12-1984

Political Integration: A National Language for Malaysia

Zairina Othman

Western Michigan University

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/masters_theses

Part of the Political Science Commons

Recommended Citation

http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/masters_theses/1526

This Masters Thesis-Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate College at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact maira.bundza@wmich.edu.
POLITICAL INTEGRATION: A NATIONAL LANGUAGE FOR MALAYSIA

by

Zairina Othman

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts
Department of Political Science

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
December 1984
POLITICAL INTEGRATION: A NATIONAL LANGUAGE FOR MALAYSIA

Zairina Othman, M.A.
Western Michigan University, 1984

This study investigates the need of a national language policy to promote political integration in a new nation, using Malaysia as an example. The thesis attempts to explain why Bahasa Malaysia was chosen as the national language and how its implementation as the prime language of political, social, and economic communication has contributed towards national political unity and stability in Malaysia. Three propositions are presented and investigated in support of the thesis.

The first proposition suggests that an acceptable national language helps foster political integration in a culturally pluralistic society. The primary objective would be to replace a specific ethnocultural orientation with a consciousness of the expanded nation.

The second proposition suggests that the most appropriate choice of a national language for Malaysia is the Malay language (Bahasa Malaysia).

The third proposition attempts to demonstrate that the use of Bahasa Malaysia contributes to political stability, and thereby promotes national unity.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Dr. Lawrence Ziring for his help with all stages of the writing and for serving as the thesis advisor. Special thanks go to Dr. C. I. Eugene Kim and Dr. Alan C. Isaak, the other members of the committee, for reviewing the manuscript and offering suggestions.

The writer thanks her parents, Haji Othman Haji Ismail and Hajjah Fatimah Haji Mohamad, for their support and encouragement throughout her life. Also, to her new born son Md. Firzaz Md. Radzi; may you have a prosperous life.

Zairina Othman
INFORMATION TO USERS

This reproduction was made from a copy of a document sent to us for microfilming. While the most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this document, the quality of the reproduction is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help clarify markings or notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or “target” for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is “Missing Page(s)”. If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting through an image and duplicating adjacent pages to assure complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a round black mark, it is an indication of either blurred copy because of movement during exposure, duplicate copy, or copyrighted materials that should not have been filmed. For blurred pages, a good image of the page can be found in the adjacent frame. If copyrighted materials were deleted, a target note will appear listing the pages in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., is part of the material being photographed, a definite method of “sectioning” the material has been followed. It is customary to begin filming at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. If necessary, sectioning is continued again—beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. For illustrations that cannot be satisfactorily reproduced by xerographic means, photographic prints can be purchased at additional cost and inserted into your xerographic copy. These prints are available upon request from the Dissertations Customer Services Department.

5. Some pages in any document may have indistinct print. In all cases the best available copy has been filmed.
OTHMAN, ZAIRINA

POLITICAL INTEGRATION: A NATIONAL LANGUAGE FOR MALAYSIA

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY M.A. 1984

University Microfilms International 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106
PLEASE NOTE:

In all cases this material has been filmed in the best possible way from the available copy.
Problems encountered with this document have been identified here with a check mark.

1. Glossy photographs or pages
2. Colored illustrations, paper or print
3. Photographs with dark background
4. Illustrations are poor copy
5. Pages with black marks, not original copy
6. Print shows through as there is text on both sides of page
7. Indistinct, broken or small print on several pages
8. Print exceeds margin requirements
9. Tightly bound copy with print lost in spine
10. Computer printout pages with indistinct print
11. Page(s) lacking when material received, and not available from school or author.
12. Page(s) seem to be missing in numbering only as text follows.
13. Two pages numbered. Text follows.
14. Curling and wrinkled pages
15. Other

University Microfilms International

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................. ii

LIST OF TABLES .............................................................................. v

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1

   The Problem ........................................................................... 1

   Theoretical and Practical Delineations and Definitions ........... 3

   Research Methods ............................................................... 7

II. THE THEORETICAL, COMPARATIVE, AND NATIONAL
    ENVIRONMENT—A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ..................... 8

   The Theoretical Background .............................................. 8

   The Comparative Perspective ............................................. 19

   The Malaysian Environment .............................................. 23

III. THE MALAYSIAN CONTEXT .............................................. 27

   The Geographical, Historical, and Constitutional Background .. 27

   The Extent of Malaysia's Ethnic Diversity ........................... 33

IV. CULTURAL PLURALISM IN MALAYSIAN POLITICS ................. 45

   Pluralism .............................................................................. 45

   The Historical Origins of Cultural Pluralism in Malaysia ....... 46

   The Political Manifestations of Socioeconomic and
   Ethno-Cultural Diversity ..................................................... 52

V. BAHASA MALAYSIA AS A UNIFYING FORCE ......................... 62

   The Role of National Language in Malaysia ....................... 63

   Educational Development ................................................... 64
Table of Contents—Continued

Chapter

Language Policy: Problems of Selection ........................................ 69
The Implementation of Bahasa Malaysia and Its Problems .................. 73
Standardizing and Improving the Status of Bahasa Malaysia .............. 77
Evaluating Malaysia's National Language Policy ......................... 79
VI. CONCLUSION ................................................. 84

BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................. 88
LIST OF TABLES

1. Gross Domestic Product Per Capita (U.S.$) and Size of Largest Language Community (% of Population), c. 1962 . . . 18

2. Language Policy: National Languages and Languages of Wider Communication in the Developing Nations .......... 21


6. Peninsular Malaysia: Mean and Median Incomes, 1970-79 ................. 39

7. Principal Race .................. 43

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Ethno-cultural divisions and the use of a national language policy to remedy them are complicated by a number of specifically Malaysian considerations.

At Malayan independence in 1957, British colonial rule left behind an arguably historically valid Malay nation-state which, however, had implanted on Malaysia large immigrant communities, making up half the population of the country. These "immigrants," about 80% Chinese and 20% Indian origin, were not only ethnically and culturally but also economically and socially separate from the Malay indigenes. The vast majority of the Malays lived a neo-feudal rural existence while the majority of the immigrants operated in an urban or rural (mainly plantation agriculture) modern capitalist economy.

The political set-up of the new state reflected the socio-economic relations in and between the principal ethno-cultural groups. Each major ethno-cultural group formed a political party and the elite of each party claimed to represent the whole ethnic group they belonged to. The socioeconomic makeup of the society and the colonial separation of educational and other facilities of social integration assured little support for non-ethnic-based parties.
A British trained largely aristocratic Malay elite formed a government in alliance with representatives of elites from both of the major immigrant groups. Initially the Malay elite, by stressing ethnic and religious unity, also ruled with the tacit support of the rural Malay masses. Indeed the attentions of both the Malay and immigrant masses were diverted from perhaps more worthy aspirations and certainly from interethnic class unity by stress on ethnocultural divisions and competition which were clearly (and perhaps deliberately) reflected in the communal based parties of the ruling alliance. As these ethno-cultural cleavages deepened and eventually led to ethnic violence in 1969, the elite was forced to recognize and take seriously the necessity for some degree of both economic development for the Malay masses and at least apparent ethnic integration to prevent the destruction of the nation they were so profitably ruling.

It is to the second of these necessities, the need for some degree of national integration, that this thesis addresses itself. The problem was to promote national unity while not upsetting the delicate political balance between the Malay ruling elite and the other major ethnic elites on the one hand, and between the Malay ruling elite and the rural Malay masses on the other.

A solution which allowed the continuation of ethnically based political identification was to gradually break down ethno-linguistic identification and replace it with national-linguistic identification by implementing a strong national language policy. However, if the Malay rural masses were to accept the national language, it could not
be a neutral elite language such as English because it would be seen to be promoting only the elite interests.

One suggestion, already demanded by nationalist Malays and originally set into motion by "pro-Malay" British administrators, was to promote and implement the use of a standardized and elaborated form of the Malay language as the sole language of public usage. This paper will trace the selection and implementation of Bahasa Malaysia as the national language and prime means of public communication in Malaysia and place its selection and implementation in the political and linguistic contexts of national integration and unity, and in the specifically Malaysian ethnic, cultural, political, and socioeconomic environment.

Theoretical and Practical Delineations and Definitions

The theoretical scope of this thesis is multidisciplinary, but ranges primarily over the intercession between political science, sociology, and linguistics. More specifically, it deals with concepts of language and political and social integration in the contexts of nationalism, nation-building, national unity, culture, and ethnicity. These superstructural elements, however, must be seen in the socioeconomic and historical conditions that gave birth to them.

Thus language here is more than just a means of communication. Language is learned from the society one is born into and lives in. The particular language one learns as a mother tongue is itself a product of the history of the society that uses it. One uses language to interpret the world and the particular language one uses,
and the extent of one's capacity to use it, guides and limits one's interpretation of the world. The process of adapting to a new language to the extent of using it for almost all economic, political, and social communication is, therefore, infinitely more complex than learning phonetic, lexical, structural, and idiomatic patterns. The motivation to assimilate oneself into a new language has to be at least as strong as the motivation to continue using one's mother tongue. It is suggested that access or restriction to economic or political participation in the society one lives in is powerful enough motivation.

In this study political integration requires the willing inclusion of representatives of all ethno-cultural and socioeconomic groups in the process of making authoritative decisions for a society. Political participation in a polity is indicative of political integration. Rejection of the political system is indicative of alienation from it.

Social integration involves the willing inclusion of individuals or groups in a society. It includes a desire on the part of the individual or group to be a part of the society and an acceptance on the part of the society of the individual or group as members of that society. Participation in the society by individuals or groups indicates integration while rejection indicates alienation from it.

The focus of this thesis will be on nationalism as distinct from nation-building and national unity. For the purposes of this thesis the term nationalism is an ideological tool used for promoting ethno-cultural solidarity. It takes the form of internal cohesion versus
external threat and thus can be viewed as a vertical bond in society which can be used to cut across socioeconomic divisions within a single ethno-cultural group. It comprises "the more inclusive organization and the elaborated beliefs, values and behaviors which nationalities develop on behalf of their avowed ethnocultural self-interest" (Fishman, 1972b, p. 4).

It does not comprise "nationalities" (i.e., ethno-cultural groups) which may also live in the same "country" or nation-state but are not members of the ethno-cultural group originally being described.

