reduction of poverty in Malaysia. She, however, urged the government to re-examine any policy “resemblance” to the NEP as they had become a factor that had nourished cronyism, manipulation, and the self-serving abuse of power amongst the elite politicians. She argued that it was about time that the affirmative action policies included all marginalised citizens in Malaysia.

[This] is very unfortunate for Bumiputera when only a minority of the rich [Bumiputera] urge [the NEP] to continue. What we must care about is the future of the majority of Bumiputera – Malays in villages, Kadazan, Murut, Iban, Bidayuh and others in remote rural areas and along the coast. Any new approach to tackle poverty has to take into account the poor and marginalised Chinese and Indians as well (Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, DR.05.05.2008).

We also don't know who is rich and who is not amongst the Malays. There are too many cronies involved in the process of eradicating poverty. If you investigate



further, most of the poorer constituencies in Malaysia are under the BN [because] they only distribute [projects] to their cronies. They have no intention of helping citizens (YB15).

There is greater contestation in public forums of the wisdom of affirmative action policies in Malaysia. The approaches that have been used to implement the affirmative action policies have become the forums of contestation in the public sphere amongst the citizens that reflect the types of deliberative practice in policy-making. The discussion in this chapter of MP roles, poverty eradication and the quota system revealed the tension in deliberative practices related to the justifications of the rationales for keeping or changing the policy-making processes around the preferential policies for Bumiputera. Nonetheless, interviews and Hansard data findings suggest that participants and MPs agreed in general that the federal government was able to address and reduce, over time, the hard core poverty and restructure society in Malaysia, even if they had misgivings about the implementation of the strategy that originated in the NEP of the 1970s.

#### **6.4 Conclusion**

This chapter presented a concise description of the complexity of the poverty and quota polemics in Malaysia. Hansard records provide interesting insights into unexplored aspects crucial to understanding poverty and quota polemics in Malaysia. This chapter, thus presents the primary materials that have been analysed to revitalise the discussion about poverty eradication and quota system in Malaysia that seems “exhausted” after having been examined by many authors (see chapter three) since the 1950s. To avoid the risk of over simplification in exploring the MPs’ views, some of the government policies, plans and missions were summarised in this chapter before deeper analysis is engaged in the next chapter. This “revitalisation” was timely because over the last two parliaments, more questions have been raised regarding the wisdom of certain “entrenched” policy practices in Malaysia.

Leete (2007) argues that poverty eradication in Malaysia is the result of economic growth rather than primarily the affirmative action policies, in particular the NEP. Economic growth has created more jobs and has thus increased income and quality of life amongst most citizens. In politics, however, what citizens perceive regarding their relative positions versus others often matters most. The incentives and consequences produced by the NEP have deeply impacted upon the contemporary politics of poverty and the quota system in Malaysia.

The on-going legacy of the original NEP in terms of its effect on public policies has contributed to never ending debates, which have often sparked controversy and tension outside parliament, and more recently, among MPs inside parliament.

Fundamentally, the NEP was meant to restructure the colonial economic patterns and to eradicate poverty that goes beyond ethnic identity lines in Malaysia. The NEP was the beginning for the government to recognise and address the need for an affirmative action plan in Malaysia to correct the “side-effects” of laissez-faire, which feed off the inequalities from the colonial period. The government was willing to sacrifice a few aspects of efficient economic growth to generate greater ethnic balance in income distribution, equity ownership and wealth in Malaysia (Zainal, 2001). However, criticisms have been directed towards the mechanisms the government has used in implementing the NEP since then. Furthermore, although the affirmative action has not produced violence and riots such as in India and Nigeria, ethnic relations and polarisation in Malaysia have not improved either (6MP, 1991; 7MP, 1996). The other policies after the NEP have also sparked controversy because of the failure of parliament to eliminate racial distinctions for the primary objective of creating unity and harmony in Malaysia’s complex multi-ethnic society.

Although forums have been established to address policy problems and provide solutions related to poverty and quota allocation for Bumiputera, MPs have faced some limitations as the policies that have been outlined in each affirmative action policy have been designed and decided by government elites. Despite all criticism and controversies that have occurred, in general, MPs’ roles have remained as mediators and social workers in delivering on the government agenda relating to affirmative action. Not until the 11<sup>th</sup> parliament did MPs show an inclination to play a rather different role, namely as policy advocates concerning poverty eradication and quota allocations for Bumiputera specifically. In carrying out their duties related to poverty eradication and quota allocation for Bumiputera, face-to-face encounters seem to have been practiced to advance and foster deliberative practice.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Poverty and Quota Polemics: Tensions in Deliberative Practices**

Following on from the previous chapter, in this chapter, I emphasise, within the context of discussions over poverty eradication policy and the quota system for Bumiputera, the efforts made by MPs to link parliament and citizens by performing their “bottom-up” role as citizen representatives while collaborating with the elite in their top-down approaches to influence decision making. To understand the “tensions” in these dual roles, I elaborate on the parliament-citizen relations by exploring them from both directions – that is, the “parliament to citizens” and “citizens to parliament” directions. The discussions in the “parliament to citizens” section reflect executive deliberative practices that emphasise the top-down engagement approach. Meanwhile, the “citizens to parliament” section reflects citizens’ engagement with MPs, which emphasises the “bottom-up” engagement approach. I examine the tensions in deliberative practices related to poverty eradication and the quota system in Malaysia by adopting a dual strategy. Despite the aforementioned tensions, and the need to employ a dual strategy to address them, this chapter demonstrates that MPs (as state actors), to some degree, are still able to undertake their task as citizen representatives, and are not always constrained by “partisan” interests when they raise citizens’ concerns in parliament. Thus, MPs continue to remain relevant at the constituency levels.

A crucial concept in this chapter is the idea of a dual strategy, which has been employed by Malaysian MPs in raising citizens concerns’ in parliament. The meaning of dual strategy in this case refers to the MPs’ strategy of collaborating with the government in the micro-level deliberative forums but also being involved with citizens beyond these formal forums of deliberation. In ideal terms, citizens’ concerns and interests that have been expressed outside parliament in the informal macro-level deliberative forums then will be channelled into the formal micro-level deliberative forums in the lower house or through closed door meetings at the ministerial level. The MPs would provide input on citizen needs through wish lists or feedback given to the government agencies by arranging dialogue with various non-state actors. The MPs’ office/community centre are responsible for updating the issues for the MPs to take further action before negotiating with government ministers or raising issues in parliament.

Unlike Malaysia, in liberal democracies, MPs do not usually need to employ a dual strategy because the state provides formal designated deliberation forums for citizens to raise their

concerns directly with the executive arm of the government, or through non-partisan parliamentary committees. Because the Malaysian government does not provide a non-partisan formal deliberative forum for citizens to channel their concerns in public such as in the Westminster liberal democracies, this role is taken up by the MPs. Understanding the dilemma MPs face when employing a dual strategy will shed light on the differences in deliberative practices between liberal and illiberal democracies of the Westminster systems.

### **7.1 Poverty Eradication**

Under the NEP, the government focus for poverty eradication was mainly in the rural constituencies, especially from the 1970s through the 1980s. Since the 1990s, the focus has shifted to include the urban constituencies as well after Malaysia experienced a rapid industrialisation and urbanisation that was highly concentrated in the major urban areas such as Klang Valley and Penang. The rapid industrialisation and urbanisation has driven the steady internal migration of the rural population to urban constituencies. The population concentration and the high cost of living in the major urban areas like Kuala Lumpur/Klang Valley, Johor Bahru and George Town has created housing problems which has contributed to the emergence of relative poverty in today's Malaysia, even if absolute poverty has been dramatically reduced.

There are various ministries that have been involved in poverty eradication, such as the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development (MoRRD), the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MoWFCD), the Prime Minister's Department (PMD), the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and so forth. This has contributed to a situation where responsibilities and policies often overlap. These ministries are responsible to inform the parliament about the programmes that they oversee. Since the top-down approach has been used to implement the programmes, the roles that MPs have been playing in poverty eradication, as this study argues, are as social workers and mediators. As social workers, MPs distribute the one-off-aid from federal government to citizens such as school uniform, book vouchers, laptops, fertilisers, groceries and so forth through their offices, or in *kenduri* or *majlis bertemu rakyat* (face-to-face social events between MPs and their constituents) organised by the party. Meanwhile, as mediators, the MPs educate and disseminate information about government programmes and how the programmes would help their constituents. Often the distribution and collection of forms for housing, financial assistance, and other applications is done by the MPs.

### 7.1.1 Parliament to Citizens

There are two programmes that have been established by the federal government to eradicate poverty that have directly impacted upon poor citizens, namely the Development Programme for the Hard core Poor or *Program Pembangunan Rakyat Termiskin* (PPRT)<sup>108</sup> and e-Kasih. Prior to the new millennium, generally the aid given under this programme was in the form of one-off-aid, and did not contribute to “value-added” activities or proper vocational training. However, the strategy has been since changed through the provision of better technical skills and vocational training support, in order to ensure the sustainability of recipients’ abilities to cope and adopt with the changes in life-style and surroundings as Malaysia continues to develop.

In April 2008, Muhammed Muhamad Taib, the Minister of the MoRRD, informed the House of Representatives that the government was focused on six core strategies to tackle poverty eradication in rural constituencies. The first strategy focused on upgrading the quality of basic infrastructure, and social utilities and amenities such as the road system, alternative roads for villages, water and electrical supplies. The second focused on eradicating hard core poverty via development schemes for people and mega agricultural projects of the “agropolitan.” Third, intensifying the human capital development for rural citizens through vocational training and along with the fourth, integration of development programmes for isolated and underdeveloped villages were both key strategies for increasing value-added activities within the program. The fifth strategy was to narrow the digital gap between the rural and urban areas by providing infrastructure and “info-structure” such as information technology (IT) centres in villages and rural districts, while the sixth and final strategies were to develop industry based on the “agropolitan” project (Mohammed Muhamad Taib, DR.30.04.2008).

The six core strategies were the continuation of previous government strategies in responding to citizens’ demands by intensifying the development of basic infrastructure, utilities, rural

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<sup>108</sup> The Malay acronym PPRT is used in this thesis for the Development Programme for the Hardcore Poor as it has been used officially in Malaysia. PPRT was established in the mid 1980s. PPRT has continued to be one of the strategies in eradicating poverty in Malaysia to date. Together with the People’s Welfare Development Scheme or *Skim Pembangunan Kesejahteraan Rakyat* (SPKR), the profiles of hardcore poor households were registered and compiled. The government has used the data from SPKR to deliver assistance in education, basic need supplements and income-generating training (Leete 2007, p. 140). Under the PPRT, one of the main strategies that the government has adopted is to build houses for poor family in Malaysia that I elaborate later in this chapter.

information and communications technology (ICT) programmes, and so forth (Muhammed Mohammad Taib, DR.20.05.2008). The MoRRD claimed that providing basic infrastructure and amenities to rural areas was on track as the supply coverage for treated water in the rural areas in the Peninsular was 97 per cent, while it was 63 per cent in Sabah and 62 per cent in Sarawak. The supply of electricity to rural areas in the Peninsular was 99 per cent, in Sabah it was 76.26 per cent and in Sarawak 84.08 per cent. Finally, the coverage of roads that were sealed roads (excluding highways)<sup>109</sup> in rural areas in the Peninsular was 95 per cent, in Sabah 40 per cent, and in Sarawak this figure was 34 per cent in 2007 (Muhammed Mohammad Taib, DR.20.05.2008).

As mediators, it has become the duty for MPs to disseminate information about government programmes on combating poverty in Malaysia to citizens and providing the lists of poor citizens to the government agencies. MPs have been one of the “backbones” to trace and give feedback to the government agencies. MPs helped their constituents by providing lists of the needy to the federal government. MPs’ offices have been responsible for combating poverty with programmes such as the PPRT, e-Kasih and the *Projek Cari* (the Search Project)<sup>110</sup> that target a wide range of welfare dependents, including poor families, single or sick elderly persons, stateless children, ill family members who need treatment, disabled persons who have not registered with the Department of Welfare, depleted households, and households without basic necessities. One interviewee provided a good example of the above,

For example, through *Projek Cari* we cooperate with the government agencies at federal level to search out and notify the marginalised individuals or detect isolated cases [which have been overlooked] that need assistance (YB1).

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<sup>109</sup> Highway in Malaysia denotes a major road system that has at least four lanes, in general with a speed limit between 80 to 110 km/h.

<sup>110</sup> e-Kasih is a federal government programme and *Projek Cari* is the opposition’s programme. The target group for *Projek Cari* is the isolated and sidelined individuals or cases that need help and those identified as having other social problems. Amongst them are the poor families who need financial assistance, ill elderly persons, children without legal documents, children who have dropped out of school, ill family members who need medical assistance, disabled persons who have not registered with the welfare department, and depleted houses without basic facilities.

All MPs that I interviewed, regardless of whether they were in the urban or rural constituencies, have worked with the Welfare Department to focus on poverty eradication in Malaysia within the PPRT and e-Kasih programmes. Another interviewee relates,

What we do is to co-operate with the government to provide lists of the needy families/individuals to the government agencies (YB7).

In principle, all those who participated in the interviews agreed that the battle to eradicate poverty should not be politicised. They agreed that those who qualified must be helped, regardless of their ethnic background and political affiliations. There should not be special preferences for one particular ethnic group and political allegiance. MPs provided the list of the needy families/individuals to the government agencies, but they did not have the power to make the final decision or to ensure that the target groups actually receive the help from the agencies.

We do not have access to [or the ability to] monitor or to double-check the final list of [those] who have been listed and are eligible to receive help (YB1).

The Bukit Mertajam MP, Chian Hen Kai, has claimed that there was favouritism that was based on party alliances in selecting the recipients of poverty programme aid. He claimed that Bumiputera who earned RM5000 had received assistance while some who had earned only RM300 were denied. He, therefore, urged the government to reconsider and change the policy to ensure that only the deserving individuals received help, to ensure political allegiance was not a factor (Chian Hen Kai, DR.02.01.1991).

Although the government denied any political influence in the process of providing assistance to the poor, findings from interviews, on the contrary, reveal that most MPs perceived that poverty assistance delivery and coverage, to some extent, was actually influenced by political allegiance. Interview data indicate that there is a strong consensus amongst opposition MPs that the government gives priority to the BN constituencies. MPs from the opposition felt that it was always about the government constituencies and the opposition constituencies. Potential recipients are often scrutinised first before receiving assistance. The opposition MPs also claimed that opposition party members often did not get help from the government agencies even though they are supposed to be non-partisan.

The poverty eradication programme is a government agenda, I mean the federal government. The agenda, the existing policy are good but implementation.....But we don't have the control to make the final decision or to ensure the target groups get the help from the agencies. It's always about government constituencies and opposition constituencies; government or opposition voters. Most of the time, the opposition voters won't get the help from the agencies. Like e-Kasih we have provided the list of poor people but we don't have access to monitor or to double-check the final list - who has been listed and is eligible for help (YB7).

The agenda has been successful but *sikap pilih bulu* [discrimination] between government supporters and opposition supporters has become the barrier to eradicate poverty in total (YB15).

Imagine, even under the government the rural areas [the constituencies under the BN] are still poor, what else if you choose the opposition? (YB17).

Furthermore, all opposition MPs suggested that the poverty eradication policy had been abused by UMNO elite for its own vested interests.

There are many Chinese who are poor; there are many Indians who are poor. Poverty doesn't see, doesn't show in colour, ok? So actually there are many Malays who are very poor, there are many Malays who are very rich (YB5).

You see, there are many Malays, Indians and even the Chinese who are poor in Malaysia but [they] don't get any support from the government agencies. Why? Because they are not BN voters (YB8).

Raja Ahmad Zainuddin Raja Omar, the Larut MP, is an example of how MPs used political allegiance to decide on the allocation of government resources to citizens. He suggested that the government should carry out studies to ensure that opposition supporters amongst the low income groups did not get assistance under the PPRT project. He expressed his frustration in parliament because the poor families who supported the opposition were amongst the recipients of the PPRT programme (Raja Ahmad Zainuddin Raja Omar, DR.23.02.2000).



However, the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, G. Palanivel explained that poverty eradication did not take political allegiance into account. (G. Palanivel, DR.23.02.2000).

The opposition MPs' claim that *only* their constituencies had been discriminated against by the government is arguably inaccurate. Hansard data show that the government constituencies in East Malaysia were also "fighting" to get better treatment from the federal government. This argument is based on the consistency of pledges and statements of frustration made by the government MPs of Sabah and Sarawak in parliament (I elaborate on this later in "Citizens to Parliament"). The MPs claimed that there was always a tendency for the federal government to be deliberately selective and biased in providing assistance to combat poverty, whether this was a regional or ethnic bias.

The federal government claimed that we are so successful in eradicating poverty. But if you yourself look at Sabah and Sarawak, there are too many poor people. Often, what has been written in newspapers does not represent the reality. I think the federal government must give priority to Sabah and Sarawak because they are so loyal to BN (YB19).

Hansard data indicate that in parliament, as expected, the Cabinet tended to use the lower house as a formal micro-level deliberative forum for informing legislators what the government has done and how successful the anti-poverty programmes were, rather than re-evaluate, debate and modify the discussed programmes. Depending on the MPs' political party affiliation, as mentioned in chapter five, generally legislator voices only echoed the Cabinet's agenda if they were government MPs, and criticised it if they were opposition MPs.

### **7.1.2 Citizens to Parliament**

From the 1990s up until 2012, poverty issues in East Malaysia, especially in Sabah, were constantly highlighted by MPs in parliament. These concerns were focused on the problems related to the lack of infrastructure, or facilities for better living conditions and activities to boost the economy. Meanwhile, the MPs of West Malaysia had moved toward discussing a new type of poverty, which is relative poverty. This kind of poverty has risen because of the rapid urbanisation process and the global impacts on the Malaysian economy of certain types of increased trade opening. Interviews and Hansard data show that MPs felt that hard core

poverty was not a major issue in many constituencies in the Peninsular, but it was in rural Sabah and Sarawak. However, these MPs perceived that the high level of income inequality was becoming a significant problem,<sup>111</sup> especially in the urban constituencies. Issues related to relative poverty captured the attention of all participants from the urban constituencies.

We don't have a hard core poverty group here but the relative one instead. We're seeing an increase in the urban [relative] poverty trend. Rapid urbanisation has made the issue of relative poverty quite significant and it should be taken seriously by the government ...Yes, [it is a successful story] if we're talking about hard core poverty but the nation is having a problem with the increasing urban poverty and the relative poverty. The gap between the super-rich and the middle class is so huge (YB7).

I think the issues for most of Kuala Lumpur's constituencies is relative poverty - poverty is a big issue. Urban poverty is much worse than rural poverty (YB2).

Where are the poor? The poor are actually in urban areas. The real poor Malays are in Kerinchi, Lembah Pantai [in Kuala Lumpur] (YB5).

Weak! The programme [e.g., PPRT] doesn't provide a platform for citizens to get out of poverty but is heavily dependent on government assistance. Although the government has been successful in reducing absolute poverty, it hasn't taken into consideration social mobility within society in the long term. That is why we have relative poverty in the urban areas [now] (YB9).

In the constituencies where poverty dominated the landscape, MPs as mediators have facilitated job creation for their constituents. Although in principle it is the government's responsibility, interview data suggest that MPs felt they had failed if they were not able to create jobs for their constituents. If the relevant government agencies were slow in carrying out their duties, MPs become the mediators for the creation of job opportunities. MPs also encouraged their constituents to upgrade their skills by providing vocational training or short

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<sup>111</sup> In economic terms, relative poverty uses the national medium income as the benchmark to assume relations between average standards of living and the social inclusion amongst the population (Niemiets, 2010, p. 242). It is argued that "poverty is easier to recognize than it is to measure" (Leete, 2007, p. 136).

courses that can be undertaken at the constituency level such as cooking, weaving, sewing and so forth as indicated by YB4.

Providing vocational training is considered a more sustainable way of combating poverty in the long-term. All of the relevant agencies have a tendency to only provide one-off aid. The Pendang MP, Fadzil Md. Noor, said that the opposition recognised government efforts to eliminate poverty through NEP and NDP. However, he urged the government to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of programmes such as *PPRT*, *Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia* (AIM),<sup>112</sup> *Yayasan Basmil Kemiskinan* (YBK) or the Poverty Eradication Foundation for the recipients. He suggested that the government programmes should support recipients to be independent and achieve a sustainable lifestyle rather than providing one-off assistance, especially in supporting educational development for children of poor families (Fadzil Md. Noor, DR.16.02.2000).

Prior to the 12<sup>th</sup> general election, Hansard data suggest that often MPs echoed government explanations during parliamentary sittings as mentioned in previous chapters. For example, Che Ibrahim Mustaffa, the Sungai Petani MP, simply praised the government by repeating what the government had delivered through the budget.<sup>113</sup> The questions asked by MPs were rather standard during parliamentary sittings. MPs asked what the government had done to tackle poverty and to lessen citizens' burden when the oil price was increasing globally (Razali Ibrahim, DR.30.04.2008). This type of question is often answered by cabinet ministers using a standard format, such as making reference to the government "reviewing mid-term budget of the Malaysia Plan."<sup>114</sup> This trend has changed since the 12<sup>th</sup> Parliament. In the first sitting of the first term of the 12<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary debates, issues of poverty and up-graded quality of life dominated the concerns of opposition MPs of DAP, PAS and PKR.

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<sup>112</sup> AIM was established in 1987 as a micro-credit organisation to help the poor rural households, especially women to involve in or establish a small business as side-income for their family.

<sup>113</sup> Che Ibrahim Mustaffa said the government had done a great job by repeating what the minister had informed the parliament about, such as RM6 billion allocations for poverty eradication programme in rural districts: RM80 million for the subsidy scheme for paddy fertilisers, RM12 million for fishermen and farmers, RM416 million for new settlements, restructuring land use and replanting the rubber trees, RM346 million for water supply, and RM16 million for electricity supply in rural districts (Che Ibrahim Mustaffa, DR.02.01.1991).

<sup>114</sup> For example, when the oil price reached US\$120 per barrel on the international market in 2008, the cabinet informed the parliament that the government would undertake a mid-term review of the 9MP. The mid-term review of any Malaysia Plan allows parliament to respond to citizens' concerns and grievances immediately. Parliament approved RM4 billion under the scope of "people oriented budget" to subsidise basic needs such as rice, flour, cooking oil and so forth as well as construction materials to ensure the upgrading of infrastructure projects in rural constituencies and the construction of low-cost flats for poor citizens were not affected (Abdullah Badawi, DR.30.04.2008).

However, most of the opposition MPs' attempts to ask questions on poverty issues were denied by the speaker.

