

## News Angle as a Non-Human Actor in the Construction of Newsworthiness: A Case Study of Sinar Harian

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**Abstract:** News construction is always associated with the news angle. It is the focus of the news that determines what is being emphasized in a news story, thus forming the identity of a particular newspaper. This study, focusing on a newspaper in Malaysia known as Sinar Harian, demonstrates how news angles actually construct news. Deploying actor network theory, this research treats news angles as non-human actors that directly influence what becomes news, thus able to trace how identity of a newspaper is formed. It is through the process of enrolment that the identity of a newspaper is being stabilized. Here, the newspaper identity is the result of the process rather than the 'context' of news production. This study concludes that the inclusion of non-human actors is always useful in understanding a particular social phenomenon.

**Key words:** Actor network theory, news angle, newsworthiness, Sinar Harian, Malaysia

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### INTRODUCTION

What becomes news in a newspaper relates directly with the identity of the newspaper itself. In the process of newsworthiness construction, events chosen to be news are always associated with the angle of the news story. Angle is a specific perspective to create what one might call the newspaper's 'Unique Selling Point' (USP).

Thus, in this study, we will demonstrate how the news angle is constructed at a particular newspaper in Malaysia called Sinar Harian (SH) based on the Actor Network perspective (ANT). SH is a newspaper established in 2006 but 'old' enough to publish non-partisan news stories and highlights community news that mainly marginalised in most national newspapers. It is a newspaper that is privately-owned and has no affiliation with the state. Particularly in this study, it will demonstrate how the news angle at the SH is produced and then enrolled to become news.

From the ANT perspective, this can be done when the notion of identity is extended into what is termed a 'virtual object' (Law, 1996; Mol, 1998; Van Loon, 2002). When the identity of the SH is seen as such, it enables the invisible process of enrolment to be revealed, shifting our understanding that identity is the result of news-making practices. This study argues the importance of the enrolment of non-human actors in understanding the construction of a news angle and particularly in examining how exactly the news angle at the SH is determined which then stabilizes into the identity of the newspaper.

Thus, in this analysis, I will show that a particular non-human actant, which is the news angle, can act to hold the durability of the news network together. This understanding leads us to the quasi-objective explanation between identity and newsworthiness construction (Latour, 1993). Thus, this study asks: How are news angles deployed as a means to trace 'identity'?

**Actor network theory:** Actor-Network Theory (ANT) is a method of study introduced by Michel Callon, Bruno Latour, John Law and others from the field of Science and Technology Studies (STS). In re-assembling the social, which is one of the most important and authoritative introductions to ANT, Latour (2005) criticizes 'the social' by arguing that there is no 'grander context' that can simply explain social actions. Rather, it exists various associations that connect various actors and the result of the connections are actually 'the social'. This is an alternative view in understanding social actions that simultaneously reduce the possibility of taking things for granted and avoid explaining a social action by simplifying it 'as a result of political or economics situations'. This is in line with Latour (1988)'s objection to reductionism in his principle of irreducibility. This principle, among others, highlights that there is no prior idea of what makes forces, there is no pre-determination of what is 'real' and 'unreal', nothing is already known but everything is realized and everything is ordered through associations with others.

Attention now must be given to the details of what is actually happening in a particular process rather than



merely investigating the result. Thus, ANT is interested in examining how objects come into being. The collective assembled together is the effect of stabilization and objects play a major role in this because they are not easily explained away. However, the closure is temporary because the network can always be interrupted by any other 'actant' (active actor). This suggests that scientific facts are constructed through the formation of networks rather than through external forces ("context") that 'shape' objects.

In another influential book by Latour (1987) entitled *Science in Action*, he added that the study of science and technology should be conducted empirically when it "happens". Studying science when it is "in action" or while it is "in the making" which explains the focus of "performativity" in ANT. This is important to journalism as it advocates the discovery of the exact practices of journalists while constructing news.