Nation-building and national unity are similar in as much as that they bring together diverse ethno-cultural groups. Nation-building is state use of the coercive and ideological apparatus (police, military, education, mass media, language, etc.) to weld together different ethno-cultural groups into one nation-state.

National unity is not so coercive and aims at integration. The state manipulates the ideological symbols and apparatus to integrate diverse groups, both ethno-cultural and socioeconomic, into a united whole.

Culture, for the purposes of this study, constitutes the accumulated beliefs (including religion), ideas, and values of a social group and the means it uses to express these, mainly through arts, institutions, and language.

Ethnicity is used in this thesis as a more precise term than race yet narrower than nationality. Race can be confusing because of its biological connotations which, in the case of Malaysia, would
include Malays with Ibans or Senoi, but not with Tamils or Negritos. Nationality would be confusing in the Malaysian context because it would not differentiate between the diverse ethnic groups who comprise Malaysians.

Races of Malaysia are referred to as ethno-cultural groups in this thesis because, unlike some diverse ethnic groups in some parts of the world (e.g., many Americans), the ethnic groups in Malaysia are culturally very differentiated as well.

This thesis concentrates on the political ramifications of the national language policy in Peninsular Malaysia only. Although the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak are mentioned peripherally, they are not comprehensively covered for several reasons. Firstly, there is simply less material available on the East Malaysian states. Secondly, what statistics and research that are available are rarely included in the general statistics and research on Malaysia as a whole (See for example Fourth Malaysia Plan, 1980). Thirdly, the political setup has been very different to that of West Malaysia, notably in having a predominance of non-communally-based parties (although this pattern is currently changing in Sarawak with the growth of a Dayak-only party). Fourthly, the Malay and Muslim presence in East Malaysia is weak, whereas in the peninsular it is all-pervasive. Finally, Sabah and Sarawak were allowed to follow separate language policies to the peninsular until recently. As a result the full effects of the national language policy are yet to be felt in the eastern states.
Research Methods

The research for this thesis was based largely on secondary library sources, such as books, journals, periodicals, newspapers, and on Malaysian Government publications. Statistical data has been gathered from the above, especially the Fourth Five-Years Malaysian Plan.

The research necessary to find out the extent of success or failure achieved in promoting national integration through the national language policy was carried out by comparing conditions relating to ethno-cultural integration apropos of language pre- and post-1969. The year 1969 was chosen as the watershed from which to measure ethno-cultural integration because of the bloody ethnic rioting which occurred in May of that year and which prompted a rapid increase in state intervention in the promotion of national unity and the quashing of both ethno-cultural and socioeconomic dissent.
CHAPTER II

THE THEORETICAL, COMPARATIVE, AND NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT—A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter critically reviews the wide ranging and multi-disciplinary literature on language and nation-building and national unity and proposes that the selection and implementation of a single common language of national communication is, under certain circumstances, conducive to national integration. Firstly, it surveys the literature on theories on national integration. Secondly, it investigates some of the work in print on other attempts at promoting national unity from a comparative perspective. Thirdly, it reviews the literature on Malaysia's attempts at national integration, particularly through the national language policy.

The Theoretical Background

The study of the use of language as a political tool for integration is currently out of favor in political science circles (as a glance through any recent index to articles on language and national integration will show). It is a reflection of that disfavor that the majority of the literature on the role of language in national integration has been written by researchers with backgrounds essentially in socio-linguistics rather than political science. Indeed many socio-linguists (Cobarrubis & Fishman, 1983; Cooper, 1982; Fishman, 1968) suggest that questions of language policy per se would be
better researched by political scientists. A multidisciplinary approach with a substantial contribution from political science would significantly benefit our understanding of, in the words of a researcher with a nonlinguistic background, "individual and subgroup involvement in the national system" (Kelman, cited in Rubin & Jernudd, 1971, p. 21). Fishman, quantitatively and qualitatively by far the leading scholar in the field, makes the case for the multidisciplinary approach to language and national integration.

The topics ... are ... clearly language-related, but they cannot be studied as such by most socio-linguists today. Topics such as these require the close collaboration and integration of disciplines that are still too rarely in serious contact with other. Optimally they require much more than multidisciplinary research; they require the preparation of researchers who are themselves interdisciplinary and therefore who can approach questions in this area in terms of problem-orientation rather than in terms of vested disciplinary interests and skills. (Fishman, 1968, pp. 8-9)

Our multidisciplinary theoretical approach begins with notions of integration into the "artificially" assembled nation-state. Deutsch (1966), Fishman (1972b), and Breuilly (1982), among others, differentiate between the nation-states that came into being in Europe in the 19th century (e.g., Germany and Italy) and the "new" nations of Africa and Asia that have come into being as independent entities since World War II.

The former became nations out of a desire to unify ethno-cultural groups with the same language into single states. After the Napoleonic Wars, European intellectuals recognized that "there were apparently some nationalities who were such even in the absence of states of their own" (Rubin & Jernudd, 1971, p. 7). These constitute
Fishman's (1968) process of "Nation into State."

The latter (e.g., India and Nigeria) became nations because the inhabitants of colonial administrative areas achieved independence. The geographical boundaries of the new nations did not usually correspond with ethno-cultural and linguistic boundaries. One of the main tasks of the elites which inherited the apparatus of the colonial state was to forge unified nations out of the disparate ethno-cultural groups in the new states. These constitute Fishman's (1968) process of "State into Nation."

Some recent observers believe that attempts to operate within geographical boundaries which do not constitute true nation-states (i.e., states which represent one ethno-cultural group only) should not even be attempted. These observers reject any form of integrative theory as impossible, given disparate ethno-cultural groups within a polity. Representative of this extreme nationalist view are A. Smith (1983), Breuilly (1982), and Connor (1972). The nationalists claim that liberals and Marxists alike have ignored or underplayed the importance of ethnicity. This excerpt from Connor's (1972) seminal article best summarizes their position:

The preponderant number of states are multiethnic. Ethnic consciousness has been definitely increasing, not decreasing, in recent years. No particular classification of multiethnic states has proven immune to the fissiparous impact of ethnicity: authoritarian and democratic; federative and unitary; Asian, African, American and European states have all been afflicted. Form of government and geography have clearly not been determinative. Nor has the level of economic development. But the accompaniments of economic development—increased social mobilization and communication—appear to have increased ethnic tensions and to be conducive to separatist demands. Despite all this, leading theoreticians of "nation-building" have
tended to ignore or slight the problems associated with ethnicity. (p. 332)


Language, in multiethnic states, can only be divisive, although it is integrative in true nation-states. "It is language and/or culture which divides men, perpetually, in the modern world; and which, equally, constitutes the chief bond between men today" (A. Smith, 1983, p. 47).

The nationalist approach ignores several realities. Firstly, there are many states which are ethnically heterogeneous and yet which exist as successful polities (e.g., the U.S.A. and Australia). Secondly, there are several states which are ethnically, culturally, and linguistically heterogeneous and yet which function successfully as nations (e.g., Switzerland and Singapore). Thirdly, those states which have, through the whims of colonial or other policy, found large and diverse ethno-cultural populations within their boundaries are unlikely to voluntarily "Balkanize" themselves. Moreover, some of these states have populations which are so intermingled that they could not viably geographically separate. Finally, the nationalists ignore the infinitely more powerful pull of socioeconomic over "primordial" ethnic factors. (The same criticism will be leveled at some integrative theoreticians below.)

The mainstream of opinion maintains that the state remains the most important form of political entity for achieving goals. It is through the state that the bulk of developing countries' development
plans are formulated and usually implemented. These development plans are likely to be frustrated if there is serious ethno-cultural or socioeconomic strife. Development goals would be more easily attained still if the population had the same language and culture. For these reasons unification (and the corresponding integration) rank high in a developing country's agenda.

Integration theorists view nation-building as important, especially in the developing world, for creating the national unity and integration required for stability and development. The role of these forces is explained by Deutsch (1966), the leading theoretician of integration:

The nation-state, it seems, is still the chief political instrument for getting things done. The main basis of its power is, now more than ever, the consent of the governed; and this consent is easiest to obtain and to keep among populations with the same language, culture, and traditions of nationality. Nation-preserving, nation-building, and nationalism or the preference for the real or imagined interests of one's own nation and its members—these still remain a major and even a still growing force in politics, which statesmen of good will would ignore at their peril. (p. 4)

Deutsch (1966) argued that "social mobilization" occurs when modernization leads to improvements in communications and opportunities for employment which uproot people. Examples of this are peasantry moving from the countryside to cities to become urban proletariat and immigrants coming to America. Social mobilization then leads to "assimilation" into the larger society (i.e., the nation), which constitutes nation-building. "A decisive factor in national assimilation or differentiation was found to be the process of social mobilization which accompanies the growth of markets,
industries, and towns, and eventually of literacy and mass communication" (Deutsch, 1966, p. 188).

Deutsch later became aware that social mobilization might proceed at a pace that would outstrip assimilation and lead to strife.

We have seen that the more gradually the process of social mobilization moves, the more time there is for social and national assimilation to work. Conversely, the more social mobilization is postponed, the more quickly its various aspects—language, monetization, mass audience, literacy, voting, urbanization, industrialization—must eventually be achieved. But when all of these developments have to be crowded into the lifetime of one or two generations, the chances for assimilation to work are much smaller. The likelihood is much greater that people will be precipitated into politics with their old languages, their old outlook on the world and their old tribal loyalties still largely unchanged; and it becomes far more difficult to have them think of themselves as members of one of new nation. It took centuries to make Englishmen and Frenchmen. How are variegated tribal groups to become Tanzanians, Zambians, or Malaysians in one generation? (Deutsch, 1966, p. 73)

Deutsch's work is representative of the work of other "integrationists" with political science, anthropological, and sociological backgrounds. Another major contribution to integration theory was Old Societies and New States, edited by Geertz (1963). Geertz identified an "integrative revolution" in the transformation of old states ("traditional") into new ("modern"). The "integrative revolution" involves a shift from "primordial sentiments" for one's ethnic group towards "civil" loyalty for one's polity. However, "primordial and civil sentiments are not ranged in direct and implicitly evolutionary opposition to one another... (in the sense of) ... Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft" (Geertz, 1963, p. 155). Primordial sentiments need to be accommodated in new states while integration
takes place.