The government MPs of East Malaysia took a different tone when questioning government programmes and policies. Their behaviour in questioning the government's promises to citizens was actually inclined towards and similar to that of the opposition MPs in parliament. For example, the Tanjung Manis MP, Norah Abdul Rahman, questioned the federal government's perception about the status and significance of East Malaysia. She felt the federal government had ignored East Malaysia in terms of economic development (Norah Abdul Rahman, DR.05.05.2008). She was not alone as the MPs of Kinabatangan, Kalabakan, Gaya and Batang Sadong were amongst the most active legislators who advocated citizens' concerns, demands and frustrations within parliament. MPs from Sabah and Sarawak felt that East Malaysia had been sidelined and the East Malaysia was the "Cinderella" in the federation. Hansard analysis suggests that often the MPs from East Malaysia were sceptical about cabinet answers in parliament.<sup>115</sup>

Frustrated with the rhetoric, the Kalabakan MP, Abdul Ghapur Salleh suggested that the cabinet should visit the poor constituencies in Malaysia rather than rely on data provided by officials. Abdul Ghapur Salleh is one of the MPs that had consistently advocated the poverty agenda in parliament. He claimed that poverty in Sabah was at 24 per cent of its population and 800 per cent higher than poverty at the national level (Abdul Ghapur Salleh, DR.12.05.2008). The Deputy Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, S.K. Devamany informed parliament that the government only provided assistance to poor families and responded to citizens' demands based on statistical data provided by the government agencies (S.K.Devamany, DR.12.05.2008). However, as argued by MPs of East Malaysia, statistical data did not always portray the actual situation (amongst others, see for examples Abdul Ghapur Salleh, DR.12.05.2008; Nancy Shukri, DR.07.05.2008; Norah Abdul Rahman,

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<sup>115</sup> The common answer given by the minister in the lower house is that the government always allocates a bigger budget to Sabah and Sarawak than other states in the Peninsular. For example, the Minister of Integration, Culture, Arts and Heritage, Mohd Shafie Apdal denied that East Malaysia had been sidelined from the major development by Putrajaya. Shafie stated that both Sabah and Sarawak had been allocated a bigger budget in the 9MP compared to the 8MP. The allocation for Sabah, which was RM15.7 billion or 7.8 per cent in the 9MP against RM13.2 billion in the previous 8MP, was the highest amongst the 13 states in Malaysia. Meanwhile, Sarawak received RM13.4 billion or 6.7 per cent in the 9MP compared to RM12.8 billion in the 8MP. Mohd Shafie explained to the parliament that RM189 million was allocated for Sabah to tackle poverty amongst the Bumiputera with emphasis given to Orang Sungai, Rungus, Bisayah, Suluk and Sulu. Meanwhile RM139 million was allocated to Sarawak to help poor Bumiputera there, in particular amongst the Bidayuh, Kenyah, Kayan, Kadayan, Penan and Luang Bawan (Mohd Shafie Apdal, DR.05.05.2008).

DR.05.05.2008; Bung Mokhtar Radin, DR18.02.2009; Lau Ngau Siew, DR21.02.2000). The Batang Sadong MP urged the government to pay closer attention to her constituency as the reality was worse than what statistical data suggested (Nancy Shukri, DR.07.05.2008).

Solving the problem of poverty through subsidies is also a common approach advocated by the MPs. For example, the Padas MP, Radin Malleh, argued that the 1991 Budget had further marginalised the working class and poor families in Sabah. Most of the citizens in Sabah's rural constituencies were farmers and fishermen. He argued that the government's decision to replace the subsidy scheme with a credit scheme had created difficulties for the uneducated farmers and fishermen in dealing with government agencies. Therefore, poverty remained high in Sabah after the NEP ended (Radin Malleh, DR.02.01.1991). Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar also raised the issue of price increases in basic needs and asked the government to use different means to reduce the burden on lower income groups (Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar, DR.05.05.2008).

The Minister of Domestic Trade, Co-operatives and Consumerism, Shahril Abdul Samad said that the government from time to time revised the subsidy for basic items such as rice, cooking oil, sugar, and flour to control the food supply and price of imported raw products (Shahril Abdul Samad, DR.05.05.2008). Hansard records indicate that the price of basic needs has been kept low through state subsidies and market intervention through the practise of price controls for certain items such as rice, sugar, cooking oil, flour and so forth. However, the issue of subsidised goods not reaching the target group is persistent. For example, there is the long standing issue of subsidised rice for the low income group being extended illegally to restaurants and other business operators (Kong, 2011). Consumer activist Patrick Sindu has argued that the shortage of subsidised rice is particularly obvious in small towns in rural districts such as Sabah and Sarawak (Sario & Tien, 2011).

What we can learn here is that East Malaysian MPs of BN share similar approaches to opposition MPs who have repeatedly raised issues requesting the government to help the hard core poor citizens in every parliament session.

### **7.1.3 Housing Affordability: Staying “Bottom-Up” while Collaborating using a Top-Down Approach**

Demography changes and poverty are interrelated (World Bank, 2002).<sup>116</sup> Rapid urbanisation has had major impacts on housing demand and affordability in Malaysia. One of the government strategies to combat poverty is to build free houses under the PPRT programme for the citizens who live below the poverty line, or build low-cost houses for the working class group. Since the Fourth Malaysia Plan (4MP) (1981-1985) priority has been given to building more low-cost state houses.

Two government agencies, the MoHLG at the federal level, and the State Economic Development Corporations at the state level, have been responsible for building houses whose price per unit must not be higher than RM42,000.<sup>117</sup> The project was established under the Public Low-Cost Housing Programme (PLCHP), which was changed to the People’s Housing Programme (PHP) in February 2002. PLCHP was started under Mahathir. Mahathir established the National Economic Action Council (NEAC) in January 1998 to address and respond to recession and the impacts of the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997/98. Besides building low-cost houses for sale, the NEAC has taken further action by initiating the PLCHP in December 1998 to provide more rental housing for the working class. The rental rate under the PLCHP/PHP has remained at RM124 monthly. The federal government has been financing the PLCHP/PHP. To some extent, the PLCHP/PHP has reduced the squatter problem in big cities in Malaysia. Meanwhile, the National Housing Department of the MoHLG has been accountable for implementing and monitoring the programme.<sup>118</sup> Under the

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<sup>116</sup> There is a marked contrast between the Peninsular and Borneo states in terms of ethnicity and development level. With high economic growth and rapid development, urban space in Malaysia has also changed rapidly. The number of people who live in urban areas has increased because of (1) the migration of the population from rural to urban areas, (2) rural areas have become urban areas, and (3) the natural increase of urban residents. From 1980 to 2005, the population of urban areas increased to 63 per cent. Half of the population in nine out of 13 states in Malaysia were living in urban areas including in Kelantan, Kedah, Perlis and Pahang, where population remained predominantly rural (Leete, 2007, pp. 64-65).

<sup>117</sup> The criteria used by authorities to select eligible citizens are (1) monthly household income not exceeding RM2,500, (2) household size, (3) age, and (4) marital status. Individuals are required to register as potential buyers through the Computerised Open Registration System (MoHLG, 2009a, pp. 22-26).

<sup>118</sup> Based on location and design, the price for each unit varies – from RM25,000 (rural/small towns – terrace houses) to RM35,000 to RM42,000 (urban/big cities- high rise flats) (MoHLG, 2009a, pp. 22-26). As the most populated city in Malaysia, 25 out of the 57 projects that involved 32,762 units were built in Kuala Lumpur. The other 32 projects that involved 41,322 units were built in other states in Malaysia. A total of 25 projects, comprising 32,762 housing units were built in Kuala Lumpur whilst 57 projects comprising 41,322 housing units were implemented in other states. A total of 51,820 units of such houses have been completed (MoHLG, 2009a, pp. 27).

housing assistance programme, 2,210 out of the 2,348 houses were built for the target group in 2010 (Chan, 2011)

Since all states in Malaysia have gone through rapid urbanisation (estimated to be at a rate of 62 per cent in 2009), low income citizens have been struggling to cope with the increasing cost of renting in all major cities (MoHLG 2009, p.21). Rapid urbanisation has created slum areas in big cities in Malaysia. In 1999, there were 116,412 squatter families in Malaysia categorised as poor families, based on *the Study on Policy and Strategy on Eradication of Squatters in Malaysia*. In 2005, 18,766 families had been successfully relocated to proper low cost housing areas. By then, 97,646 families were still living in squatter camps. In Kuala Lumpur, 63.7 per cent of the squatter families, who earned about RM1,200 monthly, were living under the poverty line (MoHLG 2009a, p. 21). The same trend also appears in Sarawak. The Sri Aman MP, Jimmy Lim Donald, felt that the Dayak was 20 years behind compared to other ethnicities in Peninsular Malaysia. He claimed that most of the Dayak lived in squatter camps when they moved to big cities in Sarawak such as Kuching, Miri and Sibul (Jimmy Lim Donald, DR.21.02.2000).

In Peninsular Malaysia, the squatters tended to build their houses on the reserved land belonging to the government. For example, they encroached on the reserved land of the Keretapi Tanah Melayu (KTM). In 1990s, to cater for the increasing number of train commuters, the KTM needed to expand its rail service. Some of the KTM's reserved land was occupied by the squatters, which was becoming an urban problem in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan. The Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Transportation explained to parliament that the Technical Committee of the Squatter Relocation of the Prime Minister's Office had given the squatters the opportunity to relocate to temporary long house units provided by the government, or to low cost flats in seven locations including Rawang, Jinjang, Pantai Dalam, Balakong, Puchong, Pelabuhan Kelang and Seremban (Zaleha Ismail, DR.02.01.1991).

Ten years later, the relocation of the squatters to temporary long houses had created a new problem. The deteriorating condition of the temporary long houses ten years later attracted the attention of MPs as well. Zulhasnan Rafique, the Wangsa Maju MP, asked the Prime Minister and the DBKL questions relating to the government plan to achieve "zero squatters" in Kuala Lumpur, including questions on the status of the residents of the long houses (Zulhasnan Rafique, DR.21.02.2000). The government explained to the House of

Representatives that the developers appointed by the DBKL had been given orders to build 98,000 low cost units and medium cost houses to relocate the squatters and residents of the long houses. The project was expected to be finished by 2005. The lower house was informed that there were enough units to relocate the squatters and low income groups in Kuala Lumpur to achieve the “zero squatter” objective (Pandikar Amin Mulia, DR.21.02.2000).

Housing affordability is no longer only a lower income group problem in Malaysia. Housing affordability is a major problem amongst the middle-income group in Malaysia as well. Hansard data and media reports indicate that many Malaysians from the middle class in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Penang and Johor could not afford to buy a first house. During the Budget 2011 debate, the Tebrau MP, Teng Boon Soon, urged the government to take proper notice of citizens’ complaints to prevent property speculation in Malaysia. He claimed that speculation had worsened and further marginalised the chances of the middle-income group to have their own houses.

Houses valued at RM1mil are sold at RM1.2mil by speculators....There are developers who have sold some of the units to speculators with the intention of creating a false demand in the market. So the price of the houses can increase up to RM50,000 or more (Teng Boon Soon, DR.20.10.2011).

To overcome the affordability issue amongst the middle-income group who are not eligible for low cost houses, all the state governments have proposed to build houses for middle-income citizens who earn about RM5,000- RM6,000 monthly. An initiative has been taken to impose quotas for developers to build houses within the range of RM200,000 especially in Selangor, Penang and Johor (Rajagopal, 2011). In general, the middle-class group in the big cities has been trapped in the economic system because there is no specific policy to assist them to buy a house. The existing policies are more concerned with the low-income group through the quota system imposed by the government. Meanwhile, developers have been building houses to cater for the upper middle class and the rich as well as foreigners. In the 2011 Budget, the government announced that under the *Skim Rumah Pertamaku* (My First House Scheme), which targeted the middle-income group, first-time buyers were only required to make a down payment of 10 per cent for a house below RM220,000. First-time buyers who earn less than RM3,000 monthly will be eligible for a 100 per cent loan i.e.,



exempted from paying the 10 per cent down payment. In addition, if the house is valued at RM350,000 or below, they will get a 50 per cent discount off the stamp duty (Tee, 2011).

Housing demand nationwide in Malaysia for the lower and middle-income groups was also affected by abandoned housing projects. Many buyers have been victimised by developers who have abandoned their housing projects. Most of them are first time buyers who cannot afford to buy another house as they still have to pay the mortgage on the unfinished house. The Fund for the Abandoned Housing Projects or *Tabung Projek Perumahan Terbengkalai* (TPPT) (1990-1992), was set up by the government in 1990 to help to re-develop 74 abandoned housing projects by giving loans amounting to RM356.2 million to developers. The Finance Minister II stated that the fund had re-built 177,730 units, of which 5,717 units, or 32 per cent, were meant for lower income group (Nor Mohamed Yakcop, DR.05.05.2008).

Hansard records indicate that MPs were sceptical about the success rate of the “bail out” package that the government provided to developers. However, it has not prevented the MPs from suggesting that the government should bail out the abandoned projects. For example, the Rasah MP, Loke Siew Fock, urged the MoHLG to bail out the abandoned housing projects as thousands of citizens had been victimised by the developers (Loke Siew Fock, DR.08.05.2008). However, the Bachok MP, Nasaruddin Mat Isa, stated that, based on the MoHLG records (1990-2005), there were 261 abandoned housing projects nationwide that involved 88,410 housing units with 58,685 buyers victimised because of developers’ management problems. He said, studying the Consumer Association of Penang (CAP) (an NGO) analysis data, the abandoned housing projects had occurred at an alarming rate because of the failure of the government agencies to monitor developers, and due to the red-tape in the government bureaucracy that prevented quick decisions being made (Nasaruddin Mat Isa, DR.05.05.2008).

Zuraida Kamaruddin, the Ampang MP, asked the MoHLG for reasons why the housing developers were not being held accountable to the buyers who had been burdened with bank loans without actually receiving a home. As some of the projects have been built by government linked developers such as TALAM, she asked about the government’s stand on this dilemma, which had been one faced by buyers for decades (Zuraida Kamaruddin, DR.08.12.2010). The CAP stated that most of the abandoned housing projects involved unlicensed developers. Up to April 2012, there were 159 housing projects nationwide built by

unlicensed developers not subject to government oversight or regulation involving an estimated 19,500 buyers (CAP, 4 April 2012).

The involvement of the civil society in helping to build houses for poor community has not progressed much. However, in 2009, a new programme that involved cooperation between NGOs and the government was launched to provide houses for poor citizens. From 5 through 30 October 2009, six hard core urban poor families were chosen for the pioneer project: “House Build project” by Habitat for Humanity Malaysia (an NGO) in collaboration with the MoHLG. The project took place in Kota Kinabalu, Kuching and Kuala Terengganu. Two houses were built in each city (MoHLG, 2009, p. 17).

Urbanisation has also created social pressure for citizens and government in providing better shelter for the population. Providing housing for low income households has been one of the most fundamental strategies used to combat poverty and uplift low income households’ quality of life in Malaysia. The government has been giving emphasis to building low-cost houses through the five-year Malaysia Plans to eradicate poverty. MPs have been acting both as social workers and mediators by helping and supporting the application made by constituents as well as trying to expedite the application process by arranging meetings with the relevant government agencies.

## **7. 2 Quota System for Bumiputera**

The quota system for Bumiputera is part of the government’s strategy to increase Bumiputera equity, especially the ethnic Malay’s share in the Malaysian economy and education. This has involved the imposition of a Bumiputera quota allowing the Malay’s in particular to enter public universities. The policy also provides scholarship to enable them to further their studies. Although the NEP did not spell out clearly how the quota system for Bumiputera should be implemented, a 30 per cent target was used as benchmark to push multiple public and economic sectors to increase the participation of the Bumiputera. With the target set out, but without a blueprint for how it would be implemented, the quota allocations for Bumiputera have been prone to criticisms and have been misused by certain influential individuals in government as mentioned in chapter three. The NEP’s modus operandi then has been implemented in other affirmative action policies in Malaysia.

### 7.2.1 Parliament to Citizens

This discussion on quota system for Bumiputera from a top-down approach, that is, a “parliament to citizens” approach, is divided into two parts: the first part focuses on Bumiputera equity in the market, and the second part focuses on educational opportunity for Bumiputera.

#### *Bumiputera Equity*

Malay equity was only 2 per cent in 1970 but had increased to 21 per cent in 1995 (8MP, 2001, p. 64). In helping to increase the Bumiputera equity in the economy, the Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department informed the lower house that the government had also introduced special schemes for Bumiputera to invest in, such as the *Amanah Saham Nasional* (ASN) and the *Amanah Saham Bumiputera* (ASB). Up to 31 December, 1990, 2.46 million Bumiputera had invested an amount of RM7 billion in ASN, and about 44 per cent of the 5.6 million Bumiputera who were eligible to invest in ASN had shares in ASN. When the government listed ASN in Bursa Malaysia (the Malaysian Stock Exchange), 1.2 million out of the 2.46 million Bumiputera investors had changed to the more conventional ASB with a total investment of RM5 billion (Syed Hamid Syed Jaafar Albar, DR.02.01.1991).

Shafie Mohd Salleh, Deputy Minister of the MoF, informed the House of Representatives that Bumiputera contractors were given priority to carry out government projects. The government has assisted the Bumiputera contractors to solve their capital liquidity in three main ways: (1) by simplifying contracts without involving a personal bank mortgage, (2) by giving a 15 per cent advance, and (3) by pledging to make at least a 50 per cent payment of invoices within 14 days of the reimbursement request. In addition, on 10 February, 2000, the government launched *Tabung Projek Usahawan Bumiputera* (TPUB) or the Bumiputera Entrepreneur Project Fund aiming at providing capital with lower interest rates to ensure that Bumiputera entrepreneurs who had financial problems and difficulties could access loans from commercial banks, allowing them to get involved in new projects (Shafie Mohd Salleh, DR.15.02.2000). However, the weakness in financial management eventually burdened the government, as only 6,000 out of the 55,000 loans given to the Bumiputera were paid back during the NEP era (Ganguly, 1997, p.262).

Shafie Mohd Salleh also stated that the government had taken a number of steps to assist the Bumiputera entrepreneurs and contractors who had problems since the Asian Financial Crisis

of 1997/98. The government established different schemes to finance them. Up to February 2000, 42 types of funding from different ministries and government agencies with a total value of RM13.9 billion were available. The government through the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development (MoED) has established the Training Centre for Entrepreneurs (*Pusat Bimbingan Usahawan*) to guide and give advice to Bumiputera enterprises and companies. In addition, to realise the vision of establishing the Bumiputera Commerce and Industry (*Masyarakat Perdagangan Dan Perindustrian Bumiputera*), the government also established specific programmes for Bumiputera such as the Bumiputera Developer Contractors Programme (*Program Kontraktor Binaan Bumiputera Berwibawa*) and the Entrepreneur Development Programme (*Program Pembangunan Usahawan*). Shafie explained that the government allocated the projects through the Chamber of Commerce Malaysia and the Malay Contractors' Association. These two bodies have also been involved in selecting eligible contractors for government projects (Shafie Mohd Salleh, DR.24.02.2000)

The Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, S. Devamany, stated that the equity of Malays and Bumiputera in the corporate sector had increased from 19.4 per cent in 2006 to 21.9 per cent in 2008. The same pattern is also present in the management and professional sectors, with architects increasing from 45.5 per cent to 60 per cent, surveyors from 48.2 per cent to 55.1 per cent, and doctors from 38 per cent to 53 per cent, all during the same time period (Devamany S. Krishnasamy, DR.09.12.2010).

Since 2006, the government has allocated RM2.461 billion under the Public Infrastructure Maintenance (PIA) programme for Class F Bumiputera contractors ("RM2.4b set aside for Class F Bumiputera contractors," 15 April 2010). In 2010, there was a suggestion that the government should set up the Bumiputera Equity Trust (*Amanah Saham Ekuiti Bumiputera*) (ASEB) to buy back company shares that had been sold by individual Bumiputera shareholders. Therefore, the target of reaching 30 per cent Bumiputera equity in the market would not be jeopardised by those Bumiputera seeking short term profits ("Beli balik saham Bumiputera," 2010). According to the Minister of International Trade and Industry, Mustapa Mohamed, Bumiputera controls 22 per cent of the market equity in Malaysia in 2010, still eight percent behind the original target set for 1990 ("Bumiputera kuasai 22 peratus pasaran modal," 2011).

Through the implementation of different affirmative action policies, the Malaysian government has adopted an approach of “exclusive treatment” by given preferences to Bumiputera to establish businesses, to apply for government credits/loans, and to supply goods and services for government projects. The preferential treatment given to Bumiputera has been the source of endless debates in the House of Representatives since the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament, which many authors claim that the quota system for Bumiputera has been abused by elite politicians of BN (see for example Crouch, 1996; Gomez, 1990; Sowell, 2004).

### *Education*

Education is a common focus for affirmative action programmes and a key feature of the goal of upgrading the socio-economic and socio-political status of marginalised groups in the Westminster systems. In various ways, such systems have been employed in Canada, India, Britain, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand. The same approach has been adopted in Malaysia. Through the quota system in education, opportunities for Bumiputera to pursue higher levels of study have been increased and broadened. Education has played a significant role in producing an educated, professional middle class amongst the Bumiputera, with higher number of lawyers, doctors, engineers and so forth within the Bumiputera community (Lee, 2006; Rahimah, 2012; Verma, 2002b). In the 6MP (1991-1995), basic education, schooling from nine to eleven years at school, was made free to citizens. 1991 was the year when the upper secondary school became accessible to all students without needing a grade in the lower secondary school examination to proceed to the upper secondary level.

Malaysia’s track record in educational investment is at par with the OECD. The education system is centralised in Malaysia and under the purview of the federal government. The Malaysian government’s involvement in education was high in the mid-1990s to maintain universal primary and secondary education, and to increase citizens’ accessibility to tertiary education (Leete, 2007).<sup>119</sup> Malaysia is however, facing problems with regards to making choices between intensifying investments in education in poor areas or investing in other

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<sup>119</sup> For example, the Education Minister, Hishammuddin Hussein, informed the House of Representatives that the government had as part of their education policy provided *Tabung Kumpulan Wang Amanah Pelajar Miskin* (KUAM) (the Trust Funds for Poor Students): a text book loan scheme, a tuition scheme, transportation allowances, a food and milk supplement programme, scholarships for primary and secondary students, scholarships for A-Level/pre-university students, scholarships for sport, uniform allowances, and disabled student allowances (Hishammuddin Hussein, DR.05.05.2008). In addition, *Program Destini Anak Bangsa* (the Citizens Destiny Programme) was launched by Prime Minister Najib Razak to give opportunities to 500 poor students to pursue their studies at tertiary level at Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) (Betty & Suriani, 30 2010).

economic development projects. There are also issues related to competition between private and public education (Nelson, 2007; UNESCO-UIS & OECD, 2005).

Although Malaysia is an example of a successful nation that has restructured society through an education quota system, this success has come with a cost. Sowell (2004) argues that the education quality in Malaysia has declined as a result of the employment of an ethnic based quota system rather than a pure meritocratic system focused on individual performance. Consequently, the merit system was re-installed and re-implemented for university admission for the first time in 2001 since the introduction of the NEP in 1971 (Sowell, 2004). Prior to that, the tertiary education admission imposed a quota system that ensured that Bumiputera could compete with other ethnic groups and would be able to access educational training that would allow social mobility.<sup>120</sup> In 1991, Yong Chiew Lip, the Gaya MP, had already urged the government to revise the quota system for public universities, at a time when 60 per cent of the places in public universities had been allocated to Bumiputera students. He argued that it was about time the government democratised the public university admission by introducing a meritocratic system (Yong Chiew Lip, DR.02.01.1991).