From the ANT perspective, this can be performed when scientists start to scrutinize a social action from the processes of translation. Translation is a central concept in ANT and also an important concept in this study because every change/transformation that occurs involves translation. The moments of translations are identified by Callon (1986) in his study of scallop conservation at St. Brieuc Bay in France. Callon (1986) discerned four "moments" of translation which comprises:

- Problematization
- Interessement
- Enrolment
- Mobilization

Since this study highlights one of the moments in translation which is the enrolment, we will focus the discussion to merely this term. Enrolment as defined by Callon (1986) is a set of strategies in which the researchers sought to define and interrelate the various roles they had allocated to others.

However, also found that enrolment is never a sure process. The enrolment of scallops into the anchor net involves various factors that may hinder enrolment (thus a form of resistance) including sea currents, parasites and visitors who visit the bay. In order to measure the most effective way of scallop enrolment, a group of scientific researchers are enrolled into the conservation study process and, in this case, without social resistance from the fishermen because they are all aiming to achieve similar interests. They allow the experts to study the scallops without questioning in order to achieve the same interest: to discover ways to increase scallop reproduction (thus, the best way of scallop enrolment into

the anchors and restocking them in the market). This stabilizes the enrolment process which means that the scallops willingly enter the anchorage and scallop production increases.

What can be learnt in this process of stabilization is that enrolment does not imply pre-established roles or identities. Rather, "it designates the device by which a set of interrelated roles is defined and attributed to actors who accept them". Callon (1986) found that each of the actors in this study was only able to identify their role after they understood what the other actors were doing. Thus, their identities were relational to the other actors' roles.

Besides that in terms of determining enrolment, there is no prior assumption on what makes the scallop enrolment a success. Political and ideological interests for instance are never surely will lead to successful enrolment. Applying this process to the study of news-making, the news angle is an important example that can be examined through this theory because constructing a news angle for a particular story can be based on various interests among journalists.

If this is seen from moments of translation, this is the stage when distinct interests (or newspaper identity) are being exposed to readers, telling them that 'this is what they should read' through specific ways of angling the stories that are distinct from other newspapers which they are competing with. By publishing stories with a certain slant of interest, newspapers are trying to impose 'order' for their readers. If they succeed, this suggests that the message of the newspaper 'enrols' into the life of its readers by stating "it is in your interest to read this article or paper". For example, a newspaper that published community news can be seen as imposing on the readers to 'read this news as it will interest you'. Thus, examining the process of enrolment further enables the 'unseen' process of the inclusion of non-human actants into social studies by mapping and transforming interests among actants involved in a social action.

This also suggests the status of non-human actants in ANT and is termed the principle of generalised symmetry. Associations are made both from the human and non-human actants. Callon and Latour (1992) define generalised symmetry:

Our general symmetry principle is to obtain nature and society as twin results of another activity network building, or collective things, or quasi-objects, or trials of force (Callon and Latour, 1992).

Thus, when the position of non-human actants is assumed to have similar importance to its human counterpart, even a text can act (e.g., it can "tell a story") and have an impact in understanding social action. Thus,



this supports the claim that nothing exists without relations, associations and networking (either human and non-human) that hold the entities together. It is here that the concepts of 'mediator' and 'intermediary' become important. Latour (2005) differentiated a mediator and an intermediary. An intermediary is what transfers meaning or force without difference, thus, it can be ignored in a network. However, although, it can be ignored, it is considered as slowing the process of reaching the 'final destination' in the network 'chain' because it still needs to be 'passed by' by the other actors that only later to be found has no contribution to the network, hence, a longer distance to reach the final point in the network chain.

**Operationalisation:** The news angle is an important part in newsworthiness construction (Breed, 1955; Gitlin, 1980; Tiffen, 1989). However, exactly how this happens is still vague, particularly in examining specifically how certain events become news. It is when identity is seen as a virtual object that the performativity of the object can be examined. Thus, the identity of the SH in this study is an effect of the performativity act of identification which is focused on the act of constructing a news angle. In this study, how a particular journalist decides a news angle is examined from the notion of enrolment (Callon, 1986). It is after the news angle of a story is enrolled only then does the identity of the newspaper emerge. How enrolment is performed is based on the act of inclusion and exclusion in the process of choosing which actors will be retained or eliminated in the news network. Inclusion and exclusion is done via the different interests that an actor has over another. It is this translation process that enables the identity of the newspaper to be known by the readers.