Whether ethnic differentiation is given its political expression in terms of territorial subunits, political parties, government posts, executive leadership, or as is most common, one or another combination of these, the effort is everywhere to find a formula that will keep the pace of modernization of the nation's sense of selfhood in step with the parallel modernization not only of its political, but of its economic, stratificatory, domestic, and so on, institutions as well. (Geertz, 1963, pp. 156-157)

Geertz moreover warns that "alternatives to such attempts as these to construct a civil politics of primordial compromise would seem to be either Balkanization, Herrenvolk fanaticism, or the forcible suppression of ethnic assertion by a leviathan state" (p. 157).

Whereas integration is seen by scholars in the Deutsch and Geertz tradition as a natural and eventually inevitable result of social mobilization (see Lerner, 1958), it is more rarely recommended by political and social scientists as a policy to be implemented in its own right. However, policies designed to encourage integration above and beyond the "natural" integrative processes of modernization are practiced by most new states with ethno-cultural diversity. Such policies commonly include the establishment of an integrated national educational system, a national language, and national symbols.

Socio-linguists, in league with a few commentators from other disciplines, have debated the uses of different language policies in the promotion of nation integration. Most have advocated the general use of a single national language or lingua franca for the purposes of national communication and integration (Gellner, 1973; Haugen,
A lingua franca is a "language which is used as a means of communication between people who have no native language in common" (Trudgill, 1974, p. 145). A national language is de jure the prime language of governmental communication and of the most educational instruction. It need not be a lingua franca.

For Haugen (1966),

Every self-respecting nation has to have a language. Not just a medium of communication, a "vernacular" or a "dialect," but a fully developed language. Anything less marks it as underdeveloped ... [and] the national ideal demands that there be a single linguistic code by means of which ... communication can take place. (p. 928)

Kelman (cited in Rubin & Jernudd, 1971) believed that "language is a uniquely powerful instrument in unifying a diverse population and in involving individuals and subgroups in the national system" (p. 21). By promoting "instrumental" and "sentimental" attachment to the new state, language can even, for short periods, maintain (a system's) legitimacy—even if it is not working effectively, is facing serious economic difficulties, or is torn by internal conflicts so that it can adequately provide for the needs and interest of only some segments of the population at the expense of others—as long as it is seen by wide segments of the population as representing their national (ethnic-cultural) identity. (p. 23)

This was precisely the case until recently in the Malay peasantry's position vis-a-vis the government in Malaysia.

The opposing view is that the use of a single language in a linguistically diverse state is dysfunctional. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which claims that language shapes the way we look at the
world, forms the major linguistic backdrop to this view (Fishman, 1980). The extended Whorfian hypothesis, which is currently enjoying a new lease of popularity among socio-linguists, advocates "a multi-lingual and multicultural world in which 'little peoples' and 'little languages' would not only be represented but valued" (Fishman, 1982, p. 32).

A lot of research done on language and cognition has shown that children learn best through the medium of their mother tongue, especially in the single figure years (Sotomayor, 1977). These findings show that a single language for educational instruction in a linguistically plural society could hamper cognitive development.

Amongst the political scientists, Snider (1973) and Enloe (1973) support a diffuse language policy for linguistically divided developing states. They argue that the new states are "artificial creations" and that "ethnic affiliations are much more persistent and pervasive than assumed" (Snider, 1973, p. 83).

The strongest criticism of policies for language diversity in developing countries come from Pool (1972). He cited other researchers to show that,

Language diversity aggravates political sectionalism; hinders inter-group cooperation, national unity, and religion multinational cooperation; impedes political enculturation, political support for the authorities and the regime, and political participation; and holds down governmental effectiveness and political stability. Similarly it is said that language diversity slows economic development, by, for example, braking occupational mobility, reducing the number of people available for mobilization into the modern sector of the economy, decreasing efficiency, and preventing the diffusion of innovative techniques. (p. 214)
Pool's own research shows that linguistic heterogeneity contributes to economic underdevelopment. He used data on the Gross Domestic Product Per Capita plotted against size of the largest language group as a percentage of the population of most of the countries of the world (see Table 1). The data shows that although linguistically homogeneous nations may be either economically developed or underdeveloped, almost all the linguistically heterogeneous nations are underdeveloped (p. 221). He concluded that "a planner who insists on preserving cultural-linguistic pluralism had better be ready to sacrifice economic progress" (p. 225).

Another aspect of the influence of socioeconomic factors in language policy is the power of socioeconomic rather than legal-political conditions to "force" people to use a language of national communication. If a language is perceived as a means to attain better employment and a higher social status for an individual, it is likely to be learned and used. Transversely, a language which is seen as a hindrance to socioeconomic status is likely to gradually drop out of socioeconomic and public usage.

A government language policy which tries to engineer by political means the functional use of a language will, of course, arouse political opposition in a linguistically diverse society. However, if the alternative is ethno-cultural and linguistic cleavage, politicians would be better to opt for a unifying single language of national communication, except in cases where the implementation of such a policy would irreparably antagonize major sections of the society.
Table 1

Gross Domestic Product Per Capita (U.S.$) and Size of Largest Language Community (% of Population), c. 1962

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>GDP Per Capita (U.S.$)</th>
<th>Size of Largest Language Community (% of Population)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (PR)</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In the vast majority of cases "people will learn a language when it is to their socio-economic advantage to do so" (Scotton, 1982, p. 85). It is the language planner's job to persuade people that a national language is to their socioeconomic advantage if he wants to encourage political integration.

In conclusion, the integrative power of a single language for public communication is necessary for the efficient functioning of a
linguistically plural society and is more likely, in the long run, to bring about cultural assimilation and a common national identity than alternative diffuse language policies.

The Comparative Perspective

The majority of national case studies on the role of language in national integration have been conducted by socio-linguists and have thus concentrated on the linguistic aspects of language policy and planning (Cooper, 1982; Cobarrubis & Fishman, 1983; Fishman, 1968; Lamy, 1979; Le Page, 1964; Rubin & Jernudd, 1971). The main contributions to understanding the political implications of language policy and planning have concentrated on the implementation, and to a lesser extent, the selection of a language policy (Das Gupta, 1968; Enloe, 1973; Kelman, cited in Rubin & Jernudd, 1971; M. Roff, 1967; Rustow, 1967).

Fishman (1968, 1972a, 1972b), while arguing for greater diversity in language policy within linguistically plural states, presented the clearest picture of the process of language policy and planning in developing nations. The process involves selection, codification, elaboration, and implementation. Selection requires the primarily political task of choosing what language or languages should have what roles in the new state. Codification and elaboration are linguistic tasks which involve standardizing and expanding the selected language(s) if they are not already established languages of international use. Implementation requires carrying out programs which will ensure the language or languages are used for the
purposes intended.

A useful framework in which to view the different language policies adopted by developing nations is reproduced in Table 2 (adopted from Fishman, 1972a, p. 192).

Fishman identified three groups of developing nations based on the type of decisions they make on language policy and planning. "A-modal nations" have no national "Great Tradition" to refer back to and from which to facilitate the selection of a national identity. They tend to select a single national language from one of the "Languages of Wider Communication" (e.g., English and French) and use it as a tool for political integration. Countries like Nigeria (which has adopted English), the Ivory Coast (which has adopted French), or Indonesia (which has adopted Malay, not the language of the majority Javanese) are examples of these.

"Uni-modal nations" perceive one ethno-cultural "Great Tradition" which must be the focus for national identity. From it a single national language is selected, modernized, and implemented as the prime national communicator. A Language of Wider Communication is usually used transitionally until the revamped native language can take over all its functions. The Philippines, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Pakistan, and to a degree, India and Malaysia exemplify this model.

"Multi-modal nations" recognize several "Great Traditions" as competing for separate recognition. Policy makers need to balance their desire for political integration with the political realities of ethno-cultural diversity and so usually adopt a multi-lingual approach and use a Language of Wider Communication as a compromise.
Table 2

Language Policy: National Languages and Languages of Wider Communication in the Developing Nations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>I. Type A Decisions</th>
<th>II. Type B Decisions</th>
<th>III. Type C Decisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Perceived socio-cultural integration</td>
<td>a. No integrating Great Tradition at the national level</td>
<td>a. One Great Tradition at the national level</td>
<td>a. Several Great Traditions seeking separate socio-political recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Adoption of Language of Wider Communication (LWC)</td>
<td>c. Yes, as permanent, national symbol</td>
<td>c. Often transitionally: for modern functions</td>
<td>c. Yes, as unifying compromise (working language: W)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Language Planning Concerns</td>
<td>d. Minor; exonormative standardization of LWC</td>
<td>d. Modernization of traditional language: H or L?</td>
<td>d. Modernization of several traditional languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bilingualism Goals</td>
<td>e. Local, regional; transitional to LWC</td>
<td>e. National; transitional to indigenous monolingual</td>
<td>e. Regional bilingual (H &amp; L, W &amp; N) &amp; national bilingual (W &amp; N)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Biculturism Goals</td>
<td>f. Transitional to modernity or now integration</td>
<td>f. Traditional plus modern spheres</td>
<td>f. Traditional plus modern spheres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


lingua franca. Singapore, the Cameroon Republic, and the developed nations like Switzerland, Canada, and Belgium represent this model.

Of course many countries fall between categories. Swahili is considered part of a "Great Tradition" by some in East Africa while others view it as a convenient and non-elite lingua franca (see Dloughy, 1974; Scotton, 1982; Whiteley, 1971). The national language of Tanzania is Swahili and of Kenya is English.

Hindi is the national language of India, but determined opposition from non-Hindi native speakers has meant that other native (especially Dravidian) languages and English remain in widespread use (Das Gupta, 1968; Le Page, 1964; Misra, 1982). However, after over 35 years of implementation as the national language Hindi has gradually been spreading due to the societal need for the development of a pan-Indian development medium. . . . Such a role, it has been realized, has not been fulfilled by English and cannot be fulfilled by any language other than Hindi, not because it is the mother tongue of one-third of the population, but because of the role it has played in the society up to this time and is fit to play in future. Nationalism, democratization, the spread of educational facilities, and economic, political developments have all congregated in its favor. (Misra, 1982, p. 157)

Singapore has adopted English as its prime means of communication, although Malay is the national language, and despite having a population which is 70% Chinese. This seemingly incongruous situation reflects the political realities of wanting to avoid being thought of as a "third China" in an anti-Chinese southeast Asia.