Another contentious issue related to the quota system in education is the distribution of scholarships to citizens. Under the NEP, half of the scholarships awarded to Malay students went to the top 17 per cent of rich Malay families in the 1980s. The Prime Minister's Department has since taken into consideration views from the MCA, MIC and Gerakan on the issue of awarding PSD scholarships..<sup>121</sup> The non-Bumiputera political parties in the BN coalition presented 364 cases that involved non-Bumiputera applicants, asking the Public Service Department (PSD) to re-consider their applications. MCA, MIC and Gerakan urged the government to award PSD scholarships based on academic merit only. In addition, they

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<sup>120</sup> The same strategy also has been adopted by the countries that use a quota preferential in the education system to give opportunities to the marginalised groups. During the Soviet Union era, preferential grading was given to central Asian students and the same pattern had been adopted in the United States for minorities under the concept of "affirmative grading." Another example is in India where the "untouchables, other backward classes" and tribal groups outside the Hindu caste system are eligible for "grace marks" and to prevent high failure rates, the pass grade is lowered unilaterally (Sowell, 2004, p. 4).

<sup>121</sup> 4,000 PSD scholarships were offered to top scorers in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) certificate (equivalent to O-Level), with 1,500 awarded to study abroad and 2,500 awarded locally, out of 8,857 eligible applicants in 2011. The scholarships to study abroad were offered to students as follows: 882 (58.8%) to Bumiputera, 466 (31.1%) to the Chinese, 137 (9.1 %) to the Indians, and 15 (1%) to others. Meanwhile 2,500 PSD scholarships to study for a degree at local universities were allocated as follows: 1,301 (52%) for Bumiputera, 1,086 (43.5%) for the Chinese, 108 (4.3%) for the Indians and 5 (0.2%) for others.

insisted that only the top students should be given scholarships to study abroad<sup>122</sup> (Ng, Ili, & Rozanna, 2011).

In sum, the quota system for Bumiputera has become a blunt instrument of redistribution when ethnicity is used as the main criterion, and thus the system may jeopardise the effort to provide aid to marginalised groups rather than help in addressing this marginalisation. As the quota system for Bumiputera is enshrined in the Constitution, thus giving the government the legitimacy to enforce a top-down approach. Consequently, as this study indicates, MPs have the tendency to become reactive when discussing or debating these issues.

### **7.2.2 Citizens to Parliament**

A few works on affirmative action in Malaysia suggest that the quota system reserved for Bumiputera within the public sector, education sector, and in terms of the share of the economic pie, is, unsurprisingly, works at the expense of other non-Bumiputera especially the Chinese and Indians (Kahn, 1996). However, my interview data findings indicate that none of the participants mention this. At a personal level, the participants believed that as representatives of citizens, their responsibilities went beyond protecting ethnic and religious identities when representing their constituents. There was no sense of MPs explicitly agreeing with favouritism. When opportunities are given to ethnic Malays in particular but results are not forthcoming, the focus of discussion should be on what Malays have not done to achieve the target rather than pointing fingers at others as supposedly the cause of targets not being met. Nevertheless, none of the participants mentioned that the Bumiputera blamed the non-Bumiputera for their “backwardness” in economic development.

By examining interviews and Hansard data, my findings reveal that MPs’ views on the quota system were highly concentrated and focused on patronage practices. The Bumiputera preferential access to the quota system has disproportionately advantaged a small number of Malays and has excluded a large group of Bumiputera as well as non-Bumiputera. MPs perceived that the quota system had benefited the well-off Malays and non-Malays who had good connections with the Malay elite politicians. Furthermore, the system has also been

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<sup>122</sup> Three criteria are used to award the PSD scholarships: academic performance (85%), co-curricular activities (10%), and interview and special examination (5%). However, five criteria are used to award scholarships based on ethnic make-up: academic performance (65%), socio-economic status (25%), co-curricular activities (5%), and interview and special examination (5%). In addition, 20% of the scholarships given to Bumiputera students must be allocated to Sabah and Sarawak Bumiputerans who are socially disadvantaged compared to their counterparts from the Peninsular (Ng, Ili & Rozanna, 2011)

corrupted as a group of “greedy” politicians have accumulated wealth rapidly through the distribution of government projects through the system of Bumiputera preferential treatment.

The patronage system of the NEP has produced a few selected rich Malays who have been referred to by analysts and critics as UMNO-putera. They argue that this practice has resulted in corruption, cronyism, favouritism, and nepotism amongst the elite politicians, especially the UMNO political leaders (Gomez, 1990, 1991, 1996; Gomez & Jomo, 1999). More than half of the interview participants said that the innovation of the programme had been tarnished by elite politicians who have misused the state-sponsored quota system to enrich their own cronies and ultimately themselves. Thus, the Bumiputera remained the poorest ethnic group in Malaysia even after the initial NEP programme ended. The analysis of the interview data showed that cronyism, favouritism and nepotism are terms that have been used constantly to describe the Malay leaders of UMNO. For example:

The current quota system is a crony system. It is only for the influential MPs in BN. They got it [quota], not the ordinary citizens (YB15).

The most contentious element of parliamentary debates related to the quota has always centred on government contracts and procurements. Bung Moktar Radin, the Kinabatangan MP, asked the government how the open tender system would help the Bumiputera and the Malays to advance their businesses (Bung Moktar Radin, DR.09.12.2010). There had been criticisms that the government only offered tenders and bail-outs to its cronies.<sup>123</sup> Wan Junaidi Tuan Jaafar, the Batang Lupar MP, asked the MoF about the business opportunities given to Bumiputera. He raised the issue of whether the government intended to give opportunities to only one Bumiputera or a few Bumiputera groups or any Bumiputera groups that were interested in being involved in business. He alerted the MoF to the fact that the small number of Bumiputera companies that had always been granted projects by the government did not give an opportunity to other Bumiputera as sub-contractors or suppliers

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<sup>123</sup> In 1991, the *Tabung Pemulihan Usahawan* (TPU) or the Entrepreneur Recovery Funds was established to assist Bumiputera entrepreneurs who had financial difficulties to re-build the abandoned projects. The requirements to qualify and be eligible for the scheme were: (1) the company must be 100 per cent owned by Bumiputera, (2) the company is still active in business, (3) the company must be competitive and have the potential to re-structure, (4) the company problems originated from the recession and not mismanagement or other reasons, and (5) the company must be a member of the Malaysian Chamber of Entrepreneurs or its associations. 455 applicants were granted loans with a total of RM458.49 million. The main objective was to help Bumiputera entrepreneurs to re-establish their businesses because of the recession since 1985 (Abdul Ghani Othman, DR.04.01.1991).



for their projects (Wan Junaidi Tuan Jaafar, DR.24.02.2000). The Batang Lupar MP's view below was shared by other participants:

These practices only allow corruption, cronyism, favouritism, nepotism amongst the BN leaders. Why is the poorest ethnic group in Malaysia still the Malays? Why are the UMNO-putera leaders so rich, but the rest of the Malays are poor? Ahmad, Ali, Hassan in *kampung* (village) are still living in poverty. Why? They only think about themselves. They want to keep the current quota policy for their advantage, to fatten their own pockets. The current quota system is a trap for Bumiputera (YB8).

The quota debates also relate to Bumiputera competitiveness. The impact of the quota system on human development skills amongst the Bumiputera has often been touched upon by MPs during parliament sittings. As argued by YB8, "The quota system has made the Malays less competitive in the market." The question of who was responsible for Malays underperforming and why others continued to outshine the Malays has been raised frequently by MPs in parliament. Liberals and conservatives claim that the welfare state has produced a "dependency mentality" among the needy, which has prevented them from mobilising into a "better" social class (Smits, 2009). Samsul Amri, the Director of the Institute of the Malay World and Civilisation (Atma), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, argued that the failure to achieve 30 per cent equity ownership was because of the inability of the Bumiputera to multiply opportunities in the business chain as they did not have the required expertise (Kumar, 2005).

The current quota system in Malaysia has caused the Malays to lack competitiveness. The exposure that the Malays have is limited. For example, re-development projects that involve Malays in urban areas have further isolated them when they have been relocated to poor resettlement constituencies [refer to the development in Iskandar Region, Johor]. I think this is a backward development method of reversing the system [relocating the urbanised and developed Malays]. They should be in the cities for better exposure and competition, not being made to go back to backward areas without any proper development provided (YB1).

In helping Bumiputera to be more competitive, Shahril Abdul Samad, the Johor Bahru MP said,

The distribution process must be less individual centred. We would like to see more competition enabling the more deserving Malays to get quotas, rather than it is being based on favouritism (Ram, 2005).

Participants in the interview perceived that the quota system had made the group benefiting from the system less competitive by encouraging this group to take “short cuts” to gain economic prosperity, and without having sufficient hands-on experience in managing business. Findings from Hansard data also indicate that this perspective was shared by a wider group of MPs. There were references to “invisible hands” that controlled the business interests of certain individuals who qualified for favourable treatment. In Malaysia and Indonesia, the concept known as “Ali-Baba” refers to businesses that are “owned” by Bumiputera on paper only. “Ali” and “Baba” refer to Bumiputera and the non-Bumiputera, respectively. The “Baba” is a reference to the actual “invisible” owner, often the Chinese, who runs the business behind “Ali” to benefit from the preferences and quotas allocated to Bumiputera (Hing, 1984; Sowell, 2004).<sup>124</sup>

Analysis also showed that the line between “racial-based” and “racist” is indistinguishable when MPs expressed their views on the quota system. All MPs from the opposition and a few government MPs agreed that the quota system should be inclusive of all Malaysians. It should protect the whole of marginalised society as well as the marginalised groups in Malaysia. Treatment should not be given to the Bumiputera only. Wan Azizah argued that an inclusive quota policy that blurred the religious, ethnic, gender, language and political ideological identities, does not mean the end of assistance for the Bumiputera (Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, DR.05.05.2008).

The excerpts below from the interviews indicate that MPs agreed that the quota system concept was relevant in terms of its ability to reduce poverty and allow increased social mobility amongst poor families, especially amongst the Bumiputera. However, they argued

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<sup>124</sup> This tactic, however, has been commonly practised in the United States, the Jewish behind the “Gentile” in Poland, the Lebanese behind the African in Sierra Leone, and the Asian behind the African in Kenya (Sowell, 2004, pp. 10-12).

that it was about time the quota system was re-evaluated to help the whole of the marginalised Malaysian community.

The quota system is not totally bad. It can be used to reduce poverty amongst the side-lined or marginalised communities....It is not a question of whether the quota policy is wrong or relevant. The problem is the implementation. This quota policy shouldn't be used to protect one race only. It should be universal. Like I say, to protect the marginalised or side-lined groups, be the Malays, Chinese or Indians (YB7).

[The quota system should] accommodate people according to their capability and the assistance [given must be] based on needs rather than ethnicity (YB2).

What I'm saying is that the quota system should be inclusive, for everyone. It should protect the marginalised society, the side-lined groups in Malaysia. It shouldn't be given to the Bumiputera only (YB8).

I believe that it is about time that our country implemented a policy based on merit. This is just and healthy [for citizens]. Social justice must be provided to other ethnic groups without any barrier or discrimination (YB1).

The obvious weakness of the quota system in Malaysia is that it can't differentiate between the rich and the poor Malays or the rich and the poor Bumiputera. We need to think up a new approach for the quota system that is free from a racial base (YB9).

Although the interview data suggest strong agreement about requesting parliament to make changes to the current quota system based on needs, the interviews and Hansard data also provide evidence of mixed findings. Some MPs believed that the Bumiputera still needed the quota system to protect their interests and concerns.

The Malays and Bumiputera still need the protection [through quotas]. It is unfair for them to compete in the open market with other ethnic groups especially the Chinese who have already established themselves in business. [Without the quota]

they will be left behind. If we want to scrap the quota system, it must be done by stages to reduce the negative impacts on Bumiputera (YB18).

A common shared view amongst the MPs is that quota system in terms of implementation has side-lined deserving target groups and has only benefited a small group. The MPs were more interested in discussing the repercussions of the quota system rather than the policy related to the quotas.

### **7.3 Managing Tensions in Deliberative Forums**

In advocating for citizens' concerns, MPs must be able to balance the interests of the party and the interests of the citizens. Tensions occur because the MPs attempt to stay "bottom-up" while collaborating with the top-down approach of the executive and party elites in parliament. There are two elements to this tension. Firstly, as the only elected citizen representatives in Malaysia, the MPs have to advocate citizens' concerns and interests from the "bottom-up" by appearing to remain neutral and apolitical when dealing with the executive. Secondly, the MPs, on the other hand, need to observe party discipline and interests in parliament itself, and this may limit their ability to criticise in the official institution of parliament and the elite-centred policy-making process.

#### **7.3.1 Staying "Bottom-Up" while Collaborating with the Elite**

The "bottom-up" element here refers to the participation and engagement of the ordinary citizens of each constituency in issues raised by MPs. In theory, what takes place is that citizens' informally expressed concerns will be translated into more coherent ideas to influence the decision-making process by the elite. Tensions occur when MPs advocate the voices of citizens in order to influence the decision-making that has been proposed and already marked out by the cabinet. Citizens' concerns and interests were often "universal" in the sense that they spanned the political party system divide in parliament that often structured MPs' responses. When MPs advocated for their constituencies, they did not take into account the political party affiliation, ethnicity and religious background of the constituents. The voices of constituents became "one." Often, grassroots voices need to be raised in order for the government notice and take action to overcome or solve certain problems. The "neutralisation" of the MPs' stand in advocating for their constituents, however, will change when MPs have to vote based on political party preferences (i.e.,

different than the constituent preferences) in order to produce a coherent view amongst the party members in parliament.

As the citizens' views about poverty and quota system are macro-level deliberative and unstructured, tension occurs over who should speak up for those at the grassroots level in parliament. The tension emerges when the actors are "figuring out how to maintain a "bottom-up" approach to organising while doing policy advocacy that requires collaboration with policy elites" (Dodge, 2010, p. 391). Interviews and Hansard analysis suggests that the MPs across the divide have similar types of arenas and forums to communicate with the citizens. As a constituency is naturally an independent "political territory" in the lower house,<sup>125</sup> the MPs as the representatives of the "political territory" will themselves decide and identify the issues, and when they should be raised in the micro-level deliberative forums such as closed door meetings with the minister, or in the House of Representatives, to ensure the policy-makers capture the essence of the concerns that I examined further below. Alternatively, MPs used the hierarchical structure in the party system to choose who should participate in coordinating policy advocacy to ensure better transmission of the grassroots issues to the elites. The MPs' strategy is to collaborate with elites in order to avoid risking the loss of opportunity to influence the decisions made by the executive. On the other hand, MPs' judgement could well be clouded by the power and influence of the elites while advancing citizens' concerns.

### *Policy Advocacy*

The MPs engaged through a series of meeting sessions with constituents both formally and informally. Meeting-citizen sessions in informal macro-level deliberative forums, such as wedding receptions, worship places (mosques, churches and temples), parks, markets and so forth or through *turun padang*, provides feedback and the reality of grassroots concerns in each constituency. The MPs then used formal micro-level deliberative forums such as having a closed door meeting with ministries or directly voicing the issues in parliament when they have felt that they had been "ignored." Often, policy advocacy requires the experienced MPs to present the case to the elite or make the case in parliament to challenge government decisions without souring the relations.

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<sup>125</sup> MPs are addressed by their constituencies instead of their party affiliation in parliament.

*Turun padang* has been the most common mechanism practised by MPs as an outreach outlet with citizens. MPs listen to and discuss with citizens their needs and the infrastructure needed to generate local economic activities. *Turun padang* has created an informal macro-level deliberative forum for ordinary citizens to have their views considered and taken into account by the elites. The MPs also would involve technical or legal experts when an issue requires further understanding in terms of legal or technical consequences. For example, MPs work with NGOs such as CAP to address housing problems.

With the answers and promises given by the cabinet in parliament, the MPs do not protest or boycott parliament but keep engaging with the elite by constantly raising citizens' problems. Advocating for the voices from below is a process whereby MPs adopt a "bottom-up" approach to influence elites. MPs transmitted the knowledge gained at the grassroots level after listening to and discussing the storytelling of citizens and their everyday talk before debating it in parliament. On the issue of poverty, MPs voiced viewpoints that were different from what was pictured in government reports or official statistical data. The ministries then took note of the issues that have been raised in parliament to review the proposals or to make adjustments to existing policy.

### **7.3.2 Observing Party Discipline while Criticising Policy Makers**

The interviews indicate that MPs may face a dilemma between observing party discipline while attempting to be critical of the government decision-making at the formal micro-level deliberative forum in parliament. Tension occurs when MPs tried to convince the elite to develop policy ideas that are in line with citizens' interests but not the elite's. As the MPs have to observe party discipline in parliament, attempts to "reconstitute" their position to cooperate or vice versa with the elite has an appreciable impact on the outcome of policy-making (Dodge, 2010; Montpetit et al., 2004). MPs who attempted to transmit knowledge gathered from citizens to the elite without adopting a dual strategy will be ineffective. To convince the government, MPs often presented the evidence, such as the conflicting statistical data, through the storytelling of "people's stories" in parliamentary sittings or using symbolic events to "expose" the reality faced by the citizens. Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, MPs have also been using the new media in presenting the conflict between the official government reports and "the reality."

Citizens' grievances have been used to construct a picture of the injustices felt by lay citizens, with the hope that the cabinet will be able to figure out potential solutions for the issues

raised in parliament. The debates in parliamentary sittings have become the contributions of the MPs to the process of fine-tuning elite's policy approach to include the interests of a wider range of citizens, rather than those of a small section of certain groups only. MPs listened to their constituents' problems based on everyday talk and storytelling and took note of what they wanted from the government. The citizen "wish lists" are an example of the types of outcomes from the outreach pursued by MPs.<sup>126</sup> The wish list is a "testimony" of the everyday talk and storytelling to show what has been done and what needs to be done by the government as citizens perceive it. The different grassroots testimonies then are placed in the larger picture from the constituency level to the district level and finally to the state level before being presented in parliament or at the ministerial level. This "testimony" has been used to influence policy-makers without jeopardising the collective party spirit as it presented in a way that is less conflict-orientated and the criticism of policy-makers is only implied rather than explicit.<sup>127</sup> This process is undertaken in order to design or to review policy at the technical level. Government received the testimonies collected across the states and federal territories before coordinating and studying them at the ministerial level.<sup>128</sup> For example:

1. Harison Ngau, the Marudu MP, requested the Public Works Department to maintain and upgrade roads in Keningau, Nabawan and Tawau (Harrison Ngau Laing, DR.25.01.1991).
2. The Pendang MP, Fadzil Md Noor, raised the specific issue of the bad road conditions in Kampung Paya Bendang, Pendang. The roading system needed to be upgraded because it used by 300to 400 villagers every day (Fadzil Md Noor, DR.16.02.2000).
3. The Kinabatangan MP, Bung Mokhtar Radin, raised issues that concerned his constituents such as water supply, electricity, and the road system, during the question-and-answer session with the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development (Bung Mokhtar Radin, DR.30.04.2008).
4. The Beruas MP, Ngeh Koo Ham, raised the difficulties that his constituents faced when dealing with local councils. These were the concerns mainly of poor citizens such as farmers, fishermen, labours, hawkers, drivers and so forth (Ngeh Koo Ham, MP DR.30.04.2008).

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<sup>126</sup> The citizen wish lists such as request for seal road, electricity, treated clear water, school, market, house, community hall, clinic, hospital and so forth.

<sup>127</sup> For example, interview data indicate that the government MPs often presented cases to the federal government that the citizen support to BN has declined because of the failure to fulfil their wish lists.

<sup>128</sup> In addition to the citizens' wish lists, debates in the parliamentary sittings have also arisen from the existing policies related to poverty and quota as discussed previously in chapter five.

5. The Kalabakan MP, Abdul Ghapur Salleh, said he was ‘jealous’ of the level of development in the Peninsular Malaysia in comparison with those in Sabah and Sarawak, especially the lack of infrastructure such as broadband facilities (Ghapur Salleh, DR.06.12.2010).

MPs made recommendations to government based on the findings produced by different interest groups such as academicians in seminars or conferences, and independent think-tanks such as ASLI and IDEAS as mentioned in chapter six. Using this mechanism, the transmission of relevant knowledge to influence policy-makers are more scientific than the citizens’ everyday talk and storytelling as investigations have been undertaken on a more systematic and empirical basis.<sup>129</sup> Findings made by interest groups, even though they may not necessarily be able to modify the policy, often carry more weight in educating citizens about government decision-making or policy and gradually will change the elite’s standpoint. For example, the different mechanisms and approaches of the NEM, to some extent, have taken into account what MPs have raised in the parliamentary sittings, such as can be seen in the lobbying of the government to end the NEP’s influence in some sectors such as the introduction of meritocracy system to enter public university and the “liberalisation” of the public service (see chapter six).

Hansard data findings indicate that MPs across the political divide who came from areas where poverty existed and the injustice of the quota system is felt consistently, put direct pressure on government in parliament, asking the government to re-evaluate policies. Through the process of deliberation, while MPs advocated the issues in parliament, they also at the same time engaged the citizens outside parliament to formulate alternative policies and legislation. For example, MPs have worked closely with certain interest groups to promote new legislation that is independent from the government body as discussed previously (see sub-heading 6.1 in chapter six). MPs also have taken part in critical discourse outside the formal forum of deliberation. Engaging the masses through various mechanisms has proven to be somewhat influential in pushing elites to change existing policies in Malaysia. Citizens’ participation in supporting some causes for a more transparent and democratic system that

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<sup>129</sup> The Malaysian Parliament or the Malaysian government does not provide researchers for MPs. The expenses for any research works done at the constituency levels must be borne by the MPs or their political party. Therefore, findings from independent interest groups about the success or failure of poverty eradication and the impacts of the quota system for Bumiputera are important for MPs to check and balance the government official data.



goes beyond race, ethnicity, culture and religion, to some extent, has made modest impacts and led to some changes in legislation in today's Malaysia.

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

Although discussion in this chapter mainly concentrates on the issues of poverty eradication and the quota system for Bumiputera that have been raised in parliament as the formal micro-level deliberative forum, the legislators' voices in the "citizens to parliament" direction of deliberation reflects citizens' everyday talk that takes place outside the parliament. While communicating to citizens outside the parliament, MPs have changed their roles based on tasks they have undertaken, whether as social workers, mediators or advocates. The citizens' concerns outside the parliament that have been gathered by MPs in different deliberation locations (in both designated deliberation forums and public sphere) will be transmitted in the parliament later by MPs. MPs have channelled citizens' concerns and demands by participating in parliamentary debates.