Thus, what is important to be studied in understanding the enrolment of the news angle is the stabilisation of identity and how this is done. This is because when the news angle is enrolled in a particular story then that is the moment when the decision about what readers will read occurs. Here, it shapes what is meant by the identity of the newspaper which actually says to its readers, "This is our news and that reflects what this newspaper wants you to read". If the stabilisation of identity does not happen readers will not be able to differentiate the SH from other newspapers and in terms of newsworthiness construction, it will be unclear among the journalists how to start and write the story.

In order to understand the stabilisation of the SH's identity, this study will discuss three ways that have been identified which are through the inclusion and exclusion of actors at the moment of enrolment, the re-presentation of mediators and the role of non-human actants. Besides that, the discussion will also scrutinise 'community' as

one of the main news values at the SH and shows how it has translated and changed its meaning from the various different practices among the journalists. This suggests that the SH's identity is not like a context that determines what becomes news at the SH, but rather it is the practice of each of the journalists that changes the meaning of what is meant by community news at the SH.

Community news has become a very popular value at the SH and with its readers because it enables the newspaper to enroll itself in the life of the public. The SH reports various community news and solves readers' problems and this is not something readers can get from the mainstream newspapers. When this happens, it strengthens the SH's identity among its readers. Thus, the whole process of enrolment of news angle that triggers the stabilisation of the SH's identity among its readers 'ends' when it translates the life of the readers based on community reporting.

Thus in this study, I will discuss the empirical findings of three ways of identity stabilisation that happens within the moment of enrolment of the news angle at the SH which are:

- The inclusion and exclusion process in enrolment
- Journalists as mediators of re- presentation
- The role of non-human actants, followed by the translation that happens to the value 'community' at the SH by comparing the interview findings conducted in 2009 and 2012 and the enrolment of SH community news that visualise the identity of the newspaper to the readers

This study is structured as such in order to demonstrate that in the process of stabilisation of the SH's identity, the three processes are identified and the translation that occurs to the value 'community' suggests the fluidity of identity and further on how the enrolment of identity happens to the readers. This provides almost a complete 'story' of the stabilisation of identity within the newsworthiness construction of news at the SH.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study adopts the method suggested by ANT theorists in understanding newsworthiness construction. To perform the research operationalization stated earlier, it is done by 'following the actors' (Latour, 2005) in a network through methods such as interviews or/and ethnographic observations. Actors from this perspective are seen as the 'scientists' who are expert in what they do. Thus, learning from the ANT point of view is to learn from those who are actually practicing what is being examined.



ANT was started by the establishment of the ethnography of science which was introduced by Latour and Woolgar (1979) through the publication of *Laboratory Life*. They followed scientists in the Salk laboratory in California without any prior knowledge about the scientists' works and routines. In this study, they found new and invisible "social actions" and understand that it is wrong to explain a phenomenon by only looking at the relationship with the grander context.

Similarly (but with a more specific goal), interviews with four reporters at the SH were conducted in 2009 and 2012 to understand how the enrolment of news angle enable the development of the SH identity. The four reporters involved are mainly similar except two who have been transferred to the head quarters. Thus, two reporters interviewed in 2012 were different than the 2009. Only reporters are interviewed in this study in order to demonstrate that in newsworthiness construction and following ANT, nothing should be taken for granted. Reporters are never lesser important than the editors. All are actually networked in some ways or another.

Thus, science is a collective work that is produced by a group of connected actors. If this view is taken in journalism, it accurately shows the 'network' ones need to be in, in order to produce a story and publish news. This 'network' were examined in the SH newsroom in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. The investigation also highlights the inclusion of the non-human actors in the network. As shown by Plesner (2009, 2010), emails and Google are examples of non-human actors that highly connect in the whole news making process.