The developed world also gives contrasting comparative perspectives on language and national political integration. Whereas the
United States has been largely successful in achieving linguistic assimilation (at least until recently), language and national integration are among the most fundamental issues of Canadian politics.

In Canada the linguistic differences of the English and French have been reinforced by socioeconomic and geographical differences. The French notion of having been "conquered" and "ruled" by the English, and the latter's unwillingness until recently to allow the former access to national economic and political power have made linguistic assimilation extremely unlikely for some time to come. The result is Canada's ongoing experiment with national bilingualism which seems doomed to failure in most of the country because of the lack of socioeconomic advantage to be gained by most Canadians in learning French (Cooper, 1982, p. 15).

The choices of language policy taken by other countries and the problems associated with each are a valuable source of study when trying to understand the role of language policy in Malaysia. However, the literature on the uniquely Malaysian context must also be briefly reviewed.

The Malaysian Environment

Most studies on Malaysian politics take an ethnological and/or pluralist approach (Enloe, 1973; Esman, 1972; Y. L. Lee, 1980; Lent, 1977; Milne & Mauzy, 1980; Nagata, 1975; Ratnam, 1965; Snodgrass, 1980; Van Vorys, 1975). The problems of political integration are seen in terms of ethnicity, culture, language, and religion. The socioeconomic structure is down-played and sometimes not considered
at all (e.g., K. H. Lee, 1980).

Recently a number of other, mostly Marxist, approaches have emerged emphasizing the socioeconomic divisions in Malaysian society and laying less stress on ethno-cultural cleavages (Brennan, 1982; B. N. Chan, 1975; Hussin, 1977; Lim, 1978; Stenson, 1976). While the more doctrinaire Marxist approaches tend to overplay class, especially in terms of class consciousness and systematic and integrated inter-ethnic ruling class exploitation, the case for socioeconomic analysis is growing (Brennan, 1982). Although capitalist socioeconomic divisions have been in existence since the British intervention, it has only been recently that clear intra-ethnic class divisions have manifested themselves among the Malays, such as in the huge Kedah peasant farmers demonstration in 1980 (Far Eastern Economic Review [FEER], 1980).

Most of the commentators on language policy and politics in Malaysia have been in favor of the Malaysian government's policy of promoting gradual integration through the use of Bahasa Malaysia (Bedlington, 1978; Esman, 1972; Hj. Omar, 1979; Milne & Mauzy, 1980; Mohamad, 1970; Ratnam, 1965; M. Roff, 1967; Van Vorys, 1975). The alternatives to using political coercion to ensure the implementation of the national language policy are racial strife and national disaster.

With, one suspects, an eye on Singapore, other commentators view the thrusting of the elaborated language of the Malays on the non-Malays as more likely to cause ethnic strife than prevent it (Enloe, 1973; Y. L. Lee, 1980; Snider, 1973). Snider (1973), taking her cue
from the ethnological approach described earlier in this chapter, is critical of the heavy handed attempts of "guided democracy" to promote "fusion." She recognizes the impracticability of "geographical fission" (separation) in the Singapore tradition because of the complexity of ethnic population distribution. Instead,

under these circumstances, much more attention should be given to the problems of promoting inter-ethnic understanding and respect for ethnic differences, rather than to implementation of policies which increase pressures for socio-political integration and/or assimilation into a Malaysian "nation-state." (p. 89)

The problem with this approach is that it ignores the whole basis for the Malay elite's political support: the successful manipulation of nationalist symbols to maintain the support of the peasantry. Bahasa Malaysia is one of those symbols.

The Marxist interpretations identify three bases for the cleavages in Malaysian society: class, relations with international capitalism, and the historic movement of Chinese and Indian labor to work in the new capitalist sector of the Malayan economy in the 19th century (Brennan, 1982; Lim, 1978). While serving to right the imbalance caused by over concentration on ethno-cultural factors, its weakness lies in almost denying the existence of language as a factor. Neither Lim nor Brennan, for example, mentioned that linguistic differences are a factor in preventing inter-ethnic class unity in Malaysia. The problem is that Marxist analysis in general does not satisfactorily address itself to questions of social and political integration and whether or not language can play a part in it. It prefers to ignore these peripheral issues and concentrate on the
class struggle.

In reality, contemporary Malaysian society is neither simply ethno-culturally nor simply socioeconomically divided; it is a complex mixture of both.
CHAPTER III

THE MALAYSIAN CONTEXT

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part will examine the geographical, historical, and constitutional background of Malaysia. The second part will examine the origin and extent of Malaysia's ethnic diversity.

The Geographical, Historical, and Constitutional Background

Malaysia is located in Southeast Asia close to the Equator between Latitudes 1 and 7 North and Longitudes 100 and 119 East. To Malaysia's north lies Thailand and Indo-China, to the south are Singapore and Indonesia, and to the east are the Philippines (Henderson, 1970, p. 10). Kuala Lumpur is the capital city with a population of approximately one million. Geographically, Malaysia occupies two distinct regions. Peninsular Malaysia, also called West Malaysia (formerly Malaya), extends from the Thai border in the north to Singapore in the south. To the east are the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak which occupy the northern coast of the island of Borneo. These regions are separated by about 469 miles of the South China Sea. Peninsular Malaysia has an area of 50,806 square miles, whereas Sabah and Sarawak occupy 76,775 square miles (Henderson, p. 13). Although the eastern states are much larger in area than the peninsular, the latter has the vast majority of the population and,
most importantly, the political and economic clout.

The population and economic statistics are vital to the understanding of Malaysia's complex political structure. Malaysia is a multiracial country with a population of 14.2 million (Peninsular Malaysia 11.8 million, Sarawak and Sabah 2.4 million) in 1980 (Fourth Malaysia Plan, 1980, p. 215). In terms of geographical distribution, 83.1% resided in Peninsular Malaysia, 7.7% in Sabah, and 9.2% in Sarawak in 1980 (Fourth Malaysia Plan, p. 216). The population of Peninsular Malaysia (or West Malaysia) is higher than Sabah and Sarawak (or East Malaysia) mainly due to the former's greater exposure to commercial rural urban development. Malaysia's population growth rate in 1980 was 2.7% per annum (Fourth Malaysia Plan, p. 217). Based on the 1980 census in Peninsular Malaysia, Malays and other indigenous people constitute 53.9%, Chinese 34.9%, Indians 10.5%, and others 0.7% (Fourth Malaysia Plan, p. 217). The population of Malaysia is largely rural, but the urban percentage is politically and economically significant. In 1980 about 67% lived in rural areas and 35% lived in urban areas (Fourth Malaysia Plan, p. 78). Moreover, urban population growth rates are growing much faster than rural population growth rates. The former grew at 4.4% while the latter only grew at 0.8% in 1976-80 (Fisk & Osman-Rani, 1982, p. 86). The breakdown of population by economic activity is shown in Table 3. Although the percentage working in agriculture is declining, it remains the largest source of economic activity. Table 4 shows the breakdown of population by ethnic group and economic activity. Malays constitute the highest percentage in the
Table 3
Malaysia: Employment Growth by Sector, 1965-1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Mining and Quarrying</th>
<th>Manufacturing</th>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Utilities</th>
<th>Transport, Storage, &amp; Communication</th>
<th>Commerce: Wholesale and retail trade</th>
<th>Finance and insurance</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Producers of government service</th>
<th>Other services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1,350.0</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>217.0</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>101.0</td>
<td>287.0</td>
<td>133.4</td>
<td>463.0</td>
<td>403.9</td>
<td>122.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52.1%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1,786.8</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>289.9</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>133.4</td>
<td>406.7</td>
<td>180.8</td>
<td>526.2</td>
<td>520.4</td>
<td>126.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53.5%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1,915.0</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>448.0</td>
<td>159.6</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>187.9</td>
<td>520.9</td>
<td>207.9</td>
<td>683.8</td>
<td>520.4</td>
<td>163.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>1,972.5</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>587.3</td>
<td>196.5</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>262.8</td>
<td>602.6</td>
<td>207.9</td>
<td>808.9</td>
<td>621.8</td>
<td>187.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.9%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2,066.9</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>803.1</td>
<td>262.8</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>413.6</td>
<td>700.6</td>
<td>193.2</td>
<td>927.8</td>
<td>710.1</td>
<td>217.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2,223.9</td>
<td>93.1</td>
<td>1,368.7</td>
<td>413.6</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>263.4</td>
<td>1,114.6</td>
<td>263.4</td>
<td>1,355.3</td>
<td>1,104.0</td>
<td>344.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>1967/1968</th>
<th>1975</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Of which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. ('000)</td>
<td>All Races</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Agriculture, forestry, hunting, &amp; fishing</td>
<td>500.7</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Agricultural products requiring substantial processing</td>
<td>718.0</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mining, quarrying</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Manufacturing</td>
<td>214.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Construction</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Electricity, gas, water, sanitary services</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Commerce</td>
<td>255.2</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Transport, storage, &amp; communications</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Services</td>
<td>413.0</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Not specified</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,365.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

agricultural sector while Chinese are dominant in the commercial and manufacturing sectors. It is also interesting to note that Indians constitute the majority employed in agriculture producing products which require considerable processing. This reflects their concentration in the commercial plantation sector. The decline in the percentages of Malays and Indians in the sectors they have been traditionally associated with reveals to some degree the success of the government's New Economic Policy, which has as one of its primary aims the restructuring of employment between races to ensure that the ethnic imbalances in economic activity decline and are eventually eliminated.

Malaysia's history dates back to some Malay Hindu kingdoms of which the best known were the Kingdom of Lankasuka and subsequently the 7th Century A.D. Srivijaya Empire. Later the Javanese Majapahit Empire extended its influence over most of Malaya to become perhaps the most powerful kingdom in Southeast Asia. A Majapahit Prince, Parameswara, who was exiled from the Majapahit state of Temasek (modern Singapore), settled with his followers in Malacca and established a new dynasty there. In 1414 Indian Muslims converted Parameswara to the Muslim faith (Bastin, 1966, p. 86). Relatively quickly the majority of Malaya's inhabitants at that time followed his example and became Muslims. To this day almost 100% of the Malay population is Muslim. During his reign, Malacca prospered with its political and trade connections with China, India, and the Islamic World. With trade, the influence of Islam spread to other parts of Southeast Asia.
In 1511, the Portuguese took possession of Malacca and used it as a major port in their empire (Bastin, 1966, p. 86). Portuguese rule ended in 1641 with the victory of the Dutch who occupied Malacca for the next 183 years (Bastin, p. 86). The transfer of Malacca to the British in 1824 marked the end of Dutch influence in the Malay Peninsula.