The types of demands channelled by MPs to parliament are often related to material needs and economic development. The material and economic development demands are based on geographical locations, cultures and norms that constituents value most. In general, Hansard records demonstrate that the parliamentary sittings from 1990 to 2012 relating to poverty issues were actively participated by opposition MPs and government MPs from East Malaysia. By contrast, quota issues were debated by both government and opposition MPs in parliament. Hansard data provide mixed findings about the nature of debates between MPs on the quota system. In general, the government MPs amongst the Bumiputera were inclined to support the government agenda of continuing the quota system based on ethnicity. On the other hand, the opposition MPs, and the non-Bumiputera government MPs supported the idea of a universal quota system for citizens.

MPs have a tendency to focus more on problem-solving rather than wide ranging debate on the merits of the system itself related to poverty and quota system. The focus of MPs was to solve citizens' concerns in parliament by hoping the government would listen and thus fulfil citizens' material demands and needs. MPs do not focus on the repercussions of policy-making before the decisions are made as often as they engage in the channelling of citizens' grievances and demands to parliament in order to modify the decisions that have been made. Citizens' concerns for material and economic development reflect the informal macro-level deliberative practices in the end.

MPs have utilised the informal macro-level deliberative forum approach when establishing a collective strategy to address poverty issues with their constituents. MPs connect with citizens' concerns by raising questions related to policy-making, and the decision-making mechanisms that the government has adopted. The knowledge that MPs gather from the informal macro-level deliberative forums from citizens is then transmitted to the formal micro-level deliberative forum in parliament. The lower house as a formal micro-level deliberative forum of the state institution has been used to channel citizens' concerns. There are a few features that can be outlined relating to the strategies that MPs use to deliberate here. First, MPs' advocacy stressed the needs of low-income communities of both Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera that remained poor despite various government plans to eradicate poverty. Second, the MPs questioned the government tendency of over concentration towards the Bumiputera that seemed to create unintended outcomes relating to the initial policy. Third, the MPs highlighted a new type of poverty – the relative poverty - that was faced by citizens because of rapid urbanisation. Fourth, the MPs emphasised issues related to the successes or failures of the government programmes as a consequence of the quota system.

Despite the aforementioned tensions, and the need to employ a dual strategy to address them, this chapter demonstrates that MPs (as state actors), to some degree, are still able to undertake their task as citizen representatives, and are not always constrained by “partisan” interests when they raise citizens' concerns in parliament. In other words, MPs continue to remain relevant at the constituency levels. In other words, the “partisan interests” are not always a restraint to raising concerns, and the use of a dual strategy can help MPs to address the issues when dealing with both elites and constituents. Because of this and as described in previous chapters (i.e., the different roles of MPs), MPs are very relevant and important “functional” part of the deliberation process and overall the health of Malaysia's parliamentary democracy.

## Chapter Eight

### Conclusion

This study started by examining the mechanisms related to engagement in and outside the parliament, formal and informal deliberative forums, as well as structured and unstructured views of citizens. The intertwining nature of MPs' official and unofficial roles in reaching out to citizens in different deliberation locations has led to different structures of engagement and patterned different practices to deliberate citizens' concerns. The roles of MPs within the Malaysian political system, particularly in terms of the role they play in driving and facilitating different types of policy and legislation-related deliberation processes, are particularly distinctive in comparison with liberal Westminster-style political systems. This is one example of how deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament have been developed and consolidated through the balancing, adaption and modification of existing cultures, rules, norms and routines of the Westminster model. Some of these modifications are not strictly in line with Western liberal expectations regarding the role and purpose of deliberative democracy in Westminster systems. To gain insights into how deliberative practices are carried out, we have to understand how constituency geographical boundaries, social class and cultures play a part in citizens' concerns.

This study detailed the evolution of the Malaysian Parliament, by comparing it with other Westminster systems and focusing on "what changed and what remained the same" in the immediate post-independence adaptive phase (Gerring, 2007, p. 30). Various Westminster-style parliaments may demonstrate similarities in terms of fulfilling citizens' concerns, demands and interests, but may respond differently to the same issues because of the different nature of political discourse and political norms in any given society. In the case of Malaysia, despite its British pedigree, the Westminster-style parliament has been well established. However, the Malaysian Parliament is ultimately an adaptation of the original Westminster model based on the peculiarities of local conditions. For example, the Malaysian Parliament has undergone substantial change and has increasingly adapted to suit the local geo-political scene. These changes have included the creation of the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* as one of the parliament components and the function of the Conference of Rulers to oversee parliament accountability to safeguard the Malay language, Islam and Bumiputera privileges.

The central argument of this study is that, despite arguably being an illiberal democracy, deliberative practices matter in the Malaysian Parliament. This study focused on the

deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament, and contends that these practices are not as dissimilar to other Westminster systems, as some scholars would have us believed. Deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament are territorial in that they are defined by state boundaries. Although each state has its own state assembly, state agendas (related to local issues) often overshadow the debates in parliament sittings. More importantly, this study demonstrates how and why formal micro-level deliberative forums and informal macro-level deliberative forums have influenced the establishment of different mechanisms used by MPs to link parliament and its citizens. This study offers an alternative view to “the Anglo-American idea of deliberation [which] is culturally narrowed and insufficiently developed” (He, 2006, p. 133) and empirically broadens our understandings of deliberative possibilities in non-Western community of illiberal democracy.

If consensual community decision-making accomplished outside the electoral system is one of the important characteristics of deliberative democracy, then deliberation should not be considered to be an exclusive practice and exercise that occurs only in liberal democracies. The concepts of *muafakat* and *musyawarah* have long been employed by the Malays, for example, in the pre-colonial and colonial era prior to the introduction of the modern electoral system (see Milner, 1995, 2012). Theoretically speaking, deliberative democracy is conceptualised as enabling the logical flaws, inconsistencies and competing interests to be peacefully overcome within liberal democratic systems. This is a particular problem because citizens’ rights vis-à-vis the government generally limits the government’s ability to compel citizens to fall in line with policy programmes. However, as this thesis has shown, any assumption that deliberation is not being practiced in illiberal democracies and that such features are only the domain of liberal democracies, is unwarranted.

### **8.1 Cooperating with the Elite while Advocating for Citizens**

Deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament can be conceptualised in terms of two tiers. The first tier of deliberative practice occurs at the grassroots level or on the *citizen to parliament* tier. On this tier, MPs gather information on citizens’ concerns and interests through discussions, dialogues, everyday talk, storytelling and complaints, and then later raise them in parliament or with the respective ministries. The first tier of deliberative practices relates to the designated deliberation forums of partisan deliberation or lay citizen deliberation (e.g., dialogues, legal talks, and meetings) and the public sphere (e.g., *kenduri*, wedding receptions, and *turun padang*). The second tier of deliberative practice occurs

around the House of Representatives, and can be understood as the *parliament to citizen* tier. Here parliament would consider the issues raised by MPs during parliamentary sittings. The issues that MPs have raised during parliament sittings often originate from first tier deliberative practices.

The aforementioned two-tier deliberative practices require MPs to employ a dual strategy in undertaking their duties. This dual strategy employed by Malaysian MPs creates tensions as they balance their roles as “non-partisan” citizen representatives with having to observe their political alliances in order to allow the establishment of party cohesion decision-making in parliament. In other words, the MPs are “double agents” who act as political representatives in formal venues (at ministerial meeting, party assembly or parliament sitting) and citizen representatives in informal venues (at funerals, *kenduri* or *turun padang*).

Tensions in deliberative practices have been explained by deliberative theorists by reference to the paradox of producing a collective understanding involving different actors and organisations often working at cross-purposes by collaborating and competing at the same time (Poole & Van de Ven, 1989). MPs are faced with a similar type of paradox and are actually presented with challenging choices because of the different settings of spheres in practising deliberation. First, MPs are able to transmit citizens’ concerns by cooperating with respective government agencies, which can take place in deliberative forums or cooperative management (Montpetit et al., 2004). The situational knowledge that MPs have gained through “inputs” given by citizens may contribute to the improvement of deliberation for better policy-making. Second, as the only democratically elected citizen representatives in Malaysia, MPs play an important role in indirectly influencing public agendas through the media by engaging in concrete but compelling rhetoric, storytelling or the use of symbolic imagery (see also Dodge, 2010; Dryzek, 2000). Rhetoric, storytelling or imagery can be used by leaders in public spheres to transmit their ideas to influence government decision-making (Dryzek, 2000; Montpetit et al., 2004) without engaging in direct criticism. In this case, MPs adopt an “autonomous approach” by stepping outside state sponsored forums to challenge the state’s agendas (Dodge, 2010). MPs take this autonomous approach in deliberative forum when they believe their cooperation with the state will compromise their ability to influence government decision-making democratically (Dodge, 2010; Montpetit et al., 2004).

This thesis reveals that Malaysian MPs adopt a dual strategy in different deliberative forums when they have to deal with or implicitly challenge the cabinet government in parliament but

also engage with citizens outside the parliament. The dual strategy creates two specific tensions (Dodge, 2010) with regards to MPs' interactions with the elites as policy-makers.

The first tension relates to how to undertake "bottom-up" approach in a top-down governance system and paternalistic political culture in Malaysia. MPs first advocate for constituent concerns through the "bottom-up" approach of raising citizens' problems when engaging and collaborating with elite policy-makers. If initial collaborative advances do not work then this will create a dilemma and constraints on the Malaysian MPs' capacity to advance citizens' concerns and interests to the executive. This is particularly the case when dealing with party leaders and cabinet ministers because of a whip system that imposes party discipline and constrains MPs' freedom to vote independently. The functions of the executive overshadow those of the legislative branch in policy-making in most Westminster systems, but policy-making practices in the Malaysian House of Representatives are particularly concerned with party discipline, political ideology and cultural customs. Culturally, there is a tendency for MPs show respect to senior leaders by not questioning their ideas and decision-making. Thus, it can be argued that the Malaysian Parliament reflects the normative institutionalist view that specific notions of values and norms help shape the behaviour of institutions by simplifying political life.

The second tensions relates to MPs' role as legislators. A common practice in Westminster systems is that the political party regulates and partisanship controls the behaviour of citizen representatives in parliament. Therefore, MPs manoeuvre and creatively design citizens' concerns to influence the executive as they appear to be "non-partisan" (as social workers, mediators or as "neutral" advocates) with the elite policy-makers. The mechanisms that MPs have used have created "hybrid" deliberation locations in and outside the Malaysian Parliament by changing their roles based on issues raised by citizens. To enhance citizen-parliament relations, MPs embody their roles as the only democratically elected representatives in Malaysia by camouflaging themselves as advocates, mediators and social workers to represent citizens while lobbying the government, without attempting to appear to be jeopardising or sabotaging party unity or going against party ideology.

The executive branch undoubtedly plays a significant if not dominating role in the Malaysian Parliament. However, this fact should not distract us from the important functional roles that MPs play in advocating for citizens. Malaysian MPs possess certain shared characteristics that constitute the informal macro-level and formal micro-level deliberative practices. MPs'

deliberative practices depend largely on the accommodation of economic benefits and political stability. MPs do not merely advocate for but also mediate citizens' concerns. That is, they often listen to various perspectives regarding localised issues before reaching a collective position. To avoid the legislature appearing as merely a rubber stamp for the executive, MPs as citizen representatives are first and foremost treated as "agents" for the citizens within parliament rather than as a central element of the national legislative and policy-making processes. As agents, rather than political "insiders," "non-elite" MPs' perspectives are considered to be an "outward" view of the government. Though the legislature is peripheral to the executive in terms of decision-making, it is far more representative than other sectors such as the public service. As the only elected body in Malaysia's public institutions, the Malaysian Parliament has been the forum for citizens to balance communal and ethnic representations. As this thesis has shown, the influence of the institution of parliament has increased over the last two parliaments, and with the upcoming election, it is likely to become even more important. Thus, the distinctive deliberative elements described in this thesis are likely to be strengthened and take on a more prominent functional role in Malaysia's political system over the next five years.

## **8.2 Creating Deliberation Forums for Citizens**

Deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament are important if the analytical perspective is widened beyond the assumption that *only* the "forum" of the state institution is the focal point for deliberation (Dodge, 2009, 2010). Studies on deliberative democracy betray an inclination to examine how the different stakeholders perceive, establish and react only to state sponsored forums. By concentrating and focusing on the official "forum" as the locus, other activities between the MPs and citizens outside these official forums may easily have been overlooked. In other words, analysing the processes and functions of deliberative democracy as traditionally understood in liberal Westminster systems will limit our understanding when exploring the role of MPs in practising deliberation in the Malaysian Parliament. In Malaysia's case, this is even more crucial because the Malaysian Parliament does not have a select parliament committee, then the purpose of the House of Representatives is not even to function as *the* ultimate deliberative forum, as this study has argued, but is merely a "transit forum" allowing citizens' concerns that have been transmitted by the MPs to be raised, although not necessarily addressed or to be formally incorporated within the policy- or legislative-making process. Even this function, as noted in this thesis, has only strengthened over the last few parliaments.

Deliberative practices in and outside parliament are determined according to where the MPs perceived their roles to be. Outside the parliament, party affiliations have minimal impact on the representative-citizen relationship, but in parliament the relationship has been less prominent as political parties have more influence in determining the deliberative processes. In this sense, in comparison with the MPs' roles in the 1970s (Musolf & Springer, 1979), there has been little change in the roles that MPs have played. Despite the rapid economic transition that Malaysia has experienced from agriculture in the 1970s to an industrialised nation since the 1990s, the only difference has been in the modes of engaging citizens whereby the MPs have started utilising new technology, namely the Internet. Parliament has not yet evolved towards becoming an institution that plays a central role in deliberation regarding national policies and important policy strategies, although new technologies and political developments of the last few years, such as the weakening grip of the BN in particular, have allowed greater scrutiny to be directed against politically influential figures inside the government by mass society as well as civil society. MPs' roles are likely to undergo some change in this context.

With the rapid digitalisation of the nation since the 1990s, citizens' concerns and political interests have changed as well. Increasingly, the middle class uses the Internet to access alternative information. At the same time, civil society groups have expanded their presence through the new media to help citizens make better informed decisions regarding the public interest. Citizens' demands for better governance system of the Malaysian Parliament is not new; however, gradually such demands are becoming stronger and more prominent with the existence of a large urban middle-class and civil society that have access to the digital world that is beyond government control unlike the mainstream media.

Conversely, the demands from below, to a certain extent, have impacted upon the thinking of MPs, forcing them to revisit and challenge the embedded political norms championed by the cabinet members, namely, that the Parliament is the executive and the executive is the Parliament. Since the late 1990s, Malaysians have been continuously campaigning more openly for a better parliamentary democratic system that empowers the citizens and protects their rights (see also Loh & Surin, 2011). The middle class and civil society have been constantly asking the government for the right to participate and to be recognised in politics and policy deliberation. Although the idea that the political elite knows best may have worked in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the lack of transparency has been perceived to be a factor in the lack of accountability towards the public as well as the cause of some policy failures.



Since the *Reformasi* in 1998, civil society has made stronger efforts to participate and influence policy-making in Malaysia. The *Reformasi* established a platform for citizens to be more actively involved in politics through a more structured agenda via civil society. However, Malaysia's civil society to some extent can be described as still fragmented as a result of state control over citizens' public and private life (see Weiss, 2006). The civil society campaigns to end the "authoritarian regimented governance" have however become more apparent such as the demands made by the BERSIH movement for a fair electoral system in Malaysia. Interestingly, activists that have fought for public rights have entered politics, especially joining opposition parties, to better advocate their views in parliament. Political parties have become an arena for activists to contest the government's power. For example, Charles Santiago, Tian Chua, Sivarasa Rasiah and Elizabeth Wong have become citizens' representatives in parliament or state assemblies. However, often the government dismisses the views or inputs from civil society groups as their arguments are considered as anti-establishment, pro-opposition, and often they are seen to be agents of foreign agencies (Western powers), that have the intention to create anarchy in Malaysia (Mohd Azizuddin, 2009).

Prior to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the consensual decision-making process of the BN coalition, by accommodating and respecting the property and identity rights of each ethnic group, maintained political stability and economic growth in Malaysia without much pressure from the citizens and civil society. The elites had played a vital role in making policy-making to be based on a consensus that took into consideration the multi-ethnic background of Malaysian politics (Case, 1996, 2001; Collins, 1998). The political accommodation, however, had produced restrictions on citizens' democratic participation and engagement within the state even as some now question whether the technocratic policy-making approach has actually resulted in superior policy outcomes. For example, the large amount of resources that the government has invested in education as a long term investment for combating poverty, especially for the Bumiputera through the quota system, has had the unintended consequence of producing a group that is economically better off and more valuable to market forces. Furthermore, while education may not always result in social mobility, it has enlightened citizens sufficiently that they are now more informed and likely to become active in politics rather than remain the passive receivers of the government's plans. However, the political "uprising" in Malaysia can also be argued as deriving from concerns about economic factors rather than political thinking about rights and freedoms as such. This argument is advanced in

this thesis as the federal government has only been challenged by the citizens when the Malaysian economic performance was at a low level, such as in the general elections in 1999 and 2008. Only then did the government suffer a serious setback in the number of seats in parliament.

What this study indicates here is that the citizens' demand for more direct engagement and participation in determining the direction of public policy in Malaysia is a response to the problem of imperfect accountability, transparency and legitimacy, particularly related to the government's economic development programmes. Deliberative practices in Malaysia indicate to us two aspects of the Malaysian Parliament, namely, why the MPs deliberate and how they deliberate. This study argues that MPs do engage the citizens at the grassroots level but have little room to manoeuvre and to advance the citizen's voices officially at the micro-level in parliament.

Three features can be identified as important here. Firstly, the unstructured deliberative practices of the public sphere, to some extent, have influenced the rules and agenda setting in parliament. That is the informal deliberation locations outside state institutions have been more useful to MPs for understanding citizens' concerns and grassroots problems because they engage the lay citizens directly without filtering first their everyday talk or storytelling. Secondly, the informal macro-level deliberative forums, to some extent, have complemented a formal conception of the legitimacy of the parliament. The citizens' concerns that have been raised in parliament reflect the public sphere at large rather than the designated forum involving selected citizens at the formal micro-level deliberative forum. Thirdly, the rigid and embedded nature of deliberative practices amongst the elites have to some extent translated into accountability, in terms of parliament responding to the citizen's concerns rather than merely reflecting the will of the executive.

### **8.3 The Malaysian Approach: Embracing *Kampung* Style in the Westminster Tradition**

There are two basic characteristics essential to understanding deliberative practices in the Malaysian Parliament. First, deliberation in the formal micro-level deliberative forum in the House of Representatives is simply a state product. The deliberative practices are within the circle of the elite amongst the parties of BN only by accommodating each ethnic group based on the premise that the government knows best, or "good government," which has been promoted as part of the Asian Values concept by the proponents since Mahathir's tenure as Prime Minister. That is to say that the collective ethnic political accommodation

representation that prevails in the Malaysian Parliament, and forged at party leadership level, has become an impediment to the individual legislators' activities. Second, deliberation in the informal macro-level deliberative forums in the public sphere is based on geographical boundaries, cultural values and the local social structure in shaping engagement of citizens and parliamentarians. Citizens' concerns that are based on everyday talk have been raised in parliament when symptoms appear and cause problems within the government (e.g., declining government popularity) or community (e.g., increasing crime rate). The deliberative practices here, in a broad sense, become the mechanism to meet and fulfil the citizens' needs. The MPs, as social workers, mediators or advocates, voice the citizens' concerns in parliament (or other state institutions such as ministries) and ask the government to respond to their demands rather than as legislators who are responsible for policy-making.

Comparatively, the executive is the core policy-making branch in Malaysia's government; a phenomenon common in other Westminster-style parliaments although as this thesis has noted, it tends to be even more technocratic in Malaysia's case. In promoting economic growth and stability, the executive has played a vital role in expediting amendments needed for the promotion of coherent public policy. The 1990s was the era when the executive became dominant and sought to adapt to new international economic and political developments. In other words, the Malaysian Parliament has struggled to control the executive since then, and the Malaysian Parliament, as the sole democratic state institution, has experienced a reversal of its relevance after the Parliamentary Services Act (1965) was repealed in 1992. Until recently, it has gradually become stagnant in promoting attempts to reform and revitalise Malaysia's democratic governance systems. Nevertheless, the legislature has performed many political functions that are not necessarily law making but still link the citizens' concerns with parliament, with MPs taking roles as advocates, mediators and social workers. Given their limited legislative participation in policy-making, many Malaysian MPs might be plausibly excluded from the elite.

This study shows that MPs' roles and functions have been overshadowed by the decision-making of the executive in the Malaysian Parliament during the period of focus of this thesis. Since the members of cabinet have always been largely members of the legislative (for cabinet members of the 12th Parliament, see appendix VII),<sup>130</sup> the Malaysian Parliament had

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<sup>130</sup> As of March, 2013, under Najib Razak, the Malaysian cabinet comprised of 68 members - 30 ministers and 38 deputy ministers. Out of the 68 cabinet members, 56 (82.3%) were the legislators of the House of Representatives. Out of the 30 ministers, five were senators. Meanwhile, seven of the 38 deputy ministers were

been practising the doctrine of fusion of powers. MPs who were cabinet members have dominated the parliament while the opposition MPs have been subjected to systemic discrimination (Malike & Musliza, 2010). To a certain extent, the doctrine of fusion of power that has been practised for decades in the Malaysian Parliament has created misunderstanding for both citizens and the MPs about the actual role of MPs, and how parliament should work in Malaysia (Malike, 2010). The lack of understanding amongst citizens, results from the long-standing practice of policy-making in parliament, which has been initiated and monopolised by cabinet members and this ultimately appears to citizens that the responsibility for making law is an executive privilege (Loh & Surin, 2011; Rais, 2006).

The relations between the Malaysian Parliament and its citizens have evolved around balancing exploitation and exploration as well as adaptation and alteration of the existing and predicted rules, norms, routines and knowledge that the citizens and MPs have embraced through time. With the standard structures and procedures of policy making, the Malaysian Parliament is considered to be a legitimate political body for defining and defending citizens' interests. MPs voice the citizens' concerns in parliament by asking questions, seeking clarification and justification, arguing the rationale and objectives and debating the motives. MPs advocate the issues by highlighting the local, national and global issues that have impacted or would impact upon their constituents in particular and the citizens in general. MPs are the political backbone in Malaysia and they highlight citizens' problems and provide feedback to government about what is happening at grassroots level. In this study, I have examined citizens' everyday talk, which has been considered to be trivial, and analysed how it has been transformed into political insights that has forced the government to re-evaluate public policy from time to time.

MPs advocate the "trivial matters" by ensuring that the voices of the people are not completely alienated from parliament. As parliament has been perceived as a "technical" forum by citizens, how their voices have been integrated into public policy seems less important than the actual outcomes of the policy felt by citizens and is more vital to perpetuate the feeling of engagement. Data analysed in this study show compelling evidence that political party affiliation and political ideology have not always prevented MPs to become involved in issues concerned with citizen's interests in parliament. MPs also have

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senators (Prime Minister's Office, March 2013). To see the components of other cabinet members prior to Najib Razak's tenure as Prime Minister, see appendices III-VI and VIII.

advocated citizens' concerns about local issues from a neutral standpoint without taking (party) sides during parliamentary sittings. In other words, the deliberative practices are not necessarily impeded by the rubber stamp culture because of the strong presence of party discipline and patronage in parliament, at least when local issues are concerned. The deliberative practices in Malaysia do not necessarily end with bills being legislated by parliament that overwhelmingly reflect the citizens' wishes or concerns. Often, the practice of the "mid-term review" in government agendas and programmes, to some extent, has taken into consideration the citizens' concerns that have been voiced by MPs, with these issues often being later re-addressed in parliament.