**Stabilisation of SH identity:** The stabilisation of the SH's identity happens in the process of newsworthiness construction of each of the stories published in the newspaper. In this study, I will discuss the stabilisation process, which involved the most important action in news construction: constructing the news angle. It is when the enrolment of the news angle occurs that I have identified three ways of identity stabilisation, which will be discussed in this study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**The inclusion and exclusion process in enrolment:** At the moment of enrolment, the inclusion and exclusion process is one of the most important occurrences that help to stabilise the network. In this analysis, whether the inclusion or exclusion is made is based on the different interests of the actor. In the case of examining the enrolment of news angle at the SH, I interviewed Journalist SH1 in order to reveal how inclusion and exclusion happen in the process of enrolling the particular news angle she has chosen for the news headlined *Belum Capai Tahap Sara Diri: Sektor Pertanian, Perladangan Belum Mampu Sumbang Bahan Makanan Negara* (Yet to Achieve Self-Sufficiency Level: Agriculture, Farming Not Able to Contribute to the Country's Food Supply) published in the SH on 26 June 2012 which was a coverage on Malaysia Agriculture, Horticulture and Agrotourism Show (MAHA) (Fig. 1). These are the news reports published by both newspapers:

I will discuss the difference of coverage in these two newspapers later but for now I will first highlight the inclusion and exclusion process involved in enrolling the news angle of this story.



Fig. 1: MAHA news as reported by the SH headlined Yet to Achieve Self Sufficiency Level: Agriculture, Farming Not Able to Contribute to the Country's Food Supply dated 26 June 2012





Fig. 2: MAHA news as reported by the SH headlined Production of Agricultural Consumption in Negeri Sembilan is Being Fulfilled dated 26 June 2012

Journalist SH1 first explained how she derived the news angle: About MAHA, we know that it is about agriculture and a way to recognise the farmers. In the press conference, I am attracted to the fact that food production in the state is still insufficient to achieve self-sufficiency level. So this is interesting to become the angle because before this the chief minister has (of Negeri Sembilan) spoken on some occasions before that he is trying hard to reduce the dependency on food imported from overseas (Fig. 2). So this lead provides the latest development (on the issue) that the state government has yet to achieve their target. That is interesting to me.

This is an example of a news angle construction that did not involve the editor. At the SH, almost all stories constructed by the reporters are self-constructed; they are not coached by the editors before they start writing. The editing process only happens after that. However, based on Journalists SH1-4, it is still minimal.

In the explanation, Journalist SH1 said that, it was during the event that she felt attracted to the issue of insufficient food production in the state of Negeri Sembilan and this became important because it was said by the chief minister, not an ordinary person. In enrolling the news angle, the first inclusion of the human actor was made, who was the chief minister of Negeri Sembilan. At the same time, a non-human actor was also included which is when she associated that this had become interesting because it was connected with the previous statement made by the chief minister. Only from these associations that enabled Journalist SH1 to decide that this was a new angle for this story would it becomes interesting for readers to read. This is the example of the lead for this news as published in the SH:

- Belum Capai Tahap Sara Diri: Sektor Pertanian, Perladangan Belum Mampu

- Sumbang Bahan Makanan Negara
- SEREMBAN Pengeluaran sektor pertanian dan perladangan di negeri ini masih belum mampu menyumbang kepada bahan makanan negara
- Menteri Besar, Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan berkata, Negeri Sembilan masih belum capai pengeluaran makanan pada tahap sara diri

#### English translation:

- Yet to achieve self sufficiency level: agriculture, farming not able to
- Contribute to the country's food supply
- SEREMBAN, the production of agriculture and farming of the state is yet to contribute to the nation's food supply
- Chief Minister, Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan said, Negeri Sembilan has not yet achieved a self-sufficient level of food production

This lead and part of the news can be compared with what was published by the UM:

- Pengeluaran Produk Tani Negeri Sembilan Membanggakan
- SEREMBAN 25 Jun Hasil pengeluaran produk tani di negeri ini membanggakan selepas langkah proaktif diambil oleh kerajaan negeri untuk memastikan pencapaian optimum
- Menteri Besar, Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan berkata, pencapaian itu disebabkan oleh usaha gigih pengusaha dalam sektor pertanian, perikanan dan penternakan yang merencanakan aktiviti masing-masing untuk mengurangkan kebergantungan kepada bahan import



**English translation:**

- Production of agricultural consumption in Negeri Sembilan is being fulfilled SEREMBAN 25 June, the production of agricultural products in the state is being fulfilled after proactive steps taken by the state government to ensure optimum achievement
- Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan said, the achievement is because of the struggle by those involved in agriculture, fishery and farming, who have increased their production to reduce dependency on imported products

This is an example of how two different newspapers covered the same story. According to Journalist SH1, she sees her news angle as portraying the negative side of the story but the Utusan Malaysia (UM) is more on the positive side. To her by angling the story as such “there is a more important point to raise, although, it is on the negative side”. This is an example of how the interests of the journalists and the newspaper can be associated with the news angle construction. To Journalist SH1, what is important for readers to know is that although steps have been taken by the state government, so far there is still insufficient food production in the state, hence the dependency on imported products. In this story, she added, it is unimportant to highlight the success story of food production in the state, although, the chief minister’s speech was delivered at the 7th MAHA International 2012 and would usually result in positive coverage. However, in this story, it is more important to highlight on what is important for everybody in Negeri Sembilan to know.

Such a difference can be associated with the tendency of most mainstream newspapers in Malaysia to report only on the positive side of the story if the story is related to the government’s efforts. This is associated by some as a way of portraying the country as a developing nation and that the government is doing all it can to sustain development for the people in line with the developmental journalism perspective. However, this is the opposite of the ideal philosophy that calls for journalists to highlight both sides of the story, which readers need to know and understand so that they can evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the government, so that improvement can be made (Zaharom, 2002a, b, 2004).

A similar issue can also be linked with the ethical issues of the mainstream newspapers in the country. The tendency to report only the positive part of the story and then develop it into a news angle that thus becomes the lead turns this story about MAHA into a rather different story than what was really said by the chief minister.

Although comparisons with other newspapers that reported this story cannot be made because only the SH and the UM were observed to publish it, this can be an example to support an assertion related to UM journalism ethical conduct that relates to how the story is angled and spun, which is associated by many with the ownership of the newspaper organisation that is always affiliated with the ruling party and is said to have a tighter relationship with political interests than the main rival, the BH (Wang *et al.*, 1998).

Compared to the SH, it represents itself as an ‘ethical’ and ‘socially responsible’ newspaper and on that basis it deploys practices of angling that engage with creating a critical distance between the event and its reporting. In the case of the story on MAHA, the speech of the chief minister presents itself as spoken words and as such the report of the SH becomes a case of re-presentation, whereas the UM is more an example of representation.

Latour (1999)’s discussion on presence, representation and re-presentation is useful to help understand this situation. To Latour (1999), presence is the situation of being present in a particular time at a particular place. This is usually how we understand ‘present’ in our daily life. However, Latour also differentiates representation and re-presentation, arguing that representation is more related to science and that relates with the annulment of mediators. Mediators are reduced as much as possible in order to get the most objective outlook of a particular social action or in understanding hard sciences.

On the other hand, re-presentation is like religion, where mediators multiply in the process of delivering religious messages such as in a sermon. Here, similar religious messages are delivered in various different methods by the preacher to make them new and fresh to the listeners but the main gist of the religious teachings is maintained.

This might help to explain why the angle enrolled by Journalist SH1 is rather different. However, she argued that this is what the chief minister really said during his speech at MAHA. She has chosen a very different angle, not only different to the UM but also different compared with how the mainstream newspapers usually cover a story on agriculture. In Malaysia, Journalist SH1 said, based on her experience, the mainstream newspapers mostly report on the positive side of agricultural developments mainly because agricultural activities are usually seen to have and to bring a positive impact on society, so readers will definitely expect big events like MAHA to be reported positively. Regarding the MAHA story, she explained her interest in choosing such an angle.