The British had begun their involvement in the area when they took possession of Penang in 1786 (Allen, 1968, p. 34). From 1874, British representatives negotiated agreements with the Malay states which agreed to accept British protection. In 1895, the states of Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, and Pahang joined to form the Federated Malay States (FMS) (Allen, p. 36). In 1909, Thailand transferred to Britain all rights of suzerainty over the states of Kelantan, Trengganu, Perlis, and Kedah (Allen, p. 40).

British intervention in the Borneo territories began in 1836 when James Brooke began his rule as the first of Sarawak's "White Rajahs" (Bastin, 1966, p. 167). Sabah was brought under British North Borneo (chartered) company control in 1882 (Bastin, p. 167). In 1888, Sarawak and North Borneo became British protectorates and, in 1946, crown colonies (Bastin, p. 168).

Malaya and the Borneo territories were occupied by Japan from 1941 until Japan's surrender in September 1945 (Hanrahan, 1971, p. 4). The Federation of Malaya subsequently became independent on August 31, 1957 (Hanrahan, p. 58).

During the years following the independence of the Federation of Malaya, Sarawak and Sabah underwent considerable constitutional
advances and on September 16, 1963, Sarawak, Sabah, and Singapore merged with the Federation of Malaya to form Malaysia, but Singapore separated from the Federation on August 9, 1965 (Enloe, 1973, p. 38). One of the reasons was due to the Chinese strength in Singapore where the Chinese population far outnumbered the Malay population.

Malaysia follows a form of parliamentary democracy based on universal suffrage. The Head of State is a constitutional monarch elected for a term of 5 years by the Conference of Rulers. The Conference of Rulers consists of the Sultans from each state who elect one of their body to be King. The parliament comprises the King and two Houses: the Dewan Rakyat or The House of Representatives with 154 members who are fully elected and the Dewan Negara or Senate with 68 members who are partly elected and partly appointed. The Cabinet, a council of ministers drawn from the members of Parliament carries out the executive functions of the government. It consists of a Prime Minister and a number of Cabinet Ministers. Each of the states in Malaysia has its own Ruler or Governor and an executive assembly from which the Menteri Besar or Chief Minister is appointed (Information Malaysia, 1980-1981, p. 98).

The Extent of Malaysia's Ethnic Diversity

Malaysia is a multiracial country with various customs, languages, and cultures. In Peninsular Malaysia the population is made up of Malays, Chinese, Indians, and other ethnic groups. In East Malaysia the main groups are non-Malay Austronesians and Chinese immigrants with a few Malay coastal dwellers. The Ibans (Sea Dayaks)
are the biggest group in Sarawak while Kadazans and Dusuns are the majority in Sabah. These many races have made Malaysia an ethnically pluralistic society. Pluralism exists in modern societies of heterogeneous organization where language, ethnic groups, socioeconomic class, and cultural interests are diversified. In the development process ethno-cultural diversity can be a building block or a potential stumbling block on the road to a stable society. However, when one community is dominant, ethnicity has been the cornerstone of nationalism (Enloe, 1973, p. 3). This has been the case of the Malays in Malaysia.

To have any form of development, or any policy implementation in Malaysia, is to affect the nature and culture of those who direct development and those to be developed (Wilson, 1967, p. v). Understanding the development in terms of diverse people is very important.

Most of the ethnic groups of Peninsular Malaysia are different not just in appearance, religion, and diet, but also in economic function.

**Aborigines**

The aborigines were the first to settle in Peninsular Malaysia. The three groups of the aborigines that exist are Negritos, Senoi, and Jakuns.

The Negritos are found in the northern part of the peninsula. Usually they are hunters and gatherers who depend primarily on the jungle and rivers for their food. Sometimes they are known as Semang
and Pangan. Most of them live in shelters made from sticks and leaves.

The Senoi are also known as the Sakai and are one of the largest aboriginal groups. They live on the mountains and foothills of the central peninsula. They are hunters and food gatherers, like the Negritos, but they also practice shifting cultivation for rice and millet.

The Jakuns, or Proto-Malays, settled in the southern lowlands of the peninsula. They also practiced shifting cultivation. Many of them have been assimilated into Malay groups.

These three aborigine tribes are akin to the Mongoloid-Indonesian, Australoid, and Melanesoid. Most of them still live in tribes and family groups, although many have settled in villages and towns. Their languages vary somewhat from group to group and contain unique words, but mainly can be classified as archaic Malay. There are now about 50,000 aborigines in Peninsular Malaysia (Information Malaysia, 1980-1981, p. 18).

Malays

The ancestors of the Malays came from Yunan in South China to Sumatra and Java around 2000 B.C. Around 1500 B.C., they started to settle in Peninsular Malaysia (Awang, 1983, p. 39). They displaced the sparse population of the aboriginal people. Most of them settled in the extreme north and south of the peninsula. Nowadays in the northern peninsula, most of the Malays are poor fishermen and rice planters, but as one proceeds southwards, there is an increase in
wealth. Most Malays live in rural areas in villages. However, under the government's present policy of restructuring society, more Malays are involved in business and industry and more now live in the urban areas. The Malays' staple food is rice, and pig is forbidden to be eaten because of their Islamic religion. The slaughtering of animals for food must follow Islamic rites.

Malays have traditionally been associated with the land and today remain predominantly rural (65.2% in 1980) (Fourth Malaysia Plan, 1980, p. 56). About one-half the rural Malay population is involved in some aspect of commercial agriculture (mainly on small holdings) and the other half are mainly rice growing peasantry or fishermen. About two-thirds of the urban Malays are involved in services (mainly government). The remainder are mostly urban proletariat (see Table 5).

Malays are poorer per capita on average than Chinese and Indians. Mean household income for Malays was Malaysian $309 per month compared to M$459 per month national average in 1979 (see Table 6) (Fourth Malaysia Plan, 1980, p. 56).

The language used by the Malays varies. In the rural areas the peasantry use one of a number of Malay dialects while the educated Malay elites increasingly use the codified and elaborated form of Malay which is the national language, Bahasa Malaysia. The Malays thus share a common basic culture, language, and religion. In short, they are a united cultural group.
Table 5
Peninsular Malaysia: Employment by Occupation and Race, 1970, 1975, and 1980

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Malay ('000)</th>
<th>Malay (%)</th>
<th>Chinese ('000)</th>
<th>Chinese (%)</th>
<th>Indian ('000)</th>
<th>Indian (%)</th>
<th>Others ('000)</th>
<th>Others (%)</th>
<th>Total ('000)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1970</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and technical</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>136.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and managerial</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical and related workers</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>142.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and related workers</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>159.6</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>258.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service workers</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>225.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural workers</td>
<td>923.5</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>221.3</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>123.7</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1,278.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production, transport and other workers</td>
<td>266.0</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>434.5</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>777.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,477.6</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>1,043.6</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>301.4</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2,850.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1975</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and technical</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>189.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and managerial</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical and related workers</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>192.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and related workers</td>
<td>85.9</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>227.2</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>345.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service workers</td>
<td>145.7</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>123.3</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>311.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural workers</td>
<td>998.1</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>257.8</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>147.6</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1,416.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production, transport and other workers</td>
<td>434.5</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>518.0</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>112.2</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1,070.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,855.4</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>1,302.6</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>377.5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>3,567.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1980</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>('000)</td>
<td>('000)</td>
<td>('000)</td>
<td>('000)</td>
<td>('000)</td>
<td>('000)</td>
<td>('000)</td>
<td>('000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and technical</td>
<td>118.2</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>236.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and managerial</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical and related workers</td>
<td>169.4</td>
<td>110.8</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>306.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and related workers</td>
<td>99.8</td>
<td>299.0</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>432.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service workers</td>
<td>168.4</td>
<td>140.1</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>351.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural workers</td>
<td>998.9</td>
<td>289.9</td>
<td>175.4</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>1,474.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production, transport and other workers</td>
<td>640.6</td>
<td>601.9</td>
<td>160.9</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>1,412.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,211.5</td>
<td>1,558.0</td>
<td>460.7</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>4,264.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This category includes all professionals, ranging from lawyers and engineers to nurses and teachers, in public as well as private sectors.

Table 6
Peninsular Malaysia: Mean and Median Incomes, 1970-79
($ per household per month)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In constant 1970 prices</th>
<th>In current prices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malay mean</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malay median</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese mean</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese median</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian mean</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian median</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others mean</td>
<td>813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others median</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All mean</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All median</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban mean</td>
<td>428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban median</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural mean</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural median</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chinese

The early 15th century marked the first contact between Peninsular Malaysia and China. During this period, the Chinese who ventured to Malaya were mostly small scale traders. The major Chinese influx was during British rule in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Henderson, 1970, p. 35). There were a lot of opportunities for development which required labor and service and the Chinese were ready and willing to provide the British with the needed workers. The tin mining industry in particular attracted Chinese labor. Most of them came from the southern provinces of China.

They are concentrated on the west coast of the peninsula, especially in towns and industrial areas. The majority of them are local-born and have made Malaysia their permanent home. However, prior to World War II most considered Malaya only as a temporary shelter, to prosper in before returning with their fortune to China. They usually speak a variety of dialects. Some of these are: Hakka, Cantonese, Hokkein, Teochew, Mandarin, and Hainanese.

The Chinese are predominantly urban (53.8% in 1980) (Fourth Malaysia Plan, 1980, p. 55). The urban Chinese are mainly involved in service industries, commerce, and manufacturing. Most rural Chinese are involved in commercial agricultural and fishing. The Chinese share of the mean national income is proportionately high, although it has decreased from 149% of the national average in 1970 to 144% in 1979 (Fourth Malaysia Plan, p. 55).
Due to their different dialect groups and social aggregates, the term "Chinese" tends to hide the considerable cultural and social heterogeneity of the Chinese population in Malaysia.

**Indians**

The Indian migration to Peninsular Malaysia began with the coming of Islam to Malaysia from India, and was mainly based on trade. However, the main migration was during British rule of the peninsula. It started on a small scale for public works such as construction of roads and railways. Then the migration became a flood with the rubber boom after 1905 (Henderson, 1970, p. 39). The increasing development of rubber estates had increased the demand for estate labor, which Malays were reluctant to fill.