Constituencies in Malaysia are far from homogenous and hence the deliberative practices vary according to the constituency and state-level government. With regards to MP roles, they have been determined and shaped by different factors, depending on historical and cultural circumstances. The differences between urban-rural, ethnic, religious and cultural settings of any constituency influence the MP-constituents relationships. Additionally, the unequal economic development between states and regions, in particular between the West Malaysia and the East Malaysia may explain the reasons for variations in the extent to which types of deliberative democracy have been utilised. Culture, religion, ethnicity and geographical boundaries also have defined the duties and roles of an MP. For example, the interactions between MPs and citizens are different in urban and rural constituencies, Muslims and non-Muslims as well as the wish lists of Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera. In other words, these factors have a great influence in moulding the way MPs would carry out their tasks and test their flexibility in engaging with citizens.

MPs from both rural and urban areas felt that the educated and the economically better-off citizens in urban constituencies and industrialised states were more concerned about citizen-parliament relationship. Citizens in the urban areas were keen to be directly involved in government agenda or policy-making. However, to say that citizens in rural constituencies and lesser urbanised states are less concerned about democracy is misleading, as the election turnout in Malaysia is also higher in the lesser urbanised states such as Kelantan, Kedah and Pahang. Examination of the 10<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup> general election reports indicates that citizens in lesser urbanised and poor states comparatively had almost equal voter turnout with the urbanised and rich states such as Selangor, Penang and Johor. In other words, the political participation and engagement amongst the lesser urbanised and poor states are not less than

the urbanised and rich states in Malaysia. The only difference is in the spheres and the ways that citizens structure and discuss their agendas and thoughts. As indicated in the earlier chapters, the issues raised by citizens from the rural constituencies are less structured and more informal, adopting the *kampung-style* (village-style) that have been observed and practiced by constituents prior to Independence following *kampung* norms.<sup>131</sup> Their concerns have been concentrated on basic needs and the infrastructure of economic development. Meanwhile the issues raised by citizens from the urban constituencies (the middle-class) are more structured and formal. Their concerns are notable in terms of being interested in civil rights and engagement with the government in policy-making. Nonetheless, the working class in the urban constituencies also have the tendency for the *kampung-style* practices when raising their concerns with MPs.

The main difference between urban and rural constituencies in terms of deliberation is in the MPs' modes of engaging citizens. What is considered to be deliberative in the urban areas and big cities may not be perceived as such in the rural and remote areas. In the remote and rural areas, the hands-on MPs may consider engaging with citizens rather than advocating public policies. Deliberative practices cannot be understood in Malaysia if we fail to recognise the informal macro-level deliberative forums and unorganised voices of everyday talk and storytelling amongst the ordinary citizens, especially those inhabiting rural constituencies. The informal macro-level deliberative forums and unorganised voices of everyday talk outside the parliament have also been responsible for influencing government policy, often after the policy has been introduced, as mentioned in chapters five through seven.

This study has presented ample evidence (see in particular chapter five) that the citizens are not always explicitly concerned about the values and principles of the MPs. Beside the political party, citizens are unlikely to be familiar with how MPs are involved in policy-making. MPs are voted for by citizens because they promise to bring development such as new or upgraded infrastructures to the community. Citizens generally do not vote for a candidate who highlights issues concerned with improving policy-making in parliament and national-level policies. Financial hand-outs and physical developments are far more vital for any MP to gain support from citizens in certain constituencies. Data findings overwhelmingly indicate that MPs believed that citizens were more concerned about addressing economic

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<sup>131</sup> See Milner (1995, 2012) for further insights on the Malay's traditional political system of *kerajaan*.

needs rather than understanding the citizens' role in influencing public policy directly. Overall, the citizens' political awareness only increased when the growth in the economy was slowing down. The failure of the local councils to provide basic services for residents, has also contributed to increasing the non-legislative work of the MPs. "Development politics" is still a vital part of keeping MPs relevant to citizens, especially in the lesser urbanised states and rural constituencies.

#### **8.4 Concluding Reflections**

What has been practised in Malaysia is the opposite of how deliberation should be undertaken in the Westminster systems as conceptualised by liberal deliberative democrats. Empirically, this study shows how and why lay citizens' everyday talk has then transformed to complex reality of deliberative practices in Malaysia.

The notion of deliberation in Malaysia, often only occurs after the decisions have been made and implemented. The do it first, face the consequences later has been the most common practice in Malaysia. However, the scenario has gradually changed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century since the new media has penetrated into societal discourse and has allowed citizens to make better informed decisions by exploring alternative and different perspectives from opposition MPs or civil society rather than just from government sources. Hence, the government has to increasingly engage with the citizens not just after a decision has been made but before implementing the agendas. This thesis points to the examples of the Lynas plant and the Warisan Merdeka Project. Therefore, the government's commitment to listen and engage people shows there is deliberation in the governing system in Malaysia.

In pacing increasing industrialisation and urbanisation, the Malaysian Parliament has been utilised by the government as a forum to protect Malaysia from "Western liberal influences" and to perpetuate the executive power and interests. The strong mandate that the ruling government had enjoyed from Independence to the eleventh parliament (August 1957 – March 2008), created a perception amongst both legislators and citizens that the main role of MPs was serving the citizens outside the parliament.

Throughout this study, I have indicated that the deliberative practices *in* parliament have been constructed based on decision-making made by the executive to produce coherent views in policy-making. Yet, despite the efforts that have been made by the executive to control and reduce the formal micro-level deliberation locations that go beyond the state sponsored

forums, the government still has not been able to control citizens' concerns arising from their everyday talk and storytelling in the public sphere *outside* parliament. Eventually, the communications and discussions taking place amongst the citizens in the public sphere have to be taken into consideration and advocated for by MPs in parliament. Under the study period this thesis covers, it was shown that the unstructured views of lay citizens have dominated the debates in the parliament sittings. The unstructured views of lay citizens have been raised by MPs, acting as social workers, mediators or advocates (especially the government MPs) rather than legislators to avoid "confrontation" method that may be perceived as against the executive decision-making in the parliament sittings. These lay citizens' views can be used as the locus for better understanding of the deliberative practices in the regimented "authoritarian" government of the illiberal democracy such as Malaysia.



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## List of Appendices

Appendix I Number of Seats and Votes Percentage Obtained by the Government and the Opposition/Independent in the Malaysian Parliament 1990-2008

Year	Term	Government			Opposition/Independent			Total Seats
		Seats	% Seats	% popular Vote	Seats	% Seats	% popular Vote	
1990	8 <sup>th</sup>	127	70.55	53.4	53	29.45	46.6	180
1995	9 <sup>th</sup>	162	84.38	65.2	30	15.62	34.8	192
1999	10 <sup>th</sup>	148	76.68	56.5	45	23.32	43.5	193
2004	11 <sup>th</sup>	198	90.41	63.9	21	9.59	36.1	219
2008	12 <sup>th</sup>	140	63.06	50.27	82	36.94	48.73	222

Sources: Penyata Rasmi Parlimen Malaysia, Dewan Rakyat (1990-2008), Laporan Pilihan Raya Umum Malaysia (1999, 2004, 2008), ISEAS (2000, January)

Appendix II Number of Seats based on Party and State of the 12<sup>th</sup> Parliament as of June 2012

State/ Federal Territory	Government											Opposition					Independent	Total Seat		
	UMNO	MCA	MIC	GERAKAN	PRS	SUPP	PBB	PBRIS	LDP	UPKO	SPDP	PBS	DAP	PAS	PKR	PSM	SAPP		KITA	No Party
Perlis	3																			3
Kedah	3	1												6	3				2	15
Kelantan	2													8	3				1	14
Terengganu	6													2						8
Penang	2											7		2				1	1	13
Perak	8	3	1	1								6	2	1	1				1	24
Pahang	9	2	1												2					14
Selangor	4	1	1									4	4	8						22
K. Lumpur	1											5		3					1	10
N. Sembilan	5											2		1						8
Malacca	4	1										1								6
Johor	16	7	1	1								1								26
Labuan	1																			1
Sabah	13							1	1	4			1				2			25
Sarawak					6	5	14					4	3	2						31
Putrajaya	1																			1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>221</b>

Source: Parlimen Malaysia, <http://www.parlimen.gov.my/pages.php?view=76&uweb=dr>, retrieved on 1 July 2012

Notes:

1. The columns for 'Opposition' and 'Independent' have been re-arranged from the original source of the Malaysian Parliament website.
2. SAPP and KITA are treated as 'Opposition' rather than 'Independent' (No Party) as shown in the Malaysian Parliament website.
3. One empty seat (Titiwangsa) in the House of Representatives.
4. All the parties under the 'Government' are under the *Barisan Nasional* coalition.
5. DAP, PAS and PKR under the 'Opposition' are under the *the Pakatan Rakyat* coalition.

### Appendix III List of Elected Representatives of the 8<sup>th</sup> Malaysian Parliament, Oct. 1990 – April 1995

#### Deputy Speakers:

1. Juhar Mahiruddin (Kinabatangan)
2. Ong Tee Keat (Ampang Jaya)

#### Prime Minister:

1. Mahathir Mohamad (Kubang Pasu) (*also Minister of the Ministry of Home Affairs*)

#### Deputy Prime Minister:

1. Abdul Ghafar Baba (Jasin) (*also Minister of the Ministry of Rural Development*)

#### Ministers:

1. Abang Abu Bakar Abang Mustapha (Kuala Rajang), Prime Minister's Department
2. Abu Hassan Omar (Kuala Selangor), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
3. Anwar Ibrahim (Permatang Pauh), Ministry of Education
4. Daim Zainuddin (Merbok), Ministry of Finance
5. Law Hieng Ding (Sarikei), Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment
6. Lee Kim Sai (Hulu Langat), Ministry of Health
7. Leo Moggie Irok (Kanowit), Ministry of Public Works
8. Lim Ah Lek (Bentung), Ministry of Human Resources
9. Lim Keng Yaik (Beruas), Ministry of Primary Industries
10. Ling Liong Sik (Labis), Ministry of Transport
11. Mohamad Yusof Mohamed Nor, Ministry of Public Industries
12. Mohamed Rahmat (Pulai), Ministry of Information
13. Najib Abdul Razak (Pekan), Ministry of Defence
14. Napisah Omar (Kuala Pilah), Ministry of National Unity and Community Development
15. Rafidah Aziz (Kuala Kangsar), Ministry of International Trade and Industry
16. S. Samy Vellu (Sungai Siput), Ministry of Energy, Telecom and Post
17. Sabbaruddin Chik (Temerloh), Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism
18. Sakaran Dandai (Semporna), Ministry of Land and Cooperative Development
19. Sanusi Junid (Jerlun), Ministry of Agriculture
20. Sulaiman Daud (Petra Jaya), Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs
21. Syed Hamid Syed Jaafar Albar (Kota Tinggi), Prime Minister's Department, and Ministry of Justice
22. Ting Chew Peh (Gopeng), Ministry of Housing and Local Government

#### Deputy Ministers:

1. Abdul Ghani Othman (Ledang), Ministry of Finance
2. Abdul Hamid Othman (Sik), Prime Minister's Department
3. Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir (Kulim Bandar Baharu), Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs
4. Abdullah Fadzil Che Wan (Bukit Gantang), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
5. Alexander Yu Lung Lee (Batu), Ministry of National Unity and Community Development
6. Chan Kong Choy (Lipis), Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism
7. Chua Jui Meng (Bakri), Ministry of International Trade and Industry
8. Daud Taha (Batu Pahat), Ministry of Housing and Local Government
9. Fong Chan Onn (Selandar), Ministry of Education
10. Kerk Choo Ting (Taiping), Ministry of Public Works
11. Leo Michael Toyad (Mukah), Ministry of Education
12. Loke Yuen Yow (Tanjung Malim), Ministry of Finance
13. Megat Junid Megat Ayob (Pasir Salak), Ministry of Home Affairs
14. Mohamed Farid Ariffin (Balik Pulau), Ministry of Health
15. Mohd Khalid Mohd Yunus (Jempol), Ministry of Land and Cooperative Development
16. Mohd Tajol Rosli Mohd Ghazali (Gerik), Ministry of Energy, Telecom and Post
17. Mohd Yasin Kamari (Sri Gasing), Ministry of Rural Development,
18. Osu Sukam (Papar), Ministry of Housing and Local Government

19. Peter Chin Fah Kui (Miri), Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment
20. Peter Tinggom Kamarau (Saratok), Ministry of Public Works
21. Railey Jaffrey (Silam), Ministry of Information
22. Raja Ariffin Raja Sulaiman (Baling), Prime Minister's Department
23. Siti Zaharah Sulaiman (Mentakab), Ministry of Public Industries
24. Suleiman Mohamed (Titiwangsa), Prime Minister's Department
25. Teng Gaik Kwan (Raub), Ministry of Youth and Sports
26. Tengku Mahmud Tengku Mansor (Setiu), Ministry of Primary Industries
27. Wan Abu Bakar Wan Mohamed (Jerantut), Ministry of Defence
28. Wong See Wah (Rasah), Prime Minister's Department
29. Zaleha Ismail (Selayang), Ministry of Transport

Parliament Secretaries:

1. Abdul Rahman Suliman (Parit Buntar), Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism
2. Douglas Uggah Embas (Betong), Prime Minister's Department
3. Fauzi Abdul Rahman (Kuantan), Ministry of Information
4. Ismail Said (Kemaman), Ministry of Youth and Sports
5. Mohamed Jamrah (Bagan Datok), Ministry of Rural Development
6. Mohd Noh Rajab (Tampin) Ministry of Land and Cooperative Development
7. Mohd Shariff Omar (Tasek Gelugor), Ministry of Agriculture
8. Ong Ka Ting (Pontian), Ministry of Health
9. Othman Abdul (Pendang), Prime Minister's Department
10. Yong Khoon Seng (Padawan), Ministry of National Unity and Community Development

Members of Parliament:

1. Abdol Mulok Awang Damit (Labuan)
2. Abdul Ajib Ahmad (Mersing)
3. Abdul Hadi Awang (Marang)
4. Abdul Hamid Abdul Rahman (Sungai Benut)
5. Abdul Malek Munip (Muar)
6. Abdul Manan Othman (Kuala Terengganu)
7. Abdul Rashid Muhammad (Kuala Nerus)
8. Abdul Taib Mahmud (Kota Samarahan)
9. Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (Kepala Batas)
10. Affifudin Omar (Padang Terap)
11. Ahmad Nor (Bayan Baru)
12. Ahmad Omar (Pagoh)
13. Ahmad Shukri Hassan (Machang)
14. Alias Md. Ali (Hulu Terengganu)
15. Amir Kahar Mustapha (Marudu)
16. Awang Jabar (Dungun)
17. Basri Bajuri (Kuala Langat)
18. Bernard Giluk Dompok (Penampang)
19. Billy Abit Joo (Hulu Rajang)
20. Buniyamin Yaakob (Bachok)
21. Che Ibrahim Mustafa (Sungai Petani)
22. Chian Heng Kai (Bukit Mertajam)
23. Chor Chee Heung (Alor Setar)
24. Daniel Tajem Miri (Sri Aman)
25. Dominic Joseph Puthuchery (Nibong Tebal)
26. Fong Kui Lung (Klang)
27. Foo Tiew Kok (Batu Gajah)
28. G. Palanivel (Hulu Selangor)
29. Geoffrey Yee Ling Fook (Tawau)
30. George Sangkin (Bandau)
31. Ghazali Ahmad (Jerai)
32. Gooi Hock Seng (Bukit Bendera)

33. Hamzah Mohamed Zain (Tasik Chenderoh)
34. Harrison Ngau Laing (Baram)
35. Ibrahim Ali (Pasir Mas)
36. Ibrahim Jendol (Alor Gajah)
37. Ibrahim Mahmood (Kuala Krai)
38. Ibrahim Pateh Mohammad (Tanah Merah)
39. Ibrahim Sareh (Jelebu)
40. Illani Isahak (Kota Bharu)
41. Ishak Arshad (Kangar)
42. Jamaluddin Mohd Jarjis (Rompin)
43. James Jimbun Pungga (Kapit)
44. James Wong Kim Min (Bintulu)
45. Jason Wong Sing Nang (Lanang)
46. Jawah Gerang (Lubuk Antu)
47. Joseph Mauh Ikeh (Selangau)
48. Joseph Pairin Kitingan (Keningau)
49. K. Kumaran (Tapah)
50. Kang Chow Oh (Kluang)
51. Karpal Singh (Jelutong)
52. Kerk Kim Hock (Pasir Pinji)
53. Kua Kia Soong (Petaling Jaya)
54. Lai Lun Tze (Sandakan)
55. Lau Dak Kee (Ipoh)
56. Liew Ah Kim (Seputeh)
57. Lim Guan Eng (Kota Melaka)
58. Lim Hock Seng (Bagan)
59. Lim Kit Siang (Tanjong)
60. Lim Lay Hoon (Padang Serai)
61. Ling Chooi Sieng (Lumut)
62. M. Mahalingam (Kapar)
63. Mahbud Hashim (Sabak Bernam)
64. Maidom P. Pansai (Kota Belud)
65. Michael Lisa Kaya (Bukit Mas)
66. Micheal Asang (Jambongan)
67. Mohamad Abdullah (Maran)
68. Mohamad Khaled Nordin (Johor Bahru)
69. Mohamad Sabu (Nilam Puri)
70. Mohamad Shukri Mohamed (Kok Lanas)
71. Mohamed Kamal Hussain (Lembah Pantai)
72. Mohammad Abu Bakar Rautin Ibrahim (Kuala Kedah)
73. Mohd Sharif Jajang (Sepang)
74. Mohd Tamrin Abdul Ghafar (Batu Berendam)
75. Mohd Zihin Mohd Hassan (Larut)
76. Monggoh Orow (Tuaran)
77. Mustapha Harun (Limbawang)
78. Nasruddin Alang Saidin (Parit)
79. Nawawi Mat Awin (Tambun)
80. Nik Abdullah Arshad (Pengkalan Chepa)
81. Nurnikman Abdullah (Kimanis)
82. Ong Tin Kim (Teluk Intan)
83. Osman Minudin (Kinabalu)
84. Patau Rubis (Mas Gading)
85. Philip Yong Chiew Lip (Gaya)
86. Qamaruzaman Ismail (Bagan Serai)
87. Radin Malleh (Padas)
88. Rakibah Abdul Manap (Shah Alam)
89. Richard Riot Jaem (Serian)
90. Robert Iau Hoi Chew (Sibu)



91. Rohani Abd. Karim (Santubong)
92. Ruhanie Ahmad (Parit Sulong)
93. S.S. Subramaniam (Segamat)
94. Saidin Adam (Tanjong Karang)
95. Sanusi Daeng Mariok (Rantau Panjang)
96. Shahidan Kassim (Arau)
97. Sim Kwan Yang (Bandar Kuching)
98. Siti Zainabon Abu Bakar (Tebrau)
99. T. Marimuthu (Teluk Kemang)
100. Taiman Lumaing (Pesiangan)
101. Tan Kok Wai (Sungai Besi)
102. Tan Seng Giaw (Kepong)
103. Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah (Gua Musang)
104. Thomas Salang Siden (Julau)
105. V. David (Puchong)
106. Yun Shin Cho (Tanjong Aru)
107. Wahad Suhaili (Batang Sadong)
108. Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar (Batang Lupar)
109. Wan Mohd Hanafiah Wan Mohd Saman (Kota Star)
110. Wan Mohd Jamil Wan Mahmood (Tumpat)
111. Wan Omar Wan Najib (Pasir Puteh)
112. Wee Choo Keong (Bukit Bintang)
113. Wong Wing On (Kampar)
114. Woon See Chin (Senai)
115. Yim Chee Chong (Seremban)

Source: Chamil, W. (2009). *Parlimen Malaysia: Perjalanan Badan Perundangan Persekutuan*. Media Global Matrix Sdn. Bhd: Petaling Jaya, pp.184-191.

## Appendix IV List of Elected Representatives of the 9<sup>th</sup> Malaysian Parliament, April 1995 – Nov. 1999

### Deputy Speakers:

1. Juhar Mahiruddin (Kinabatangan)
2. Ong Tee Keat (Ampang Jaya)

### Prime Minister:

1. Mahathir Mohamad (Kubang Pasu) (*also Minister of the Ministry of Home Affairs*)

### Deputy Prime Minister:

1. Anwar Ibrahim (Permatang Pauh)<sup>132</sup> (*also Minister of the Ministry of Finance*)

### Ministers:

1. Abang Abu Bakar Abang Mustapha (Kuala Rajang), Prime Minister's Department
2. Abdul Hamid Othman (Sik), Prime Minister's Department
3. Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (Kepala Batas), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
4. Abu Hassan Omar (Kuala Selangor), Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs
5. Annuar Musa (Peringat), Ministry of Rural Development
6. Chua Jui Meng (Bakri), Ministry of Health
7. Law Hieng Ding (Sarikei), Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment
8. Leo Moggie Irok (Kanowit), Ministry of Energy, Telecom and Post
9. Lim Ah Lek (Bentong), Ministry of Human Resources
10. Lim Keng Yaik (Beruas), Ministry of Primary Industries
11. Ling Liong Sik (Labis), Ministry of Transport
12. Mohamed Rahmat (Pulai), Ministry of Information
13. Muhyiddin Mohd Yassin (Pagoh), Ministry of Youth and Sports
14. Mustapha Mohamed (Jeli), Ministry of Entrepreneur Development
15. Najib Abdul Razak (Pekan), Ministry of Education
16. Osu Sukam (Papar), Ministry of Land and Cooperative Development
17. Rafidah Aziz (Kuala Kangsar), Ministry of International Trade and Industry
18. S. Samy Vellu (Sungai Siput), Ministry of Public Works
19. Sabbaruddin Chik (Temerloh), Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism
20. Sulaiman Daut (Petra Jaya), Ministry of Agriculture
21. Syed Hamid Syed Jaafar Albar (Kota Tinggi), Ministry of Defence
22. Ting Chew Peh (Gopeng), Ministry of Housing and Local Government
23. Zaleha Ismail (Gombak), Ministry of National Unity and Community Development

### Deputy Ministers:

1. Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir (Kulim-Bandar Baru), Ministry of Human Resources
2. Abdullah Fadzil Che Wan (Bukit Gantang), Ministry of Defence
3. Abu Bakar Daud (Kuala Terengganu), Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment
4. Affirudin Omar (Padang Terap), Ministry of Finance
5. Ali Mohd Rustam (Batu Berendam), Ministry of Transport
6. Chan Kong Choy (Selayang), Ministry of Energy, Telecom and Post
7. Fong Chan Onn (Selandar), Ministry of Education
8. Goh Cheng Teik (Nibong Tebal), Ministry of Land and Cooperative Development
9. Ibrahim Saad (Tasek Gelugor), Prime Minister's Department
10. Idris Jusoh (Besut), Ministry of Entrepreneur Development
11. K. Kumaran (Tengah), Ministry of Rural Development
12. Kerk Choo Ting (Taiping), Ministry of International Trade and Industry
13. Leo Michael Toyad (Mukah), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
14. Loke Yuen Yow (Tanjung Malim), Ministry of Youth and Sports
15. Megat Junid Megat Ayob (Pasir Salak), Ministry of Home Affairs

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<sup>132</sup> Anwar Ibrahim was sacked by Mahathir Mohamad as a Deputy Prime Minister in 1998.

16. Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz (Chenderoh), Prime Minister's Department
17. Mohd Khalid Mohd Yunus (Jempol), Ministry of Education
18. Mohd Tajol Rosli Mohd Ghazali (Gerik), Ministry of Housing and Local Government
19. Ong Ka Ting (Pontian), Ministry of Home Affairs
20. Peter Chin Fah Kui (Miri), Ministry of Housing and Local Government
21. Peter Tinggom Kamarau (Saratok), Ministry of National Unity and Community Development
22. Railey Jaffrey (Silam), Ministry of Public Works
23. Raja Ariffin Raja Sulaiman (Baling), Prime Minister's Department
24. S. Subramaniam (Segamat), Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs
25. Siti Zaharah Sulaiman (Paya Besar), Ministry of Health
26. Siti Zainabon Abu Bakar (Tebrau), Ministry of Primary Industries
27. Suleiman Muhamed (Titiwangsa), Ministry of Information
28. Teng Gaik Kwan (Raub), Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism
29. Tengku Mahmud Tengku Mansor (Setiu), Ministry of Agriculture
30. Wong See Wah (Rasah), Ministry of Finance

Parliament Secretaries:

1. Abu Bakar Taib (Langkawi), Ministry of Agriculture
2. Azmi Khalid (Padang Besar), Prime Minister's Department
3. Chor Chee Heung (Alor Setar), Ministry of Transport
4. Douglas Uggah Embas (Betong), Ministry of Rural Development
5. Fauzi Abdul Rahman (Kuantan), Ministry of Land and Cooperative Development
6. G. Palanivel (Hulu Selangor), Ministry of National Unity and Community Development
7. Hishamuddin Hussein (Tenggara), Ministry of International Trade and Industry
8. M. Mahalingam (Kapar), Ministry of Health
9. Mohamad Abdullah (Maran), Prime Minister's Department
10. Mohd Noh Rajab (Tampin), Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism
11. Mohd Shafie Apdal (Semporna), Ministry of Information
12. Shafie Mohd Salleh (Kuala Langat), Ministry of Finance
13. Sharizat Abdul Jalil (Lembah Pantai), Ministry of Youth and Sports
14. Tan Chai Ho (Bandar Tun Razak), Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs
15. Yong Khoon Seng (Padawan) (Ministry of Public Works)

Members of Parliament:

1. Abdol Mulok Awang Damit (Labuan)
2. Abdul Aziz Mohd Yassin (Muar)
3. Abdul Ghafar Baba (Jasin)
4. Abdul Hadi Awang (Marang)
5. Abdul Hamid Abdul Rahman (Sungai Benut)
6. Abdul Rahman Sulaiman (Parit Buntar)
7. Abdul Taib Mahmud (Kota Samarahan)
8. Abu Dahari Osman (Lipis)
9. Abu Seman Yusof (Alor Gajah)
10. Abu Zahar Nika Ujang (Kuala Pilah)
11. Ahmad Kamaruzaman Mohamed Baria (Jerantut)
12. Ahmad Rahim Mohd Said (Kuala Nerus)
13. Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (Bagan Datok)
14. Ainon Khairiyah Mohd Abas (Parit)
15. Akbar Khan Abdul Rahman (Libaran)
16. Amir Kahar Mustapha (Marudu)
17. Asmat Nungka (Beluran)
18. Badruddin Amiruldin (Yan)
19. Badrul Hisham Abdul Aziz (Hulu Langat)
20. Billy Abit Joo (Hulu Rajang)
21. Buniyamin Yaakob (Bachok)
22. Chang Kon You (Ipoh Timur)
23. Chang See Ten (Gelang Patah)

24. Che Ibrahim Mustafa (Sungai Petani)
25. Chia Kwang Chye (Bukit Bendera)
26. Chiew Chiu Sing (Bintulu)
27. Chua Soon Bui (Tawau)
28. Daim Zainuddin (Merbok)
29. Fu Ah Kiow (Mentakab)
30. G. Leelavathi (Kapar)
31. Hamzah Ramli (Sri Gading)
32. Hanafi Ramli (Jerlun)
33. Hashim Ismail (Ledang)
34. Henrynus Amin (Kinabalu)
35. Hew See Tong (Kampar)
36. Ho Cheong Sing (Ipoh Barat)
37. Hon Choon Kim (Seremban)
38. Hoo Seong Chang (Kluang)
39. Husni Hanadzlah (Tambun)
40. Ibrahim Mahmood (Kuala Krai)
41. Ibrahim Pateh Mohammad (Tanah Merah)
42. Illani Isahak (Kota Bharu)
43. Jacob Dungau Sagan (Baram)
44. Jamaluddin Mohd Jarjis (Rompin)
45. James Jimbun Pungga (Kapit)
46. Jawah Gerang (Lubuk Antu)
47. Jimmy Lim Donald (Sir Aman)
48. Joseph Chong Chek Ah (Batu)
49. Joseph Mauh Ikeh (Selangau)
50. Joseph Pairin Kitingan (Keningau)
51. Kamal Salleh (Wangsa Maju)
52. Kamarudin Ahmad (Arau)
53. Karpal Singh (Jelutong)
54. L. Krishnan (Teluk Kemang)
55. Lau Ngan Siew (Sandakan)
56. Liew Ah Kim (Seputeh)
57. Lim Guan Eng (Kota Melaka)
58. Lim Kit Siang (Tanjong)
59. Lim Lay Hoon (Padang Serai)
60. Lim Si Cheng (Senai)
61. Ling Chooi Sieng (Lumut)
62. Mahbud Hashim (Sabak Bernam)
63. Mansor Masikon (Batu Pahat)
64. Maximus Johnity Ongkili (Bandau)
65. Md Isa Sabu (Kangar)
66. Michael Lisa Kaya (Bukit Mas)
67. Mohamad Khaled Nordin (Johor Bahru)
68. Mohamad Sabu (Kubang Kerian)
69. Mohamed Abdullah (Pasir Puteh)
70. Mohd Zihin Mohd Hassan (Larut)
71. Mokhtaruddin Wan Yusof (Dungun)
72. Mustafa Muda (Hulu Terengganu)
73. Nik Mohd Amar Nik Abdullah (Pengkalan Chepa)
74. Noh Omar (Tanjong Karang)
75. Nungsari Ahmad Radhi (Balik Pulau)
76. Nurnikman Abdullah (Beaufort)
77. Ong Tin Kim (Teluk Intan)
78. Othman Abdul (Pendang)
79. P. Patto (Bagan)
80. Patau Rubis (Mas Gading)
81. Paul Noutin (Penampang)

82. Philip Yong Chiew Lip (Gaya)
83. Qamaruzaman Ismail (Bagan Serai)
84. Radin Malleh (Tenom)
85. Ramli Taib (Kemaman)
86. Richard Riot Jaem (Serian)
87. Robert Lau Hoi Chew (Sibu)
88. Rohani Abd. Karim (Santubong)
89. Ruhanie Ahmad (Parit Sulong)
90. S'ng Chee Hua (Julau)
91. Salamon Selamat (Shah Alam)
92. Salleh Said (Kota Belud)
93. Sanusi Daeng Mariok (Rantau Panjang)
94. Seripah Noli Syed Hussin (Sepang)
95. Song Swee Guan (Bandar Kuching)
96. Sukiman Domo (Batang Sadong)
97. Sukri Mohamed (Machang)
98. Tan Chong Keng (Bukit Mertajam)
99. Tan Kee Kwong (Segambut)
100. Tan Kok Wai (Cheras)
101. Tan Seng Giaw (Kepong)
102. Tan Yee Kew (Kelang)
103. Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah (Gua Musang)
104. Tiong Thai King (Lanang)
105. Vincent Lim Kuo Phau (Petaling Jaya Utara)
106. Wan Hanafiah Wan Mat Saman (Pokok Sena)
107. Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar (Batang Lupar)
108. Wan Mohd Jamil Wan Mahmood (Tumpat)
109. Wee Choo Keong (Bukit Bintang)
110. Wong Kam Hoong (Bayan Baru)
111. Yap Pian Hon (Serdang)
112. Yap Yit Thong (Lumut)
113. Yee Moh Chai (Tanjung Aru)
114. Yeong Chee Wah (Batu Gajah)
115. Yunof Edward Marinking (Tuaran)
116. Yunus Rahmat (Jelebu)
117. Yusof Yacob (Sipitang)
118. Zainal Abidin Osman (Mersing)
119. Zainuddin Mohamad Nor (Pasir Mas)
120. Zakaria Mohd Said (Kuala Kedah)

Source: Chamil, W. (2009). *Parlimen Malaysia: Perjalanan Badan Perundangan Persekutuan*. Media Global Matrix Sdn. Bhd: Petaling Jaya, pp.191-198.

## Appendix V List of Elected Representatives of the 10<sup>th</sup> Malaysian Parliament, Dec 1999 – March 2004

### Deputy Speakers:

1. Lim Si Cheng (Senai)
2. Muhammad Abdullah (Maran)

### Prime Minister:

1. Mathathir Mohamad (Kubang Pasu)

### Deputy Prime Minister:

1. Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (Kepala Batas) (*Also Minister of the Ministry of Home Affairs*)

### Ministers:

1. Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir (Kulim-Bandar Baru), Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism
2. Azmi Khalid (Padang Besar), Ministry of Rural Development
3. Bernard Giluk Dompok (Kinabalu), Prime Minister's Department
4. Chua Jui Meng (Bakri), Ministry of Health
5. Daim Zainuddin (Merbok), Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Special Tasks
6. Fong Chan Onn (Selandar), Ministry of Human Resources
7. Hishammuddin Hussein (Tenggara), Ministry of Youth and Sports
8. Law Hieng Ding (Sarikei), Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment
9. Leo Moggie Irok (Kanowit), Ministry of Energy, Communications and Multimedia
10. Lim Keng Yaik (Beruas), Ministry of Primary Industries
11. Ling Liong Sik (Labis), Ministry of Transport
12. Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz (Chenderoh), Ministry of Entrepreneur Development
13. Mohd Effendi Norwawi (Kuala Rajang), Ministry of Agriculture
14. Mohd Khalil Yaakob (Kuantan), Ministry of Information
15. Muhyiddin Mohd Yassin (Pagoh), Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs
16. Najib Abdul Razak (Pekan), Ministry of Defence
17. Ong Ka Ting (Pontian), Ministry of Housing and Local Government
18. Rafidah Aziz (Kuala Kangsar), Ministry of International Trade and Industry
19. Rais Yatim (Jelebu), Prime Minister's Department
20. S. Samy Vellu (Sungai Siput), Ministry of Public Works
21. Siti Zaharah Sulaiman (Paya Besar), Ministry of National Unity and Community Development
22. Syed Hamid Syed Jaafar Albar (Kota Tinggi), Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### Deputy Ministers:

1. Abdul Latiff Ahmad (Mersing), Ministry of Human Resources
2. Anifah Haniff Amman (Beaufort), Ministry of Primary Industries
3. Chan Kong Choy (Selayang), Ministry of Finance
4. Char Chee Heung (Alor Setar), Ministry of Home Affairs
5. Douglas Uggah Embas (Betong), Prime Minister's Department
6. G. Palanivel (Hulu Selangor), Ministry of Rural Development
7. Hon Choon Kim (Seremban), Ministry of Education
8. Kerk Choo Ting (Taiping), Ministry of International Trade and Industry,
9. Leo Michael Toyad (Mukah), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
10. Mohamed Khaled Nordin (Johor Bahru), Ministry of Public Works
11. Mohd Khalid Mohd Yunus (Jempol), Ministry of Information
12. Mohd Mohd Shafie Apdal (Semporna), Ministry of Defence
13. Mohd Shariff Omar (Tasek Gelugor), Ministry of Agriculture
14. Ng Yen Yen (Raub), Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism
15. Ong Tee Keat (Ampang Jaya), Ministry of Youth and Sports
16. Peter Chin Fah Kui (Miri), Ministry of Housing and Local Government
17. Ramli Ngah Talib (Pasir Salak), Ministry of Transport
18. S. Subramaniam (Segamat), Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs

19. Shafie Mohd Salleh (Kuala Langat), Ministry of Finance,
20. Sharizat Abdul Jalil (Lembah Pantai), Prime Minister's Department
21. Suleiman Mohamed (Titiwangsa), Ministry of Health
22. Tan Chai Ho (Bandar Tun Razak), Ministry of Energy, Communications and Multimedia
23. Tan Kee Kwong (Segambut), Ministry of Land and Cooperative Development
24. Tengku Azlan Abu Bakar (Jerantut), Prime Minister's Department
25. Tiki Lafe (Mas Gading), Ministry of National Unity and Community Development
26. Zainal Abidin Zin (Bagan Serai), Ministry of Home Affairs
27. Zainal Dahalan (Sabak Bernam), Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment

Parliament Secretaries:

1. Abu Bakar Taib (Langkawi), Ministry of Agriculture
2. Abu Zahar Isnin (Jasin), Ministry of Home Affairs
3. Chia Kwang Chye (Bukit Bendera), Ministry of Energy, Communication and Multimedia
4. Donald Lim Siang Chai (Petaling Jaya Selatan), Ministry of Transport
5. Hashim Ismail (Ledang), Ministry of Finance
6. Khamsiah Yeop (Gerik), Prime Minister's Department
7. Mahadzir Mohd Khir (Sungai Petani), Ministry of Education
8. Noh Omar (Tanjong Karang), Prime Minister's Department
9. Rizalman Abdullah (Tenom), Ministry of Entrepreneur Development
10. Robia Kosai (Muar), Ministry of Land and Cooperative Development
11. Rohani Abd. Karim (Santubong), Ministry of Rural and Regional Development
12. S. Anpalagan (Teluk Kemang), Ministry of Health
13. S. Veerasingam (Tengah), Ministry of National Unity and Community Development
14. Wong Kam Hoong (Bayan Baru), Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs
15. Yong Khoon Seng (Stampin), Ministry of Public Works

Members of Parliament:

1. Abdul Fatah Harun (Rantau Panjang)
2. Abdul Ghafar Baba (Jasin)
3. Abdul Hadi Awang (Marang)
4. Abdul Hamid Abdul Rahman (Sungai Benut)
5. Abdul Hamid Pawanteh (Kangar)
6. Abdul Kadir Annuar (Pulai)
7. Abdul Rahman Yusof (Kemaman)
8. Abdul Taib Mahmud (Kota Samarahan)
9. Abdullah Fadzil Che Wan (Bukit Gantang)
10. Abu Bakar Othman (Jerlun)
11. Abu Seman Yusof (Alor Gajah)
12. Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (Bagan Datok)
13. Alexander Nanta Linggi (Kapit)
14. Alwi Jusoh (Pasir Puteh)
15. Amihamzah Ahmad (Lipis)
16. Amir Kahar Mustapha (Marudu)
17. Badrul Hisham Abdul Aziz (Hulu Langat)
18. Billy Abit Joo (Hulu Rajang)
19. Bung Moktar Radin (Kinabatangan)
20. Che Ghani Che Ambak (Setiu)
21. Chew Mei Fun (Petaling Jaya Utara)
22. Chong Eng (Bukit Mertajam)
23. Chow Kon Yeow (Tanjong)
24. Fadzil Mohd Noor (Pendang)
25. Fong Kui Lun (Bukit Bintang)
26. Fong Po Kuan (Batu Gajah)
27. Fu Ah Kiow (Mentakab)
28. Goh Khen Huat (Nibong Tebal)
29. Goh Siow Huat (Rasah)

30. Hang See Ten (Gelang Patah)
31. Hassan Ali (Parit Buntar)
32. Hassan Mohamed (Besut)
33. Henry Sum Agong (Bukit Mas)
34. Hew See Tong (Kampar)
35. Ho Cheong Sing (Ipoh Barat)
36. Hoo Seong Chang (Kluang)
37. Husam Musa (Kubang Kerian)
38. Ahmad Husni Handzlah (Tambun)
39. Ismail Noh (Pasir Mas)
40. Jacob Dungau Sagan (Baram)
41. Jamaluddin Mohd Jarjis (Rompin)
42. James Dawos Mamit (Mambong)
43. Jawah Gerang (Lubuk Antu)
44. Jimmy Lim Donald (Sri Aman)
45. Joseph Mauh Ikeh (Selangau)
46. Joseph Pairin Kitingan (Keningau)
47. Joseph Salang Gandum (Julau)
48. Juslie Ajirol (Libaran)
49. Kamaruddin Jaffar (Tumpat)
50. Karnail Singh Nijhar Amar Singh (Subang)
51. Keng Cho Ha (Lumut)
52. Kerk Kim Hock (Kota Melaka)
53. P. Komala Devi (Kapar)
54. Lau Ngan Siew (Sandakan)
55. Lee Kah Choon (Jelutong)
56. Lim Bee Kau (Padang Serai)
57. Lim Hock Seng (Bagan)
58. Liow Tiong Lai (Bentong)
59. Loke Yuen Yow (Tanjung Malim)
60. Madius Tangau (Tuaran)
61. Mah Siew Keong (Teluk Intan)
62. Mahfuz Omar (Pokok Sena)
63. Mastika Junaidah Husin (Arau)
64. Mat Basir Rahmat (Parit)
65. Maximus Johnity Ongkili (Bandau)
66. Mohamad Aziz (Sri Gading)
67. Mohamad Sabu (Kuala Kedah)
68. Mohamed Nasir Che Daud (Kuala Krai)
69. Mohamed Sayuti Said (Kuala Selangor)
70. Mohd Ali Hassan (Tebrau)
71. Mohd Apandi Mohamad (Jeli)
72. Mohd Salleh Mohd Said Keruak (Kota Belud)
73. Mohd Sarit Yusof (Temerloh)
74. Mohd Yusoff Mohd Nor (Machang)
75. Mohd Zain Omar (Balik Pulau)
76. Mohd Zin Mohamed (Shah Alam)
77. Muhammad Mustafa (Peringat)
78. Muhyidin Abdul Rashid (Hulu Terengganu)
79. Mustafa Ali (Dungun)
80. Napsiah Omar (Kuala Pilah)
81. Nasharudin Mat Isa (Yan)
82. Ng Lip Yong (Batu)
83. Nik Mohd Amar Nik Abdullah (Pengkalan Chepa)
84. Oso Sukam (Papar)
85. Peter Tinggom Kamarau (Saratok)
86. Philip Benedict Lasimbang (Panampang)
87. Railey Jaffrey (Silam)



88. Raja Ahmad Zainuddin Raja Omar (Larut)
89. Ramli Ibrahim (Kota Bharu)
90. Richard Riot Jaem (Serian)
91. Robert Lau Hoi Chew (Sibu)
92. Ronald Kiandee (Beluran)
93. Ruhanie Ahmad (Parit Sulong)
94. Saupi Daud (Tanah Merah)
95. Seripah Noli Syed Hussin (Sepang)
96. Shanon Ahmad (Sik)
97. Shaziman Abu Mansor (Tampin)
98. Shim Paw Fatt (Tawau)
99. Shukrimun Shamsudin (Kuala Nerus)
100. Siam Kasrin (Batu Pahat)
101. Song Swee Guan (Bandar Kuching)
102. Suhaili Abdul Rahman (Labuan)
103. Sukiman Domo (Batang Sadong)
104. Sulaiman Daud (Petra Jaya)
105. Syed Azman Syed Ahmad Nawawi (Kuala Terengganu)
106. Taib Azzamudden Md Taib (Baling)
107. Tan Kok Wai (Cheras)
108. Tan Seng Giaw (Kepong)
109. Tan Yee Kew (Klang)
110. Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah (Gua Musang)
111. Teresa Koh Suh Sim (Seputeh)
112. Thong Fah Chong (Ipoh Timur)
113. Ting Chew Peh (Gopeng)
114. Tiong King Sing (Bintulu)
115. Tiong Thai King (Lanang)
116. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (Permatang Pauh)
117. Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar (Batang Lupar)
118. Wan Nik Wan Yusoff (Bachok)
119. Yap Pian Hon (Serdang)
120. Yee Moh Chai (Tanjung Aru)
121. Yong Teck Lee (Gaya)
122. Yusof Yacob (Sipitang)
123. Zaleha Ismail (Gombak)
124. Zawawi Ahmad (Padang Terap)
125. Zulhasnan Rafique (Wangsa Maju)

Sources: Penyata Rasmi Parlimen Malaysia, Dewan Rakyat, Penggal 10 (1999), Laporan Pilihan Raya Umum Malaysia (1999)

## Appendix VI List of Elected Representatives of the 11<sup>th</sup> Malaysian Parliament, March 2004 – Feb. 2008

### Speaker:

1. Ramli Ngah Talib (Pasir Salak)

### Deputy Speakers:

1. Lim Si Cheng (Kulai)
2. Yusof Yacob (Sipitang)

### Prime Minister:

1. Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (Kepala Batas) (*Also Minister of the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Home Affairs*)

### Deputy Prime Minister:

1. Najib Abdul Razak (Pekan) (*Also Minister of the Ministry of Defence*)

### Ministers:

1. Abdul Aziz Shamsuddin (Shah Alam), Ministry of Rural and Regional Development
2. Abdul Kadir Syeikh Fadzir (Kulim-Bandar Baru), Ministry of Information
3. Abdullah Md Zin (Besut), Prime Minister's Department
4. Adenan Satem (Batang Sadong), Ministry of Environment
5. Azalina Othman (Pengerang), Ministry of Youth and Sports
6. Azmi Khalid (Padang Besar), Ministry of Home Affairs
7. Bernard Giluk Dompok (Ranau), Prime Minister's Department
8. Chan Kong Choy (Selayang), Ministry of Transport
9. Chua Soi Lek (Labis), Ministry of Health
10. Fong Chan Onn (Alor Gajah), Ministry of Human Resources
11. Hishamuddin Hussein (Sembrong), Ministry of Education
12. Jamaluddin Mohd Jarjis (Rompin), Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
13. Leo Micheal Toyad (Mukah), Ministry of Tourism
14. Lim Keng Yaik (Beras), Ministry of Energy, Water and Communications
15. Maximus Johnity Ongkili (Kota Marudu), Prime Minister's Department
16. Mohamed Khaled Nordin (Pasir Gudang), Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development
17. Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz (Padang Rengas), Prime Minister's Department
18. Mohd Isa Abdul Samad (Jempol), Ministry of Federal Territories
19. Mohd Mohd Shafie Apdal (Semporna), Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs
20. Mohd Radzi Sheikh Ahmad (Kangar), Prime Minister's Department
21. Muhyiddin Mohd Yassin (Pagoh), Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry
22. Mustapa Mohamed (Jeli), Prime Minister's Department
23. Ong Ka Ting (Tanjung Piai), Ministry of Housing and Local Government
24. Peter Chin Fah Kui (Miri), Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities
25. Rafidah Aziz (Kuala Kangsar), Ministry of International Trade and Industry
26. Rais Yatim (Jejebu), Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage
27. S. Samy Vellu (Sungai Siput), Ministry of Public Works
28. Shafie Mohd Salleh (Kuala Langat), Ministry of Higher Education
29. Sharizat Abdul Jalil (Lembah Pantai), Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
30. Syed Hamid Syed Jaafar Albar (Kota Tinggi), Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### Deputy Ministers:

1. Abdul Latif Ahmad (Mersing), Ministry of Health
2. Abdul Rahman Bakar (Marang), Ministry of Human Resources
3. Ahmad Husni Mohamad Hanadzlah (Tambun), Ministry of International Trade and Industry

4. Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (Bagan Datok), Ministry of Tourism
5. Anifah Aman (Kimanis), Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities
6. Awang Adek Hussin (Bachok), Ministry of Rural and Regional Development
7. Azizah Mohd Dun (Beaufort), Ministry of Housing and Local Government
8. Chia Kwang Chye (Bukit Bendera), Ministry of Home Affairs
9. Chor Chee Heung (Alor Setar), Ministry of Housing and Local Government
10. Donald Lim Siang Chai (Petaling Jaya Selatan), Ministry of Information
11. Douglas Uggah Embas (Betong), Ministry of Transport
12. Fu Ah Kiow (Kuantan), Ministry of Higher Education
13. G. Palanivel (Hulu Selangor), Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
14. Hon Choon Kim (Seremban), Ministry of Education
15. Joseph Entulu Belaun (Selangau), Prime Minister's Department
16. Joseph Salang Gandum (Julau), Prime Minister's Department
17. Kerk Choo Ting (Simpang Renggam), Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry
18. Khamsiyah Yeop (Lenggong), Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development
19. Kong Cho Ha (Lumut), Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
20. M. Kayveas (Taiping), Prime Minister's Department
21. Mah Siew Keong (Teluk Intan), Ministry of International Trade and Industry
22. Mahadzir Mohd Khir (Sungai Petani), Ministry of Education
23. Mohd Shariff Omar (Tasek Gelugor), Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry
24. Mohd Zin Mohamed (Sepang), Ministry of Public Works,
25. Ng Yen Yen (Raub), Ministry of Finance
26. Noh Omar (Tanjong Karang), Ministry of Home Affairs
27. Ong Tee Keat (Pandan), Ministry of Youth and Sports
28. Robert Lau Hoi Chew (Sibu), Ministry of Housing and Local Government
29. Shahziman Abu Mansor (Kuala Pilah), Ministry of Water, Energy and Communications
30. Sothinathan Sinna Gaundar (Teluk Kemang), Ministry of Environment
31. Tan Chai Ho (Bandar Tun Razak), Ministry of Home Affairs
32. Tengku Azlan Abu Bakar (Jerantut), Ministry of Transport
33. Tengku Putera Tengku Awang (Hulu Terengganu), Ministry of Finance
34. Tiki Lafe (Mas Gading), Ministry of Rural and Regional Development
35. Veerasingam Suppiah (Tengah), Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs
36. Wong Kam Hoong (Bayan Baru), Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage
37. Zainal Abidin Zin (Bagan Serai), Ministry of Defence
38. Zainuddin Maidin (Merbok), Ministry of Information
39. Zulhasnan Rafique (Setiawangsa), Ministry of Federal Territories

Parliament Secretaries:

1. Abdul Rahman Ibrahim (Pokok Sena), Ministry of Home Affairs
2. Abu Seman Yusup (Masjid Tanah), Ministry of Federal Territory
3. Adham Baba (Tenggara), Ministry of Higher Education
4. Chew Mei Fun (Petaling Jaya Utara), Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
5. Hilmi Yahaya (Bukit Bendera), Ministry of Finance
6. Hoo Seng Chang (Kluang), Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs
7. Lee Kah Choon (Jelutong), Ministry of Health
8. Mashitah Ibrahim (Baling), Prime Minister's Department
9. Mohd Johari Baharum (Kubang Pasu), Prime Minister's Department
10. Mohd Ruddin Abdul Ghani (Bukit Katil), Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
11. Ng Lip Yong (Batu), Ministry of Agriculture Industries and Commodities
12. Noriah Kasnon (Sungai Besar), Ministry of Information
13. P. Komala Devi (Kapar), Ministry of Education
14. Rohani Abdul Karim (Batang Lupar), Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry
15. S. Subramaniam (Segamat), Ministry of Housing and Local Government
16. Samsu Baharun Abdul Rahman (Silam), Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development
17. Sazmi Miah (Machang), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
18. Tan Yee Kew (Klang), Ministry of International Trade and Industry
19. Vigneswari M. Sanasee (Kota Raja), Ministry of Youth and Sports
20. Yew Teong Lock (Wangsa Maju), Ministry of Federal Territory

21. Yong Khoon Seng (Stampin), Ministry of Public Works
22. Zainal Abidin Osman (Nibong Tebal), Ministry of Rural dan Regional Development

Members of Parliament:

1. Aaron Ago Dagang (Kanowit)
2. Ab Halim Ab Rahman (Pengkalan Chepa)
3. Abd Rahim Bakri (Kudat)
4. Abd. Junaidy Abdul Wahab (Batu Pahat)
5. Abdul Fatah Harun (Rantau Panjang)
6. Abdul Ghapur Salleh (Kalabakan)
7. Abdul Hamid Zainal Abidin (Parit Buntar)
8. Abdul Rahman Ariffin (Jerlun)
9. Abdul Taib Mahmud (Semarahan)
10. Abu Bakar Taib (Langkawi)
11. Ahmad Shabery Cheek (Kemaman)
12. Alexander Nanta Linggi (Kapit)
13. Astaman Abdul Aziz (Titiwangsa)
14. Badruddin Amiruldin (Jerai)
15. Baharum Mohamed (Sekijang)
16. Bernard S. Maraat (Pensiangan)
17. Billy Abit Joo (Hulu Rajang)
18. Bung Moktar Radin (Kinabatangan)
19. Che Azmi Abd Rahman (Kuala Nerus)
20. Chong Cheing Jen (Bandar Kuching)
21. Chong Eng (Bukit Mertajam)
22. Chong Hon Ming (Sandakan)
23. Chong Ket Wah (Batu Sapi)
24. Chow Kon Yeow (Tanjong)
25. Chua Jui Meng (Bakri)
26. Devamany S. Krishnasamy (Cameron Highlights)
27. Donald Peter Mojuntin (Panampang)
28. Enchin Majimbun (Sepangar)
29. Fadillah Yusof (Petra Jaya)
30. Firdaus Muhammad Rom Harun (Rembau)
31. Fong Kui Lun (Bukit Bintang)
32. Fong Po Kuan (Batu Gajah)
33. Ghazali Ibrahim (Padang Terap)
34. Goh Siow Huat (Rasah)
35. Hamim Samuri (Ledang)
36. Hashim Jahaya (Kuala Kedah)
37. Hasni Mohamad (Pontian)
38. Hassan Malek (Kuala Pilah)
39. Henry Sum Agong (Bukit Mas)
40. Hew See Tong (Kampar)
41. Huang Cheng Guan (Batu Kawan)
42. Idris Haron (Batu Tangga)
43. Ismail Abd Muttalib (Maran)
44. Ismail Mohamed Said (Kuala Krau)
45. Ismail Noh (Pasir Mas)
46. Ismail Sabri Yaakob (Bera)
47. Jacob Dungau Sagan (Baram)
48. James Dawos Mamit (Mambong)
49. Jawab Gerang (Lubuk Antu)
50. Jelaing Mersat (Seratok)
51. Jimmy Donald (Sri Aman)
52. Joseph Pairin Kitingan (Keningau)
53. Juslie Ajirol (Libaran)
54. K.S. Nijhar (Subang)

55. Kalthom Othman (Pasir Puteh)
56. Kamarudin Jaffar (Tumpat)
57. Karpal Singh (Bukit Gelugor)
58. Lau Yeng Peng (Puchong)
59. Lim Bee Kau (Padang Serai)
60. Lim Hock Seng (Bagan)
61. Lim Kit Siang (Ipoh Timur)
62. Ling Ban San (Tebrau)
63. Liow Tiong Lai (Bentong)
64. Loh Seng Kok (Kelana Jaya)
65. Loke Yuen Yow (Tanjung Malim)
66. Low Hieng Ding (Sarikei)
67. M. Kulasegaran V. Murugeson (Ipoh Barat)
68. Marcus Mojigoh (Putatan)
69. Markiman Kobiran (Hulu Langat)
70. Mat Yasir Ikhsan (Sabak Bernam)
71. Mohamad Aziz (Sri Gading)
72. Mohd Alwi Che Ahmad (Ketereh)
73. Mohd Daud Tarihep (Kuala Selangor)
74. Mohd Hayati Othman (Pendang)
75. Mohd Razali Che Mamat (Kuala Krai)
76. Mohd Said Yusof (Jasin)
77. Mohd Salleh Said (Kota Belud)
78. Mohd Sarit Yusof (Temerloh)
79. Mohd Yusof Majid (Setiu)
80. Mohd Zaid Ibrahim (Kota Bharu)
81. Muhamad Shahrom Osman (Lipis)
82. Nasaruddin Hashim (Parit)
83. Nur Jazlan Mohamed (Pulai)
84. Raime Unggi (Tenom)
85. Raja Ahmad Zainuddin Raja Omar (Larut)
86. Raman Ismail (Gombak)
87. Razali Ibrahim (Muar)
88. Razali Ismail (Kuala Terengganu)
89. Richard Riot Jaem (Serian)
90. Ronald Kiandee (Beluran)
91. Rosli Mat Hassan (Dungun)
92. Rosnah Abdul Rashid Shirlin (Papar)
93. Rozaidah Talib (Ampang)
94. Salahuddin Ayub (Kubang Kerian)
95. Shaari Hassan (Tanah Merah)
96. Shahrir Abdul Samad (Johor Bahru)
97. Shim Paw Fatt (Tawau)
98. Siti Zaharah Sulaiman (Paya Besar)
99. Suhaili Abdul Rahman (Labuan)
100. Syed Hood Syed Edros (Parit Sulong)
101. Syed Razlan Syed Putera Jamalullail (Arau)
102. Tan Ah Eng (Gelang Patah)
103. Tan Kee Kwong (Segambut)
104. Tan Kok Wai (Cheras)
105. Tan Lian Hoe (Bukit Gantang)
106. Tan Seng Giaw (Kepong)
107. Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor (Putrajaya)
108. Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah (Gua Musang)
109. Teresa Kok Suh Sim (Seputeh)
110. Ting Chew Peh (Gopeng)
111. Tiong King Sing (Bintulu)
112. Tiong Thai King (Lanang)

113. Wahad Dollah (Kuala Rajang)
114. Wan Adnan Wan Mamat (Indera Mahkota)
115. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (Permatang Pauh)
116. Wan Azmi Wan Ariffin (Sik)
117. Wan Hashim Wan Teh (Gerik)
118. Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar (Santubong)
119. Wee Ka Siong (Ayer Hitam)
120. Wilfred Madius Tangau (Tuaran)
121. Wong Nai Chee (Kota Melaka)
122. Yap Pian Hon (Serdang)
123. Yee Moh Chai (Kota Kinabalu)

Sources: Penyata Rasmi Parlimen Malaysia, Dewan Rakyat, Penggal Ke-11 (2004), Laporan Pilihan Raya Umum Ke-11 (year)

Appendix VII List of Elected Representatives of the 12<sup>th</sup> Malaysian Parliament, March 2008 – March 2013<sup>133</sup>

Deputy Speakers:

1. Ronald Kiandee (Beluran)
2. Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar (Santubong)

Prime Minister: *(since April 2009)*

1. Najib Abdul Razak (Pekan) *(Also Minister of the the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development)*

Deputy Prime Minister: *(Since April 2009)*

1. Muhyiddin Mohd Yassin (Pagoh) *(Also Minister of the the Ministry of Education)*

Ministers: *(Since April 2009)*

1. Ahmad Husni Mohamad Hanadzlan (Tambun), Ministry of Finance
2. Ahmad Shabery Cheek (Kemaman), Ministry of Youth and Sports
3. Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (Bagan Datok), Ministry of Defence
4. Anifah Aman (Kimanis), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
5. Bernard Giluk Dompok (Panampang), Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities
6. Chor Chee Hung (Alor Setar), Ministry of Housing and Local Government
7. Douglas Uggah Embas (Betong), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
8. Hissamuddin Hussein (Semborong), Ministry of Home Affairs
9. Ismail Sabri Yaakob (Bera), Ministry of Domestic Trade, Co-operative and Consumerism
10. Kong Cho Ha (Lumut), Ministry of Transport
11. Liow Tiong Lai (Bentong), Ministry of Health
12. Maximus Johnity Ongkili (Kota Marudu), Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
13. Mohamed Khaled Nordin (Pasir Gudang), Ministry of Higher Education
14. Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz (Padang Rengas), Prime Minister's Department
15. Mohd Mohd Shafie Apdal (Semporna), Ministry of Rural and Regional Development
16. Mustapa Mohamed (Jeli), Ministry of International Trade and Industry
17. Ng Yen Yen (Raub), Ministry of Tourism
18. Noh Omar (Tanjong Karang), Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry
19. Nor Mohamed Yakcop (Tasek Gelugor), Prime Minister's Department
20. Peter Chin Fah Kui (Miri), Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water
21. Rais Yatim (Jelebu), Ministry of Information, Communications and Culture
22. S. Subramaniam (Segamat), Ministry of Human Resources
23. Shaziman Abu Mansor (Tampin), Ministry of Public Works

Deputy Ministers: *(Since April 2009)*

1. Abd Rahim Bakri (Kudat), Ministry of Transport
2. Abdul Latif Ahmad (Mersing), Ministry of Defence
3. Abu Seman Yusop (Masjid Tanah), Ministry of Home Affairs
4. Ahmad Maslan (Pontian), Prime Minister's Department
5. Chua Tee Yong (Labis), Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry
6. Fadillah Yusof (Petra Jaya), Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
7. Hamzah Zainudin (Larut), Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities
8. Hasan Malek (Kuala Pilah), Ministry of Rural and Regional Development
9. Hou Kok Chung (Kluang), Ministry of Higher Education
10. Jacob Dangau Sagan (Baram), Ministry of International Trade and Industry
11. James Dawos Mamit (Mambong), Ministry of Tourism

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<sup>133</sup>. Najib Abdul Razak had reshuffled the cabinet after he had been appointed as the sixth Prime Minister on 3 April 2009.

12. Jelaing Mersat (Saratok), Ministry of Education
13. Joseph Entulu Belaun (Selangau), Ministry of Rural and Regional Development
14. Joseph Kurup (Pensiangan), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
15. Joseph Salang Gandum (Julau), Ministry of Information, Communications and Culture
16. Lajim Ukin (Beaufort), Ministry of Housing and Local Government
17. Lee Chee Leong (Kampar), Ministry of Home Affairs
18. Liew Vui Keong (Sandakan), Prime Minister's Department
19. M. Saravanan (Tapah), Ministry of Federal Territories and Urban Wellbeing
20. Mohd Johari Baharum (Kubang Pasu), Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry
21. Mohd Puad Zarkashi (Batu Pahat), Ministry of Education
22. Mukhriz Mahathir (Jerlun), Ministry of International Trade and Industry
23. Noriah Kasnon (Sungai Besar), Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water
24. Razali Ibrahim (Muar), Ministry of Youth and Sports
25. Richard Riot Jaem (Serian), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
26. Rohani Abdul Karim (Batang Lupar), Ministry of Domestic Trade, Co-operatives and Consumerism
27. Rosnah Abdul Rashid Shirlin (Papar), Ministry of Health
28. S.K. Devamany (Cameron Highlands), Prime Minister's Department
29. Saifuddin Abdullah (Temerloh), Ministry of Higher Education
30. Tan Lian Hoe (Gerik), Ministry of Domestic Trade, Co-operatives and Consumerism
31. Wee Ka Siong (Ayer Hitam), Ministry of Education
32. Yong Khoon Seng (Stampin), Ministry of Public Works

Members of Parliament:

1. Aaron Ago Dagang (Kanowit)
2. Ab Aziz Ab Kadir (Ketereh)
3. Ab Halim Ab Rahman (Pengkalan Chepa)
4. Abd Rahman Bakri (Sabak Bernam)
5. Abd Rahman Dahlan (Kota Belud)
6. Abdul Ghapur Salleh (Kalabakan)
7. Abdul Hadi Awang (Marang)\*
8. Abdul Khalid Ibrahim (Bandar Tun Razak)\*
9. Abdul Manan Ismail (Paya Besar)
10. Abdul Wahab Dolah (Igan)
11. Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (Kepala Batas)\*
12. Abdullah Md Zin (Besut)\*
13. Abdullah Sani Abd Hamid (Kuala Langat)
14. Abu Bakar Taib (Langkawi)
15. Ahmad Hamzah (Jasin)
16. Ahmad Kassim (Kuala Kedah)
17. Ahmad Lai Bujang (Sibuti)
18. Alexander Nanta Linggi (Kapit)
19. Amran Abdul Ghani (Tanah Merah)
20. Azalina Othman (Pengerang)\*
21. Azan Ismail (Indera Mahkota)
22. Azmi Khalid (Padang Besar)\*
23. Baharum Mohamed (Sekijang)
24. Billy Abit Joo (Hulu Rajang)
25. Bung Mokhtar Radin (Kinabatangan)
26. Charles Anthony Santiago (Klang)
27. Che Rosli Che Mat (Hulu Langat)
28. Che Uda Che Nik (Sik)
29. Chong Chieng Jen (Bandar Kuching)
30. Chong Eng (Bukit Mertajam)
31. Chong Kon Yeow (Tanjong)
32. Chua Soon Bui (Tawau)
33. Chua Tian Chong (Batu)
34. Ding Kuang Hiing (Sarikei)
35. Dzukifli Ahmad (Kuala Selangor)



36. Edmund Chong Ket Wat (Batu Sapi); (*Since Nov. 2009 - Linda Tsen Thau Lin*)
37. Er Teck Hwa (Bakri)
38. Eric E. Majimbun (Sepanggar)
39. Fauziah Salleh (Kuantan)
40. Fong Chan Onn (Alor Gajah)\*
41. Fong Kui Lun (Bukit Bintang)
42. Fong Po Kuan (Batu Gajah)
43. Gobind Singh Deo (Puchong)
44. Gwo-Burne Low (Kelana Jaya)
45. Halimah Mohamed Sadique (Tenggara)
46. Hamim Samuri (Ledang)
47. Hasbi Habibollah (Limbang)
48. Hee Loy Sian (Petaling Jaya Selatan)
49. Henry Sum Agong (Lawas)
50. Hiew King Cheu (Kota Kinabalu)
51. Ibrahim Ali (Pasir Mas)
52. Idris Haron (Tangga Batu)\*
53. Ismail Abd Muttalib (Maran)
54. Ismail Kasim (Arau)
55. Ismail Mohamed Said (Kuala Krau)
56. Jamaluddin Mohd Jarjis (Rompin)\*
57. Johari Abdul (Sungai Petani)
58. John Fernandez (Seremban)
59. Joseph Pairin Kitingan (Keningau)\*
60. Juslie Ajirol (Libaran)
61. Kamaruddin Jaffar (Tumpat)
62. Kamarul Baharin Abbas (Teluk Kemang)
63. Karpal Singh (Bukit Gelugor)
64. Khairy Jamaluddin (Rembau)
65. Khalid Abdul Samad (Shah Alam)
66. Lee Boon Chye (Gopeng)
67. Liang Teck Meng (Simpang Renggam)
68. Liew Chin Tong (Bukit Bendera)
69. Lilah Yassin (Jempol)
70. Lim Guan Eng (Bagan)
71. Lim Kit Siang (Ipoh Timur)
72. Lim Lip Eng (Segambut)
73. Lo' Lo Mohd Ghazali (Titiwangsa) - (*Empty since July 17, 2011*)
74. Loke Siew Fook (Rasah)
75. M. Jayakumar Devaraj (Sungai Siput)
76. M. Kulasegaran (Ipoh Barat)
77. M. Monogaran (Teluk Intan)
78. Mahfuz Omar (Pokok Sena)
79. Marcus Mojigoh (Putatan)
80. Masir Kujat (Sri Aman)
81. Matulidi Jusoh (Dungun)
82. Md Sirat Abu (Bukit Katil)
83. Mohamed Aziz (Sri Gading)
84. Mohamed Azmin Ali (Gombak)
85. Mohamed Nasir Ibrahim Fikri (Kuala Nerus)
86. Mohd Firdaus Jaafar (Jerai)
87. Mohd Hatta Ramli (Kuala Krai)
88. Mohd Hayati Othman (Pendang)
89. Mohd Jidin Shafee (Setiu)
90. Mohd Nasir Zakaria (Padang Terap)
91. Mohd Nizar Zakaria (Parit)
92. Mohd Nor Othman (Hulu Terengganu)
93. Mohd Radzi Sheik Ahmad (Kangar)\*