When writing this story, I was worried that the story might affect MAHA and the state government. Because when a big function such as this happens, usually a positive angle is taken but we have taken a negative side: "food production is still insufficient". But at that time, I thought why the chief minister said that. Because what I expect from MAHA is that the agriculture industry (of the country) is increasing up to 80% and we also export food overseas. But after I went (to the launch of MAHA), the chief minister told a different story. So, I was thinking whether to write about this angle, because I was afraid that the state government would be unhappy, because this would imply that they are not doing their job! Because the issue to increase food production is an old story but we still don't achieve that. So, I think this is important to be covered and the readers must realise this (situation).

There are different interests that she needs to consider while deciding the angle of the story as we can see in the quote. The first is her own interest as a journalist who wants readers to know this situation, and that, although the state government realised this for a long time, local food production is not improving. The second interest is that of the state government, whose interests are clearly the need to show that the government is good at governing. While, on the other hand, a reporter has to show that she is good at reporting. Here, the relationship between the two is also a part of a cycle of credit. As regards the SH, the government does not have direct influence, but it can still affect credibility, primarily by discrediting the newspaper as 'anti-government' and maybe 'anti-Malaysian'. In relation to that, she said it happened more often when she wrote political news rather than other types of news. In the words of Journalist SH1.

I am not worried about constructing the angle of certain kinds of stories. (But) what I am worried at is whether the story will have an impact on someone else. I have written many stories and many people called as well. Usually, it is political stories. For example, the story was about football. At that time, the coach was Wan Jamak Wan Hassan, where he had been warned by the chief minister of Negeri Sembilan because the team was always losing matches. The chief minister said that he was giving a warning to Wan Jamak: if the team does not perform in the future, he will not hesitate to sack him. I wrote the story and it became big, it becomes the front page (of Melaka and Negeri Sembilan segment) I got a call from the press secretary of the chief minister and he said: 'What a big story, why has it become like this?' So I said, 'I wrote a true story, that is what the chief minister said.' But, he said only the SH had placed the story so prominently. There is no problem with that (placed prominently) but how does the press secretary answer the chief minister? To me, this is not a problem at all, because this is what the story is about.

This suggests some sort of 'intervention' by political interests after a news report is published. This is an example of how different interests occur between journalists and politicians. Although, in this example, the politician did not really intervene in the process of news construction, there are always 'post-consequences' of what has been written. Although, not much can be done by a politician after the news is published, journalists are aware that what they write is seen by politicians. Although, this happens as well outside the context of Malaysia, where political intervention can be in the most subtle ways such as argued in the propaganda model.

Herman and Chomsky (1988), the continuous 'eying' activities by various politicians in the context of the concentration of media ownership in the country does affect the definition of journalism ethics in the actual practice of the journalists. However, in the case of Journalist SH1, writing non-partisan and balanced political stories is much more challenging and risky:

The higher level of risk is when I need to write a story that has the possibility of impacting on other people. For example, when we get any information from a source about problems that are happening within the PR (Pakatan Rakyat) alliance, based on the source, (we are told that) the distribution of candidates' seats declined. So I need to ask the secretary of the alliance, a person who really knows about this whether this is true. So in this instance, we (the SH) are not partisan by reporting a story based on a biased source.

This is a very fundamental issue of ethics that must be the principle of journalism practice in almost all parts of the world. From this analysis, we have seen that the interest of the SH is not to be known as the supporter of the kind of developmental journalism understood by the mainstream media but rather a new newspaper that attempts to uphold journalism ethics at a higher level without being distracted with the issue of ownership of the organisation (Hong, 2011; Loovi, 2008). This becomes the identity of the SH which is known as a newspaper with transparency in terms of its political reporting and can be said to be the most non-partisan Malay newspaper in the current market (Loovi, 2008). What is included in the moment of enrolment of the news angle is of course both human and non-human actants in order to strengthen the news network but the SH also maintains its ethical interests which helps to sustain its identity as a non-partisan newspaper. When the identity of the SH is stabilised, the identity enrolls itself to the readers and helps the SH to be known by the reader with such an identity. What sort of news at the SH enrolled to the readers' lives will be discussed in the final section of this chapter. Before that, let us consider the second way in which the SH stabilises its identity, which is through the interplay between human and non-human actors.