Most of the Indians originated from the southern part of India, and they were mainly Tamils. There were also Sikhs, who came from the north of India, and a significant number of Muslim Indians. Their languages include Tamil, Punjabi, Hindi, Malayalam, and Telegu.

Hinduism is the main religion of the Indians, but some are Muslims and Christians. Rice is their staple food, and the Hindus do not eat beef since it is against their religious beliefs.

In 1980, 58% of the Indian population was rural. Almost all the rural Indians are agricultural laborers on commercial agricultural plantations. A high percentage of urban Indians are professionals. Other urban Indians are involved in transportation and commerce (see Table 5). The Indian share of the national income per capita is close to the national per capita average (see Table 6).
Other Races

Other ethnic groups that live in West Malaysia are Eurasians, Europeans, Siamese, Arabs, and Indonesians. They comprise less than 2% of the population (Fourth Malaysia Plan, 1980, p. 58). The Eurasians are those with Portuguese or Dutch blood. Most of them have intermarried with the Indians and Chinese. Their religion is Catholicism. The Europeans in Malaysia largely work in large commercial agricultural or industrial enterprises. They enjoy mean incomes far above the national average.

In the northern part of Peninsular Malaysia there are a number of Siamese residents. Most of them migrated from Thailand. Some Arabs came long ago as traders and have made Malaysia their home. An indeterminate number of Indonesians migrated to Malaysia to work as farmers. Presently Indonesians are being assimilated into the Malay community. Both the Arabs and the Indonesians are Muslims and thus easily assimilate with the Malays.

In East Malaysia the ethnic composition is very different from West Malaysia. Although the Chinese population remains at about one-third of the total, the Malays constitute about one-sixth and the Indians less than 1% of the population of the two states combined. Native Austronesian groups comprise over half the population. These ethnic groups include the Ibans, Bidayuhs, Melanaus, Kayans, Kenyahs, Kelabits, and Punans in Sarawak and the Kadazans, Bajaus, Muruts, and Dusuns in Sabah. (Table 7 shows the comparative population statistics for East and West Malaysia [The Europa Yearbook, 1983, p. 895].)
Table 7  
Principal Race  
(Estimated as at December 31, 1979)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Peninsular Malaysia</th>
<th>Sabah(^a)</th>
<th>Sarawak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>3,876,532</td>
<td>178,469</td>
<td>383,504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malays</td>
<td>6,050,361</td>
<td>49,937</td>
<td>244,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians and Pakistanis</td>
<td>1,158,680</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Dyak</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>110,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malanau</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>66,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadazan</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>238,046</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bajau</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>109,108</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murut</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>39,282</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibans</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>354,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other indigenous</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>176,777</td>
<td>64,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>83,004</td>
<td>189,925</td>
<td>12,058</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)1978 figures.


Most of the East Malaysian indigenous people are rural shifting cultivators, although many are getting services-based employment under the government's New Economic Policy. They are predominantly Christian but a few have been converted to Islam. In the more remote areas many have remained animist.
This chapter has showed the extent to which Malaysia is ethni-
cally diverse. The basic ethnic divisions are reinforced by reli-
gious and cultural differences. Most importantly, these divisions
are further compounded by differences in economic function, which
have traditionally mapped all-too-neatly onto the ethno-cultural
divisions. The unequal development between the modern capitalist
sector using imported British capital and imported Chinese and Indian
labor on the one hand, and the traditional feudal Malay sector on the
other, set the background to the diversity. The British belief that
the immigrant Chinese and Indians would not remain in Malaya and
their "pro-Malay" policy (which gave Malays special positions in the
civil service and reserved Malay land for sale to Malays only) com-
pounded the separation of the races. This was reflected in the
colonial education system and, later, in the political system which
developed with the coming of independence. It is the political
system that is discussed in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER IV

CULTURAL PLURALISM IN MALAYSIAN POLITICS

This chapter examines the pluralism existing in Malaysia and her political structure.

Pluralism

Pluralism is "the doctrine that governmental authority within a community should be distributed among various functional groups and neither monopolized nor shared by a sovereign power in the State" (A. Smith, 1983, p. 45).

Pluralism involves complexity, with multiple causation factors and a large number of interactions and inputs to the political process (McFarland, 1969, p. 19). Lijphart (1977) saw that the subdivisions of pluralist society can go in different, even conflicting, directions and so disperse power and limit the authority of the rulership (p. 12). Dahl (1982) saw pluralism as "polyarchy," the multiplicity of rulers. He said that foreign dominance of a polity is unfavorable. He also said that pluralism refers to organizational pluralism, that is, in the existence of a plurality of relatively autonomous (independent) organizations (subsystems) within the domain of a state (p. 5).

Pluralism can be classified into political pluralism, social pluralism, and cultural pluralism. "Political pluralism describes a society in which power is widely distributed among numerous groups
arrayed in shifting patterns of conflict, competition, and cooperation with one another" (Plano & Riggs, 1973, p. 3). Pluralism involves sharing power in the government and other social institutions. Democracy is a precondition for political pluralism.

Social pluralism usually emphasizes the role of voluntary groups in an industrial society. It is sometimes contrasted with cultural pluralism in which "natural" groupings are based on race, language, caste, or religion. Social pluralism is concerned with the clash of group interests within an overall value consensus, whereas cultural pluralism is a product of basic value cleavages (Plano & Riggs, 1973, p. 59).

Cultural pluralism can be described as "cultural democracy." It guarantees the rights of ethnic groups in a democratic society to maintain their communal identity and subcultural values (Gordon, 1964, p. 262). Cultural pluralism emphasizes the existence of distinct cultures in a political system—having as groups, distinct religions, ethical systems, authority systems, usages in rearing children, languages, gestural systems, and ways of giving accounts of and valuing satisfactory or unsatisfactory human performance.

The Historical Origins of Cultural Pluralism in Malaysia

The world system approach may be used in locating the origins of ethnic contacts for international movement of capital and labor across states. Here, social and economic forces determine the movement of capital and labor under different periods. Under different
periods, different forms of ethnic relations emerge. These include different ideologies, too.

During the pre-Colonial period (before 1850), the original settlers were the aborigines and the Malays. It was in the late 14th century that Malaya was put on the international map. This was mainly due to its trading role. Most economic activities, however, were undertaken by the immigrants. Because of this there were contacts between Chinese merchants and the Malay rulers. The subsequent political influence was in the form of alliances with local rulers rather than direct conquest. The Europeans, too, were interested in Malaya because of spices. This interest led to the exodus of most of the Chinese merchants and the subsequent European control of the spice trade.

The British demand for spices had led to the establishment of commercial agricultural plantations and their demand for tin led to a massive influx of Chinese capital and labor. The necessity for labor on the plantations grew rapidly after rubber replaced spices as the chief agricultural product. Meanwhile, the Malays, unwilling by and large to join the growing mining and agricultural proletariats, remained in the feudal sector in the padi fields. This situation became accentuated with formal British control of Malaya (1874-1957) and the establishment of Malay land reservations which protected Malay rights to the land. Table 8 shows the ethnic composition of the labor force in the various sectors in 1931 (Hui, 1980, p. 137).

Most of the Indians and the Chinese at first came to Malaya to be birds of passage, making a little money and returning to enjoy it
in their own homelands. Socioeconomic and political conditions in India and China encouraged many to settle down and make Malaya their permanent home. A similar influx of Chinese interested in trade rather than tin occurred in Sarawak and Sabah. In this way the percentage of "immigrants" in the population increased until the British halted all immigration, fearing that the Malays would become a dispossessed minority in their own country. The roughly equal balance between "natives" and immigrants was already set, however, and Malaya and Sarawak and Sabah were destined to learn to live with ethno-cultural diversity.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Composition of Labor Force in the Federated Malay States in 1931 in the Estate, Mining, and Padi Sectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Malaya gained political independence on August 31, 1957. Power was smoothly transferred from the colonial administration to the Malay, largely aristocratic, bureaucratic, and land-owning elite who were in alliance with Chinese and Indian commercial, bureaucratic, and professional elites (Brennan, 1982, pp. 193-198). The economy was and remains largely in the hands of foreign investors and their subordinate partners, the non-Malays. Power and poverty were contrasted to a degree which was bound to produce instability.

The socioeconomic contradictions between the Malays and the non-Malays became more apparent after the British departure when the local elites took over political power.

The ethno-cultural and socioeconomic diversity of Malaysia has created cleavages and conflicts in the society. Moreover, the nature of the Malaysian economy and its position relative to foreign capital has exacerbated the already serious divisions. As the Malaysia economy has expanded, disparities in power, wealth, mobility, and cosmopolitanism have intensified within and between ethno-cultural groups.

The problems of cultural pluralism in Malaysia are socio-economically grounded, but manifest themselves in politics, religion, and other cultural phenomena. Most notable amongst these, for our purposes, is language.

Most of the immigrants who came during the pre-Colonial and Colonial period took part in the modern capitalist sector of the economy, which was developing fast. These immigrants were the Chinese and the Indians. They brought along their customs,
religions, and languages which were very different from those of the local Malays. Other immigrants came in from Sumatra and Java. However, because they had similar customs and languages and the same religion as the local Malays, they assimilated.

During the early Colonial period, there were conflicts over mining rights and over the succession of rulers which were mainly tied to commercial and economic interests. There was a struggle for the control of the mines. It was between the Chinese miners and merchants and the Malay aristocracy. Violence frequently broke out; and because there was no properly administered police force, it could not be controlled. The British, at that time, had only "advisors" in the Malay states.

The local Malay authorities were unable to deal with the social and economic stresses and invited the British in to preserve their positions. In return the British gained a colony which turned out to be very profitable. Hui (1980) commented on the full-scale British intervention: "Capital cannot profitably exploit resources under conditions of political instability. Pax Britannica was therefore a precondition for the further penetration of British capital into Malaya" (p. 136).