94. Mohd Shahrum Osman (Lipis)
95. Mohd Zin Mohamed (Sepang)\*
96. Mohsin Fadzli Samsuri (Bagan Serai)
97. Muhammad Husain (Pasir Puteh)
98. Muhammad Leo Michael Toyad Abdullah (Mukah)\*
99. Mujahid Yusof Rawa (Parit Buntar)
100. N. Gobalakrishnan (Padang Serai)
101. Nancy Shukri (Batang Sadong)
102. Nasharuddin Mat Isa (Bachok)
103. Nga Kor Ming (Taiping)
104. Ngeh Koo Ham (Beruas)
105. Norah Abdu Rahman (Tanjong Manis)
106. Noraini Ahmad (Parit Sulung)\*
107. Nur Jazlan Mohamed (Pulai)
108. Nurul Izzah Anwar (Lembah Pantai)
109. Ong Ka Chuan (Tanjong Malim)\*
110. Ong Ka Ting (Kulai)\*
111. Ong Tee Keat (Pandan)\*
112. Ooi Chuan Aun (Jelutong)
113. P. Ramasamy (Batu Kawan)
114. R. Sivarasa (Subang)
115. Rafidah Aziz (Kuala Kangsar)\*
116. Raimi Unggi (Tenom)
117. Rashid Din (Merbok)
118. Razali Ismail (Kuala Terengganu); (*Since Jan. 2009 – Mohd Abdul Wahid Endut*)
119. Robert Lau Hoi Chew (Sibu)\*; (*Since May 2010 – Wong Ho Leng*)
120. Roslan Shaharum (Bukit Gantang); (*Since April 2009 – Mohd Nizar Jamaluddin*)\*
121. S. Manickavasagam (Kapar)
122. Saifudin Nasution Ismail (Machang)
123. Salahuddin Ayub (Kubang Kerian)
124. Salleh Kalbi (Silam)
125. Sapawi Ahmad Wasali (Sipitang)
126. Shahril Abdul Samad (Johor Bahru)\*
127. Shamsul Anuar Nasarah (Lenggong)
128. Sim Tong Him (Kota Melaka)
129. Siringan Gubat (Ranau)
130. Siti Mariah Mahmud (Kota Raja)
131. Siti Zailah Mohd Yusof (Rantau Panjang)
132. Sulaiman Abdul Rahman Abdul Taib (Kota Samarahan)\*
133. Syed Hamid Syed Jaafar Albar (Kota Tinggi)\*
134. Taib Azzamudden Md Taib (Baling)
135. Tajuddin Abdul Rahman (Pasir Salak)
136. Tan Ah Eng (Gelang Patah)
137. Tan Kok Wai (Cheras)
138. Tan Seng Siaw (Kepong)
139. Tan Tee Beng (Nibong Tebal)
140. Teng Boon Soon (Tebrau)\*
141. Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor (Putrajaya)\*
142. Tengku Azlan Abu Bakar (Jerantut)\*
143. Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah (Gua Musang)\*
144. Teo Nie Ching (Serdang)
145. Teresa Kok (Seputeh)
146. Tiki Lafe (Mas Gading)\*
147. Tiong Thai King (Lanang)
148. Tiong Ting Sing (Bintulu)
149. Tony Pua Kiam Wee (Petaling Jaya Utara)
150. Wan Abd Rahim Wan Abdullah (Kota Bharu)
151. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail (Permatang Pauh); (*Since August 2008- Anwar Ibrahim*)\*

152. Wee Choo Keong (Wangsa Maju)
153. Wee Jeck Seng (Tanjung Piai)\*
154. Wilfred Bumburing (Tuaran)
155. William Badak (Lubok Antu)
156. William Leong Jee Keen (Selayang)
157. Yussof Mahal (Labuan)
158. Yusmadi Yusoff (Balik Pulau)
159. Zahrain Mohd Hashim (Bayan Baru)
160. Zainal Abidin Ahmad (Hulu Selangor); *(Since April 2010 – P. Kamalanathan P. Panchanathan)*
161. Zulhasnan Rafique (Setiawangsa)\*
162. Zulkifli Noordin (Kulim-Bandar Baru)
163. Zuraida Kamaruddin (Ampang)

Sources: Penyata Rasmi Parlimen Malaysia, Dewan Rakyat, Penggal Ke-12 (2008-2012), Laporan Pilihan Raya Umum Malaysia (2008), Parlimen Malaysia [www.parlimen.gov.my](http://www.parlimen.gov.my)

(\* ) Former minister, former deputy minister, or Chief Minister (*Menteri Besar*) or former Chief Minister

Appendix VIII List of Cabinet Members of the Elected Representatives of the 12<sup>th</sup> Malaysian Parliament prior to April 2009

Prime Minister:

1. Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (Kepala Batas) (*Also Minister of the Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Home Affairs*)

Deputy Prime Minister:

1. Najib Abdul Razak (Pekan) (*Also Minister of the Ministry of Defence*)

Ministers (Mac 2008- Mac 2009):

1. Ahmad Shabery Cheek (Kemaman), Ministry of Information
2. Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (Bagan Datok), Prime Minister's Department
3. Azalina Othman (Pengerang), Ministry of Tourism
4. Bernard Giluk Dompok (Panampang), Prime Minister's Department
5. Hishamuddin Hussein (Sembrong), Ministry of Education
6. Ismail Sabri Yaakob (Bera), Ministry of Youth and Sports
7. Liow Tiong Lai (Bentong), Ministry of Health
8. Maximus Johnity Ongkili (Kota Marudu), Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
9. Mohamed Khaled Nordin (Pasar Gudang), Ministry of Higher Education
10. Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz (Padang Rengas), Prime Minister's Department
11. Mohd Shafie Apdal (Semporna), Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage
12. Mohd Zin Mohamed (Sepang), Ministry of Public Works
13. Muhyiddin Mohd Yassin (Pagoh), Ministry of International Trade and Industry
14. Mustapa Mohamed (Jeli), Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry
15. Ng Yen Yen (Raub) Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
16. Noh Omar (Tanjong Karang), Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development
17. Nor Mohamed Yakcop (Tasek Gelugor), Ministry of Finance
18. Ong Ka Chuan (Tanjung Malim), Ministry of Housing and Local Government
19. Ong Tee Keat (Pandan), Ministry of Transport
20. Peter Chin Fah Kui (Miri), Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities
21. Rais Yatim (Jelebu), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
22. S. Subramaniam (Segamat), Ministry of Human Resources
23. Shahril Abdul Samad (Johor Bahru), Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs
24. Shaziman Abu Mansor (Tampin), Ministry of Water, Energy and Communications
25. Syed Hamid Syed Jaafar Albar (Kota Tinggi), Ministry of Home Affairs
26. Zulhasnan Rafique (Setiawangsa), Ministry of Federal Territories

Deputy Ministers (Mac 2008 – Mac 2009):

1. Abdul Latif Ahmad (Mersing), Ministry of Health
2. Abdul Rahim Bakri (Kudat), Ministry of Foreign Affairs
3. Abu Seman Yusop (Masjid Tanah), Ministry of Defence
4. Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah (Tambun), Ministry of Finance
5. Chor Chee Heung (Alor Setar), Ministry of Housing and Local Government
6. Douglas Uggah Embas (Betong), Prime Minister's Department
7. Fadillah Yusof (Petra Jaya), Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
8. Hamzah Zainuddin (Larut), Ministry of Housing and Local Government
9. Hassan Malek (Kuala Pilah), Prime Minister's Department
10. Hou Kok Chung, Ministry of Higher Education
11. Idris Haron (Tangga Batu), Ministry of Higher Education
12. Jacob Dungau Sagan (Baram), Ministry of International Trade and Industry
13. Jelaing Mersat (Saratok), Ministry of Home Affairs
14. Joseph Entulu Belaun (Selangau), Prime Minister's Department
15. Joseph Kurup, Ministry of Rural and Regional Development
16. Joseph Salang Gandum (Julau), Prime Minister's Department
17. Kong Cho Ha (Lumut), Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
18. Lajim Ukin (Beaufort) Ministry of Rural and Regional Development

19. Liew Vui Keong (Sandakan), Prime Minister's Department
20. M. Saravanan (Tapah), Ministry of Federal Territories
21. Mohd Johari Baharum (Kubang Pasu), Prime Minister's Department
22. Noraini Ahmad (Parit Sulong), Ministry of Human Resources
23. Noriah Kasnon (Sungai Besar), Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
24. Razali Ismail (Kuala Terengganu), Ministry of Education
25. Robert Lau Hoi Chew (Sibu), Ministry of Housing and Local Government (Deceased in 9 April 2009)
26. Rohani Abdul Karim (Batang Lupar), Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry
27. S.K. Devamany (Cameron Highlands), Prime Minister's Department
28. Saiffuddin Abdullah (Temerloh), Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development
29. Sulaiman Abdul Rahman Abdul Taib (Kota Samarahan), Ministry of Tourism
30. Tan Lian Hoe (Gerik), Ministry of Information
31. Teng Boon Soon (Tebrau), Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage
32. Wee Jeck Seng (Tanjong Piai), Prime Minister's Department
33. Wee Ka Siong (Ayer Hitam), Ministry of Education
34. Yong Khoo Seng (Stampin), Ministry of Public Works

Sources: Penyata Rasmi Parlimen Malaysia, Dewan Rakyat, Penggal Ke-12 (2008-2009), Parlimen Malaysia, [www.parlimen.gov.my](http://www.parlimen.gov.my)

## Appendix IX Interview Questions

1. What do you believe your role is as a MP?
2. How long have you been involved in politics work?
3. Who do you perceive yourself as representing? Who are your constituents/target groups?
4. How do you engage with your constituents and other groups?
5. What types of people or group approach you in your capacity as a MP?
6. Do constituents or other groups ever approach you? How do they do this and how often does this occur?
7. In what forums do you believe you speak for your constituents/citizens? For example, when have you recently felt that you were primarily advocating your constituents/citizens interests? How do you do this?
8. How often do you visit your constituency? What are the reasons for your visits?
9. What kinds of activities do you undertake when you visit your constituency?
10. What parliamentary forums do you use to raise issues of concern to your constituents?
11. What obstacles – institutional, party or otherwise – might limit your ability to represent your constituents/citizens?
12. Do you think the electoral system has an impact on deliberative practices in Malaysia?
13. What are the key policy issues that matter to your constituents/organisation at present?
14. In what do you help them to resolve the issues? Is it based on individual or communal?
15. What do you think could be done to improve the role of Parliament and its relationship with the citizens of Malaysia?
16. What other (extra-parliamentary) forums do you use in responding to the wishes of your constituency?

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL STUDIES  
FACULTY OF ARTS**

Ref. No: 2010/113



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### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (Members of Parliament)**

Project Title : The Malaysian Parliament: Deliberative Practices and Responsiveness  
Name of Researcher: Nazli Aziz

My name is Nazli Aziz. I am a Malaysian citizen who is currently enrolled as a student for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the Department of Political Studies, Faculty of Arts, at the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

This research examines how the Malaysian parliament, as an institution, supports the involvement of citizens in policy-making. It explores how Malaysian Members of Parliament (MPs) of the House of Representatives use the legislature as a forum for deliberation around public policy issues, in response to their constituents' concerns. As such, the project will analyse the role that MPs play, who or what they believe they represent, and how responsive they are to the demands of both their government and their constituents.

This research will involve interviews with MPs that are elected by citizens only. Approximately 60 out of the 222 MPs of the House of Representatives (Dewan Rakyat) will be recruited as participants. These 60 MPs are divided into two categories based on their political alliances: 30 from the ruling coalition party (the National Front) and another 30 from the opposition coalition party (the People's Alliance). The aim of this division is to have two equal groups that roughly reflect the make-up of the Malaysian Parliament. Within each group, the participants are further divided into two categories: 15 are MPs from urban constituencies and the other 15 are MPs from rural constituencies. MPs from the Senate (Dewan Negara) are excluded from the sample because all senators are selected and appointed by the government, not the Malaysian citizenry. In addition, I will interview directors of six non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to gain insight into how citizens' groups view the role and responsiveness of parliamentarians. The NGOs selected will also represent a diverse range of interests. Contact details for MPs and NGOs will be obtained from official websites and public documents.

I invite you to be involved in this research by participating in a personal interview. The contribution you make will help to develop further our understandings of the nature of deliberative practices in Malaysia and the responsiveness of MPs to their constituencies. The interview will involve questions relating to who or what you represent, your role as MP and how you represent and respond to citizens and constituents.

The interview should take approximately one hour. The interview is voluntary. I will collect data through personal interviews, as well from primary and secondary documents available in the Malaysian Parliament Resource Centre, and other libraries in Malaysia and at the University of Auckland.

I am a recipient of an external scholarship from the Malaysian Government, sponsored by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) that covers fees and stipend only. The research and travel costs associated with this project have been funded by the Research Office and the Faculty of Arts at the University of Auckland.







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### **HELAIAN MAKLUMAT PESERTA (Ahli Parlimen)**

Tajuk Projek : The Malaysian Parliament: Deliberative Practices and Responsiveness  
Nama Penyelidik : Nazli Aziz

Sukacita dimaklumkan bahawa saya Nazli Aziz adalah warganegara Malaysia yang sedang mengikuti pengajian di peringkat sarjana Doktor Falsafah (Ph.D) di Jabatan Pengajian Politik, Fakulti Sastera, University of Auckland, New Zealand.

Untuk makluman pihak YB, saya sedang menjalankan kajian mengenai Parlimen Malaysia sebagai sebuah institusi yang menggalakkan penglibatan rakyat dalam pembuatan-keputusan. Penyelidikan ini meninjau bagaimana ahli-ahli parlimen di Dewan Rakyat menggunakan badan perundangan sebagai forum deliberatif berhubung isu-isu polisi awam sebagai suatu tindakbalas dengan kepentingan para pengundi mereka. Projek ini akan menganalisis peranan yang dimainkan oleh ahli-ahli parlimen seperti siapa dan apa yang mereka percayai mereka wakili dan bagaimana mereka responsif terhadap permintaan kerajaan dan juga para pengundi.

Penyelidikan ini melibatkan temubual dengan ahli-ahli parlimen yang dipilih oleh rakyat sahaja. Kira-kira 60 orang daripada 222 orang ahli parlimen Dewan Rakyat akan dipilih untuk ditemubual. 60 orang ahli parlimen ini dibahagikan pula kepada dua kategori berdasarkan pada perikatan politik mereka: 30 orang dari parti perikatan kerajaan (Barisan Nasional) dan 30 orang dari parti perikatan pembangkang (Pakatan Rakyat). Tujuannya untuk mendapatkan dua kumpulan yang melambangkan kaedah dalam Parlimen Malaysia. Dalam setiap kumpulan, seterusnya ahli-ahli parlimen terpilih akan dibahagikan kepada dua kategori iaitu 15 orang dari kawasan pilihanraya bandar dan selebihnya 15 orang dari luar bandar. Ahli Parlimen dari Dewan Negara tidak diambilkira kerana semua senator dipilih dan dilantik oleh kerajaan dan bukannya rakyat. Sebagai tambahan, saya akan menemubual pengarah-pengarah pertubuhan bukan kerajaan (NGOs) untuk menilai bagaimana kumpulan rakyat melihat peranan dan responsifnya ahli-ahli parlimen. NGOs yang dipilih mewakili pelbagai kepentingan. Butiran lengkap ahli parlimen dan NGOs akan diperolehi menerusi laman sawan rasmi dan dokumen-dokumen awam.

Sehubungan dengan itu, sukacita saya ingin menjemput YB untuk ditemubual secara peribadi. Sumbangan YB akan membantu memperkayakan lagi pemahaman mengenai amalan-amalan deliberatif di Malaysia dan responsifnya ahli-ahli parlimen kepada pengundi. Temubual ini melibatkan persoalan siapa dan apa yang diwakili, peranan dan bagaimana YB mewakili serta bertindakbalas dengan rakyat dan pengundi.

Adalah besar harapan saya yang YB sudi ditemubual. Temubual akan mengambil masa kira-kira satu jam. Data akan dikumpul menerusi temubual peribadi serta dokumen-dokumen primer dan sekunder yang terdapat di Pusat Sumber Parlimen Malaysia dan perpustakaan-perpustakaan di Malaysia serta di University of Auckland.

Untuk makluman YB, saya merupakan penerima biasiswa Kerajaan Malaysia yang ditaja oleh Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi (KPT) yang merangkumi yuran dan pelbagai perbelanjaan lain. Kos penyelidikan dan perjalanan yang berkaitan dengan projek ini pula dibiayai oleh Jabatan Penyelidikan dan Fakulti Sastera, University of Auckland.

Dengan persetujuan YB, temubual ini akan dirakamkan dengan perakam digital. YB boleh memohon perakam ditutup pada bila-bila masa dan berhak untuk tidak menjawab soalan yang dikemukakan. YB boleh memilih untuk ditemubual sama ada dalam Bahasa Inggeris atau Bahasa Melayu. Transkrib temubual akan dibuat oleh saya sendiri, bermakna rakaman tidak akan dikongsi dengan pihak ketiga. Sekiranya diperlukan, ringkasan dapatan akan dihantar kepada YB. Data elektronik akan disimpan dalam komputer berkatalaluan. Salinan pendua data elektronik (cakera padat) akan disimpan dalam kabinet berkunci di Jabatan Pengajian Politik. Semua data, seperti dokumen transkrib elektronik, dokumen transkrib bercetak dan cakera padat akan dihapus, disobek atau dimusnahkan masing-masing selepas enam tahun projek berakhir. Selain tesis PhD, terdapat kebarangkalian beberapa artikel jurnal akan diterbitkan pada masa depan yang berlandaskan pada bahan-bahan terkumpul dalam projek ini.

YB berhak untuk menarik diri pada bila-bila masa dan segala maklumat yang disalurkan akan ditarik balik dalam tempoh empat minggu dari tarikh temubual dijalankan.

Projek penyelidikan ini melibatkan sekumpulan kecil ahli parlimen. Sekiranya diizinkan nama YB akan dinyatakan dalam laporan dapatan penyelidikan. Namun begitu, walaupun nama YB tidak dinyatakan, kerahsiaan tidak dapat dijamin sepenuhnya kerana ahli-ahli parlimen dikenali ramai di kawasan pilihanraya. YB boleh menarik diri pada bila-bila masa dari kajian ini sekiranya bimbang kemungkinan dikenalpasti.

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DILULUSKAN OLEH THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE PADA 14 MEI 2010 UNTUK (3) TAHUN NOMBOR RUJUKAN 2010/113

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL STUDIES  
FACULTY OF ARTS**

Ref. No: 2010/113



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**CONSENT FORM  
(Members of Parliament)**

**THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF  
POLITICAL STUDIES**

**Project Title** : The Malaysian Parliament: Deliberative Practices and Responsiveness

**Name of Researcher:** Nazli Aziz

I have read the Participation Information Sheet, have understood the nature of the research being conducted and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in this research.
- I understand that the interview will take about one (1) hour.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation any time, and to withdraw any data traceable to me up to 4 weeks after receiving a copy of the transcripts.
- I agree / do not agree to be digitally recorded.
- I understand that, even I agree I may choose to have the recorder turned off at any time and that I may choose not to answer questions.
- I agree / do not agree my name to be identified in writing.
- I understand that the researcher will transcribe the interview.
- I wish / do not wish to receive a summary of the results.
- I understand that data will be kept for 6 years, after which time they will be destroyed.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE  
ON 14 MAY 2010 FOR (3) YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER 2010/113



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**BORANG PERSETUJUAN  
(Ahli Parlimen)**

**BORANG INI AKAN DISIMPAN SELAMA 6 TAHUN DI JABATAN PENGAJIAN POLITIK**

**Tajuk Projek** : The Malaysian Parliament: Deliberative Practices and Responsiveness

**Nama Penyelidik** : Nazli Aziz

Saya telah membaca Helaian Maklumat Peserta, memahami kaedah pengendalian penyelidikan dan pemilihan saya. Saya telah diberi peluang untuk mengemukakan soalan dan jawapan yang diberikan adalah memuaskan.

- Saya bersetuju untuk mengambil bahagian dalam penyelidikan ini.
- Saya faham bahawa temubual akan dijalankan kira-kira satu (1) jam.
- Saya faham bahawa saya boleh menarik diri pada bila-bila masa dan menarik balik segala data yang berkenaan dalam tempoh 4 minggu selepas menerima salinan transkrip.
- Saya bersetuju / tidak bersetuju untuk dirakam secara digital.
- Saya memahami bahawa walaupun saya bersetuju, saya boleh memilih untuk merakam ditutup pada bila-bila masa dan saya juga berhak untuk tidak menjawab soalan.
- Saya bersetuju / tidak bersetuju nama saya dikenalpasti dalam penulisan.
- Saya faham bahawa penyelidik yang akan melaksanakan sendiri transkrib temubual.
- Saya mahu / tidak mahu menerima ringkasan hasil keputusan.
- Saya faham bahawa data akan disimpan selama 6 tahun dan selepas itu ia akan dimusnahkan.

Nama : \_\_\_\_\_

Tandatangan : \_\_\_\_\_ Tarikh: \_\_\_\_\_

DILULUSKAN OLEH THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS  
COMMITTEE PADA 14 MEI 2010 UNTUK (3) TAHUN NOMBOR RUJUKAN 2010/113

## Appendix XII Examples of local issues raised in the Malaysian Parliament

1. Harison Ngau, the Marudu MP asked the government to provide more specialists and staff for the Marudu Hospital. Laing raised issue of patient overcrowding in Marudu Hospital where specialists and staff were overworked and could not take without leave (Harison Ngau Laing, DR.17.01.1991).
2. The Gombak MP, Nik Abdullah Arshad, asked the government to build a new hospital in Gombak as the population had increased in his constituency (Nik Abdullah Arshad, DR. 21.01.1991).
3. The Sibiu MP, Robert Lau Hoi Chew, urged the federal government to give Sarawak priority in terms of development in Malaysia because the state was rather backward compared with other states in West Malaysia in term of education, infrastructure, development, and manufacturing. Besides Kuching, he urged the government to upgrade Sibiu and Miri airports to be international airports. He also urged the government to build more schools in rural Sarawak (Robert Lau Hoi Chew, DR.16.02.2000).
4. The Batang Sadong MP, Nancy Shukri, asked the federal government to provide or to upgrade the infrastructure and facilities in her constituency, in particular the development of a road system to allow access to remote areas deep in the jungle. This was to provide an alternative to residents who were heavily dependent on the river as a mode of transportation. She also urged the government to provide water supply and electricity to the remote areas (Nancy Shukri, DR.07.05.2008).
5. The Sibuti MP, Ahmad Lai Bujang, raised the issue of the lack of infranstructures his constituency, which thus affected the lifestyle of the constituents there (Ahmad Lai Bujang, DR.12.05.2008).
6. The Silam MP, Salleh Hj. Kalbi, wanted the government to provide more specialists for the Lahad Datu Hospital. He said citizens complained as the Lahad Datu Hospital only had a few specialists to cover the patients there (Salleh Kalbi, DR.12.05.2008).
7. The Papar MP, Rosnah Abdul Rashid Shirlin, raised the issue relating to the road system project in Papar. She also asked the reason for the Pan Borneo Highway project to link Papar-Beaufor-Sindumen that was listed in 2008 by the government, but still did not see any development (Rosnah Abdul Rashid Shirlin, DR.18.02.2009).
8. The Batang Sadong MP, Nancy Shukri, raised her constituents' needs and concerns regarding health services in her constituency. She said most of her constituents in the remote areas were still heavily dependent on the river as their only of transportation. She also asked the government to provide more public toilets, dentists and tap water supplies to the constituency (Nancy Shukir, DR.06.12.2010).
9. The Lubok Antu MP, William Nyallau Badak, raised issues relating to the electricity supply to long houses in remote areas in the Lubok Antu (William Nyallau Badak, DR.08.12.2010).
10. The Petaling Jaya Selatan MP, Hee Loy Sian, questioned the Ministry of Housing and Local Government's integrity and accountability in supervision of approved projects, especially those in his local area. He raised the issues of lifts at low cost flats such as the Pangsapuri Impian Baiduri, which were poorly maintained and had injured the users. He also pointed out the low quality of roofs used at the flats Desa Sepakat, Pangsapuri Taman Medan Cahaya and Taman Sri Manja in Petaling Jaya Selatan, which were under the supervision of Ministry of Housing and Local Government (Hee Loy Sian, DR.08.12.2010).
11. The Hulu Rajang MP, Billy Abit Joo, raised the issue relating to electricity supply in Sarawak (Billy Abit Joo, DR.14.12.2010).