Fig. 3: News on the International Beggar in Port Dickson headlined Tricky Foreign Beggars

**The enrolment of SH in lives of readers:** We have seen that the identity of the SH is not the factor that determines what becomes news at the SH. Rather, it is the practices of each of the journalists that have stabilised the enrolment of various actors, especially the news angle in the news network, that then becomes visible as the identity of the newspaper. The most prominent value usually included by SH journalists is the 'community' value, which has translated from one different virtual object to another, redefining the definition of news at the SH compared with in 2009.

So how exactly has this community news been able to translate the lives of the local people to make the newspaper popular despite its relatively young age? Journalist SH4 shared her experience:

Based on my experience, I have written a story on a disabled person who works as a mangrove worm collector. We went to find this old man and asked him to tell us the story of his life. From the story, there will emerge interesting questions that can be developed into interesting parts in the story. When I wrote this story, this man did not receive any benefit from the Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat (Community Welfare Department). The department then contacted me to get the number of the man. I heard that he later received some amount of benefit as the result of our reporting.

This is how a story published by the SH can enrol in readers' lives. Because of the lack of such stories in mainstream newspapers which mainly highlight the news values of the elite and report about the nation but not about the poor and marginalised groups (Mustafa, 2005), such stories reported by the SH becomes close to the people's hearts. Furthermore, the people know that the

authorities will take action on what is being reported by the SH and this accelerates the process of the enrolment of the newspaper among its readers (Loovi, 2008).

Besides this story, another story written by Journalist SH4 also gained attention from a similar department and action was taken to combat Foreign beggars in Port Dickson. This story is about a Chinese man who begs around Port Dickson by pretending to be a cripple (Fig. 3), but according to complaints from the locals, some have seen him running without a stick. Journalist SH3 said that it was this coverage by the SH that attracted the attention of the Welfare Department and this man was later caught.

Besides that, below is the example of the news that was reported by the SH that gained the attention of the chairman of the standing committee of plantation affairs, human resources, environment and public complaints, which carried out a test on a seawater sample that was found not to contain any toxic components. Part of the news headlined Pencemaran Bakal Diatasi (Pollution will be resolved) published on 10 March 2012 says (Fig. 4).

SH reported earlier about public complaints and apartment dwellers, including the Malaysia My Second Home from Germany, being disturbed by the pollution. The smell of the water and the condition of the beach is extremely dirty and they are very disappointed. A day after the report by the SH, Mogan came to visit the site with the assistance of Negeri Sembilan Department of Environment to investigate the report filed. A sample of the water was taken to the laboratory for further action.

These paragraphs suggest that it was on the basis of previous reports in the SH that the department took





Fig. 4: News about the polluted and Smelly Sea in Port Dickson headlined Polluted Sea, Smelly dated 10 March 2012

action. It is from the water tests carried out that it was learnt that the water was not toxic, despite its dark colour and smell. When such news is reported readers who live around the affected area will get information from the authorities and they will not have to worry about that any more. From this example, it can be concluded that the SH plays its role as an activist newspaper that helps locals to solve problems they have faced and which have yet to be resolved. Community news which can be seen as an example of a non-human actor, acts by letting the public know something they would not be able to know if they did not read the newspaper.

Besides that, in some cases, the SH also gets comments from the authorities relating to public complaints and publishes them on the the same day. For example, Journalist SH4 covered a story about the construction of floating chalets that would be developed at Mile 12, near Pekan Sungai Menyala, Port Dickson. Most fishermen interviewed in the story expressed their concern about the project, which was seen as affecting a strategic area of fish breeding. One of the fishermen was reported as saying:

"The "fish breeding" area was gazetted as a protected area. If this is developed for building, it will interfere with the ecosystem and affect the catch of the fishermen. That's what, we are worried about, when the catch of the fishermen is reduced, this will affect our income and then affect fish production for the needs of the people," he told reporters who met him recently. On the same day, the SH also published a response from the Director of Negeri Sembilan.