Political activity prior to World War II was largely limited to competing petitions from rival ethnic elites to the British administrators. These petitions were not for independence but to promote or safeguard one ethnic group's position vis-a-vis the others. The dominance of the "pro-Malay" section amongst the British ensured rights for the Malays. These "special rights" included: the rights
of Malays to ownership of most of the land; Malay dominance of the
Civil Service, police, and army; guarantees that there would be no
attempts to convert Malays to religions other than Islam; and guaran-
tees of the rights of the Malay ruling aristocracy (Hui, 1980, p.
140). Moreover, the British halted non-Malay immigration in 1938 to
prevent non-Malays outnumbering Malays (Hui, p. 141).

During the Japanese occupation (1942-1945), the Chinese were
brutalized by the Japanese. As a result many Chinese joined the
Malayan Communist Party to fight against the Japanese and any people
who collaborated with the Japanese invaders. The Malayan Communist
Party was also a threat to the British. Because of the threat, after
World War II, the British focused on the communists rather than
domestic problems.

The Japanese actively encouraged Malay-Indonesian and Indian
nationalism among the Malays and Indians during the occupation. They
achieved limited success due to their heavy-handed actions. However,
the Japanese occupation brought about political changes. Firstly,
the image of British invincibility was smashed. Secondly, many
Chinese joined the Malayan Communist Party. Thirdly, many working
class Malays of all ethnic groups became radicalized and unionized,
especially among the Indian plantation workers (Stenson, 1970,
p. 36).

The British attempted to centralize and modernize politics when
they returned after World War II. They proposed a Malayan Union
which would abolish the position of the Malay rulers (who had been
collaborating with the Japanese) and grant citizenship and equal
rights to all people domiciled in Malaya. Strong protest from Malays forced a return to the "pro-Malay" policy and the Federation of Malaya agreement in 1948.

The politically decisive factor in the period after 1945 was that the Malays "were . . . politically aroused and united to an unprecedented degree, whereas Chinese and Indians were divided by class as well as ethnic, linguistic, and political divisions" (Stenson, 1975, p. 47).

The clearest illustration of Malay ethnic unity compared to Chinese class divisions was the composition of the Malayan Communist Party at the time: almost all were Chinese or Indians. There was an outbreak of communist insurgency under British rule in 1948 which resulted in "the Emergency" that lasted until 1960 (Hanrahan, 1971, p. 3). Before World War II the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) was not a major force in local politics. The MCP declared its full support for the allies during the Japanese occupation of Malaya. The British trained some squads of the communists to destroy the Japanese. Later the MCP became a threat to the British. Consequently, the majority of the communist military arm was disbanded. However, the MCP was not totally destroyed (Hanrahan, p. 84).

The Political Manifestations of Socioeconomic and Ethno-Cultural Diversity

The dominant factors influencing Malaysia's political structure are those of race, class, religion, and culture.
From Independence to May 13, 1969

The three major ethnic group elites formed a political alliance in the early 1950s through their communal parties: the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA), and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC). UMNO had been founded in 1946 by Dato' Onn bin Jaafar (Information Malaysia, 1980-1981, p. 18). It was first formed to fight against the creation of the Malayan Union and to spearhead the struggle for independence. Later it became the dominant party in Malaysian politics.

The MCA was also founded in 1946. It was first a welfare organization and later assumed a political role in the early 1950s when it teamed up with UMNO (Information Malaysia, 1980-1981, p. 18).

The MIC was founded in 1946. Its aims were to protect the interests of the Indians and especially to get rid of the "plantation laborer" stereotype. In 1954 MIC joined the MCA and UMNO to form the Alliance (Information Malaysia, 1980-1981, p. 18).

This Alliance Party, composed of the three elements above, was formed on a tacit agreement which had been enshrined in the independence constitution of 1957.

In broad terms it guaranteed Malay political and administrative predominance, with special assistance to promote Malay education and economic uplift, while guaranteeing citizenship rights and freedom from interference for non-Malay commerce, culture and individuals. (Stenson, 1976, p. 47).

The Alliance was registered as a political party only in 1958.

As time passed, the situation changed. The non-Malays demanded more than a symbolic political role, whereas the Malays wanted to
participate more in the modern sector of the economy. The competition between the ethnic segments of the ruling elite manifested itself at lower levels of the socioeconomic structure in terms of communal conflict. The elite-manipulated communal rivalries were reinforced by socioeconomic problems, notably huge disparities in wealth and growing unemployment and underemployment.

The increase in communal tensions caused an outbreak of violence after the May 10, 1969, election (Tiek, 1971, p. 17). On May 13, 1969, bloody racial rioting occurred (Tiek, p. 17). There were many reasons for the rioting. Ethnic tensions between Malays and non-Malays were increasing. Then the separation of Singapore, with its Chinese majority, from Malaysia in 1965 heightened tension (Tiek, p. 32). "Positive Discrimination" favoring the Malays upset the non-Malays and yet the Malays felt underprivileged because they were largely employed in subsistence agriculture, whereas the non-Malays controlled most of the cash economy and urban employment. There were also personal factors and differences in political styles. The MCA was losing the support of the Chinese community; and as a result, UMNO felt it was being let down by its Alliance partners. Moreover, the main opposition parties, the Pan Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) and the Democratic Action Party (DAP), were gaining support.

PAS began as a religious section of UMNO but separated in the early 1950s (Information Malaysia, 1980-1981). The D'P was an offshoot of Singapore's ruling People's Action Party. It was and still is the strongest non-Malay opposition party and a contender for the MCA's Chinese votes. These opposition parties had all gained ground
in their election against UMNO and the MCA.

Supporters of the opposition parties (mainly Chinese) held a
victory procession in the streets of Kuala Lumpur. Malay mobs
attacked the Chinese, Chinese gangs counterattacked, and the violence
spread. Police and army did not prevent the Malay attacks and, on
occasion, attacked Chinese themselves. Though the violence was only
in Kuala Lumpur, 2 days later a nationwide state of emergency was
declared. The country was ruled by the National Operations Council
(NOC) for the following 21 months. In February 1971, Parliamentary
rule was restored to the surprise of many foreign observers (Tiek,
1971, p. 23).

This 1969 incident also led to the retirement of the Prime
Minister, Tungku Abdul Rahman, in 1970 (Tiek, 1971, p. 52). His
place was taken by Tun Abdul Razak.

After 1969

The new government was determined to give the state a much
greater role in molding Malaysian society. It formulated various
policies to achieve national unity and the economic and social de­
velopment of the country. Some of these were: "Rukunegara," the
formation of the National Front Party, and the New Economic Policy,
as well as using Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of national educa­
tional instruction and the prime means of public communication in the
country. Although we are primarily concerned with the last policy,
the first three are directly linked to its formulation and imple­
mentation.
"Rukunegara"

With the race riots of 1969, the political and economic outlook of Malaysia looked grim. In order to bring back confidence in the people for the government, it formed the "Rukunegara." It reiterated Malaysia's commitment to achieving a greater unity of all her peoples, to maintaining a democratic way of life, to creating a just society in which the wealth of the nation would be equitably shared, to ensuring a liberal approach to her rich and diverse cultural traditions, and to building a progressive society that will be oriented to modern science and technology (Information Malaysia, 1980-1981). Following this there were five principles for national unity. These are belief in God, loyalty to the King and country, upholding the Constitution, rule of the law, and good behavior and morality. Thus, "Rukunegara" was to bind the people together where "rukun" is the principle or basis and "negara" is nation (Information Malaysia, p. 40).

National Front Coalition

The six bases of the National Front are: national unity, national security, the economy, foreign policy, religion, and social services (Mauzy, 1978, p. 170).

The National Front, which is known as the Barisan Nasional in Bahasa Malaysia, was registered on June 1, 1974. The government tried to solve the problems of "sides" which usually occurred in elections with competing parties. In order to have political unity
and economic stability the National Front combined 11 political parties under its banner. It is a multiracial coalition. The component parties are UMNO, MCA, MIC, Sarawak United Peoples' Party (SUPP), Partai Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu (PPBB), Sarawak National Party (SNAP), United Sabah National Organization (USNO), Berjaya, Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia, Peoples' Progressive Party (PPP), and Berjasa.

SUPP was formed in the early 1960s (Information Malaysia, 1980-1981, p. 41). Their supporters were mainly native and Chinese Sarawakians. The PPBB is a dominant party in Sarawak and it is a merger of two parties: the Iban-based Partai Pesaka and the Muslim-based Partai Bumiputra. SNAP, another Sarawakian Dayak-based party, was co-opted into joining the National Front (NF) in 1971 (Information Malaysia, p. 42). USNO and Berjaya are the dominant members of the Sabah National Front. Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia joined the NF after winning in Penang in the 1969 general election (Information Malaysia, p. 42). PPP joined the NF in the early 1970s (Information Malaysia, p. 42). This party is concentrated in Perak State. Lastly, there is Berjasa which was formed by PAS dissidents in the 1960s (Information Malaysia, p. 42). This leaves the legal opposition parties which are the DAP (Democratic Action Party), PAS (Islamic Party), and some fragmentary socialist parties.

The DAP, although noncommunal in policy, has become overwhelmingly non-Malay in membership. It opposes the National Front's authoritarian dictates and its ethnic-based policies. PAS is an Islamic fundamentalist party and is mainly based on the Malay
peasantry in the north and east of Peninsular Malaysia. It advocates an Islamic state and totally disregards the rights of the non-Muslims in Malaysia. The socialist parties have, on occasion, united into a Socialist Front. These parties have some intellectual and labor union support and recently have challenged both UMNO and PAS for Malay votes on the east coast of the peninsula. However, they do not represent a serious threat to the ruling elite.

**New Economic Policy (NEP), 1971**

The overriding goal of the NEP is the promotion of national unity. It has two subgoals. These are the eradication of poverty irrespective of race, and the restructuring of Malaysian society in such manner that economic functions would ultimately not be identified with race or ethnic groups (*Fourth Malaysia Plan*, 1980, p. 7).

The NEP helps to raise Bumiputra (indigenous Malaysians, mainly Malays) income and status by establishing job quotas and to raise Bumiputra ownership of incorporated companies from a fraction to 30% by 1990 (*"Booming Malaysia,"* 1981, p. 67). The requirement for doing business is to have Malay partners and shareholders. The Malays should have their fair share, and that share should come from growth.