Fisheries Department who was reported as saying: The project could not affect the breeding ground for fish but will help the process. In the long term, the floating chalets' pile structure will become the new reefs and the fish breeding area will expand. "In the meantime, the government and the Department of Environment (DOE) are closely monitoring, the project activities to ensure that no contamination or conditions may affect the marine ecosystems," he said.

This suggests that enrolment happens because if the news does not get enrolled, then no parties will react or take action on the reported problems. These are examples of how the SH, through its reports, enrolls itself in the life of its readers, by taking care of marginal issues that are overlooked by the authorities. It enrolled itself by reporting such issues, so that when the authorities take action, readers are in debt to the SH and this increases the popularity and credibility of the newspaper to its public. Furthermore, the story will spread and more people will start buying and reading the SH. This simultaneously gives commercial mileage to the newspaper which cannot be separated from its commercial interests, mainly because, it is entirely a business entity that is not associated with any political parties.

## CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated how enrolment of the news angle occurs in a particular newspaper in this study, which is the SH. In the discussion, I have identified the way that stabilises the SH's identity, referring specifically



to the process of finding an angle which is the inclusion and exclusion process in enrolment. Thus, the purpose of this study is to show that studying newsworthiness construction must also pay attention to aspects of how determining the angle is done, that simultaneously include the taken-for-granted elements in discussing news. The question posed at the beginning of the study can be answered through the two identified ways of identity stabilization and the acceptance by readers of the new identity.

Through, the inclusion and exclusion of interests, journalists are able to construct the angle of the story by including interests in line with their journalistic practices, accepted by the organisation they are in and politically safe. In the case of the SH, I have shown that determining the angle is done differently from the UM by referring to a story about MAHA and how the UM's practice is seen to be related to the general practice of mainstream newspapers in the country, which is related to the understanding of (the Malaysian version of) developmental journalism (i.e., related to supporting the status quo and not be critical of the state). What differentiates the way the SH angles its story compared with the UM in this example is when Journalist SH1 explained that besides her own interest in the angle of insufficient food production and delivering the public's right to know about this, it is also accomplished through the enrolment of the chief minister's previous statements (the non-human actants) about the insufficiency and how the state government has done its best to solve the problem that however remains. This assists Journalist SH1 in deciding that the angle of the story needed to be 'negative' rather than 'positive', which differentiates its angle from the mainstream newspapers. Overall, in constructing a news angle, most journalists at the SH rely on facts that thus become their matters of concern.

The specific way of inclusion and exclusion in the enrolment process is mainly apparent in the reporting of marginal issues such as news about a poor disabled man, tricky Foreign beggars and sea pollution. Such reports are valued and enrolled into the readers' lives, through counter-reporting from related bodies and thus actions were taken to help and solve problems, differentiating the SH as a form of activist journalism that differed from the traditional types of news (Galtung and Ruge, 1965). Here, the SH seeks to construct itself as an outlet of good journalism in its specific cycles of credit as newsworthy, so to speak and reveal that choosing the angle shows how this is done in relation to the interplay between different (human and non-human) actors, regarding the role of facts as matters of concern, words as collectors of agency in terms of praise and blame and

community as performed by the news outlet. Altogether, they show how the SH profiles its USP as a means to justify its existence as performing "good journalism".

Nevertheless, the study has shown that adding some concepts of ANT such as enrolment is useful in demonstrating micro-practices that involved various human and non-human actors in the process of finding the angle. In particular, the role of non-human actors has always been regarded as 'unimportant' and thus the interplay between human and non-human actors is usually seen as unimportant too. However, as we have seen, the interplay always exists, because it is impossible for a journalist to construct a news angle if they do not engage with the 'angle' itself and gather all the information (thus non-human actors) that can inform the construction of the new angle.

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