In response to the NEP there were complaints from the non-Malays about how special assistance was being provided to the Malays. The non-Malays stated that they were in the position of Peter being robbed to pay Paul (*Kamm, 1972, p. 4*). Nevertheless, the present Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, stated that the NEP was made on behalf of the Malays and was based on their needs. Mahathir
diagnosed the weakness of the Malays in the modern sector as resulting from heredity, lack of education, adverse legislation, and the severe competition from non-Malays. He also stated that people usually go beyond the formal insistence on "Malay Privileges" but sometimes take little account of the problem of enforcement. For example, "can non-Malay shopkeepers be prevented from competing too keenly with Malays by regulations prohibiting them from bargaining or giving credit?" "How could such regulations be enforced?" (Mohamad, 1970, p. 117).

Recent Political Developments

Whereas ethno-cultural cleavages were of prime concern to the government in the aftermath of the May 1969 riots, socioeconomic divisions are increasingly the focus of attention. These divisions are most noticeable between the Malay aristocratic and bureaucratic elites in alliance with the non-Malay capitalists on one side and the Malay peasantry on the other.

The growing and ostentatious disparity between the Malay elites (the traditional aristocracy and the new bureaucrats) and the peasantry is illustrated by both economic figures ("Malaysia: Trouble in Paradise," 1983, p. 295) and displays of power and privilege.

The frustrations of the Malay peasantry have been largely channeled, in the all-too-common tradition of rural ignorance, into millenarian religious sentiments which are expressed in the Malaysian context as Islamic fundamentalism. Thus, there has been a considerable growth among the rural masses of support for some form of pure
Islamic state. This has been expressed through various political channels. The main Islamic fundamentalist party (PAS) and its breakaway groups as opposition parties demand immediate and full Islamization and claim the government is un-Islamic, with the former stressing the Iranian model more than the latter. Within the National Front, fundamentalists in Berjasa and, especially, UMNO are attempting to influence the government to implement Islamic policies, and with some considerable success. In 1983, for example, Malaysian Muslims were banned from working in or even entering the Genting Highlands Casino; an Islamic University was set up in Kuala Lumpur; an Islamic Bank was opened in Kuala Lumpur; and Islamic dress codes restricting all Malaysians were implemented in many federal and state controlled organizations, such as institutions of higher education ("Malaysia: Islam Sharpens the Knife Edge" 1980, p. 25; "Malaysia: Trouble in Paradise," 1983, p. 295).

Meanwhile Parti Socialis Raakyat Malaysia (FSRM), a socialist party, is attempting to promote the connection between socialist and Islamic internationalism and social welfare policies. The MCP has not been above tapping this socioeconomically induced fundamentalist revival. Its Islamic Front organization has been so successful that now, for the first time in the history of MCP, more Malays than Chinese are joining the party.

In short, the Islamic fundamentalist revival has challenged the view of most scholars of Malaysian politics, that the basic divisions in the society are ethno-cultural (e.g., Esman, 1972; Van Vorys, 1975) and has highlighted the growing conflict between the rural
Malay masses with the recently urbanized and rapidly growing Malay proletariat and the Malay-dominated bureaucratic and Chinese-dominated commercial elites.
CHAPTER V

BAHASA MALAYSIA AS A UNIFYING FORCE

This chapter examines the role of language policy and planning in nation-building. It studies the politics of the selection of a national language, the problems of standardizing and implementing the language, and evaluates the effect of having a national language in Malaysia. It argues that there were linguistic historical and, particularly, political reasons for selecting Bahasa Malaysia as the prime language of national communication. Finally, it shows how the national language policy has already achieved the objectives it set out to attain. It has maintained the unity of the Malays across class lines to a large degree and has greatly contributed towards integrating the non-Malays into the Malay dominated educational and political system.

Language is able to shape the attitudes of individuals and groups (Fishman, 1980). Different languages will shape differently the attitudes of different speakers in a linguistically diverse country like Malaysia. The role of Bahasa Malaysia as a process of socialization of the non-Malays into Malaysian society is comprehensive. The process includes language as a communication vehicle between the races, language usage in the establishment of a relationship and for solidarity, language as a medium of instruction, and language use in the coordination of the activities of the state.
The Role of National Language in Malaysia

The role of language as an instrument of national unity and nation-building is greatly emphasized in Malaysia officially as a tool for ethno-cultural integration and unofficially as a tool for Malay political unity.

During the Colonial period, the British government believed that language should be utilized as an instrument to foster British political and economic interests. Thereby, two types of differentiation were formed. These were status differentiation and social differentiation. Under status differentiation, the English language was used by the Malay aristocracy and the Malay language was used by the peasantry. On the other hand, social differentiation is where vernacular media or languages were used in Chinese and Tamil schools. Therefore, social and cultural pluralism became institutionalized in education policy and practice. Instruction in the medium of the vernacular was associated with cultural objectives, while instruction in the medium of English aimed at political, economic, and cultural goals. The effect was that groups educated in the vernacular tended to come closer together as communities sharing a common culture; a common language; and eventually, common political attitudes and aspirations. The British were only interested in providing a Western education for the elite Malays so that they could perform administrative duties. There was no effort to formulate a national education policy. The non-Malays had to provide their own education in the vernacular, while the majority of the Malays were educated minimally,
if at all, in religious Malay-medium schools.

Efforts were made as early as 1956 to establish national education policies with the aim of uniting the various people through the school system (Education in Malaysia, 1980, 1981, p. 3). Bahasa Malaysia was gradually to replace English as the main medium of instruction in order to "nationalize" the education system. Nationalism in this context was an instrument to reduce the ethnocultural conflicts and promote Malay unity in Malaysia. One must also recognize that language is a form of human capital and education is an investment. Language requires the use of resources that are valuable in society. Those who have a second language naturally are at an advantage and have a broader base for communication. Languages are not all alike but they are all certainly a means of communication. Before proceeding to investigate the reasons for the selection of Bahasa Malaysia as the national language and the medium of educational instruction, we must look at educational development in Malaysia.

Educational Development

Educational development can be divided into pre-British, pre-World War II, pre-Independence, and post-Independence.

Pre-British Period

During this period the educational system was nonformal and emphasized Quranic teachings, good behavior, and morality. This system also provided some rudiments in handicrafts, and
apprenticeships in agriculture, fishing, and hunting. At the more formal level, there was the religious system of education known as the "pondok" (hut) school established by the local "ulamak" (Islamic scholar) (Education in Malaysia 1980, 1981, p. 2). The religious school still exists in a more organized manner in contemporary Malaysia.

**Pre-World War II Period**

This has had the most impact on the present system of education. Undoubtedly the current system of education is basically similar to the British kind of education. The British introduced the system in the 19th century for the Malay aristocracy. Education in Malay was provided by the British government at the elementary level. In the Malay Peninsular formal education in the Malay language began in 1821 at a branch school of the Penang Free School (Education in Malaysia 1980, 1981, p. 2). These early schools had strong religious Quranic orientations. These Malay schools were assisted by the East India Company. Later they were completely taken over by the state government and the financial aid was provided for by the British government. The objectives of education, then, were to provide the basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Thus, the education provided had a low social and economic value.

Chinese education had its root in Singapore in 1829 (Education in Malaysia 1980, 1981, p. 3). The Chinese pupils in the Chinese-medium schools were taught to read and write and to use the abacus. The curriculum was China-oriented and textbooks and teachers were
brought from China. At this point, Chinese education in Malaya was very much influenced by political development in China. To overcome this situation, the British government introduced laws in the 1920s to control the activities of the schools.

The development of Tamil education was partly contributed to by Christian missionary groups who established schools in areas with a high Tamil population. The education provided by the Tamil-medium schools also had relatively low social and economic value in the colonial state. Most of the teachers in the Tamil schools were recruited from India.

English education was first introduced in Malaya in 1816 (Education in Malaysia 1980, 1981, p. 3). Christian missionaries also helped in establishing English schools. The first government English school was built in Kuala Lumpur in 1890 (Education in Malaysia 1980, p. 3). Three English schools were established mainly for the urban population. Education in these schools was based on a general curriculum, with the aim of producing junior administrative officers to support the British administration.

Pre-Independence Period

After the Japanese occupation, several committees such as the Barnes Committee in 1950 and the Fenn-Wu Committee in 1951 were established to cope with the social changes and to speed up the process of achieving self-government. As an outcome of these committees, the Education Ordinance in 1952 was passed but did not, however, produce the desired changes. Teacher training colleges were
temporarily set up in England to train Malayan teachers. Locally, teacher training colleges were also established in Penang, Kuala Lumpur, and Johore Baharu.

In 1955, the Woodhead Report urged the British government to take over the responsibility of education for Sabah, and later Sarawak. Also, in 1960, the McLellan report increased the awareness of the Sarawak government of the necessity of having an integrated education system (Education in Malaysia 1980, 1981, p. 3).

Post-Independence Period

In 1956, the then Minister of Education, Dato' Abdul Razak (later to become Tun Abdul Razak and Prime Minister of Malaysia) produced the "Razak Report." His committee proposed a new national educational policy with a view to ultimately make the Malay language the National Language and medium of instruction while preserving and sustaining the languages and cultures of the other social groups in the Federation. In 1960, a review committee was set up by Abdul Rahman Talib (Education in Malaysia 1980, 1981, p. 4). The committee suggested recommendations on the implementation of the new national education policy. The main recommendation of the Rahman Report later became the Education Act of 1961. The present education system is the result of the implementation of this Act. The main recommendations of the Rahman Report were: free primary education; automatic promotion from Standard 1 (Grade 1) up to Form 3 (Grade 9); assessment examination at primary level; enhancement of technical and vocational education; conversion from English to the Malay medium of
instruction; and the expansion of the teacher training programs (Education in Malaysia 1980, p. 4). Various divisions and committees were set-up to improve and implement effectively the Education Act of 1961.

The Cabinet Committee Report on Education was published in December 1969 (Education in Malaysia 1980, 1981, p. 4). The recommendations include: removing unequal participation in education, improving opportunities for higher educational attainment among youths from disadvantaged groups, developing stronger moral and ethical qualities of citizenship from school children, greater emphasis on vocational orientation in education, and streamlining the professional and administrative management of the educational system (Education in Malaysia 1980, p. 4).

This 1969 report on education signaled a major change in educational emphasis. Bahasa Malaysia replaced English and the Chinese and Indian vernaculars in all schools and for most subjects at institutions of higher learning. Moreover Bumiputra (Malay and other indigenous) pupils were given much easier access to the competitive higher levels of education, such as university entrance.

The educational system continues to strive for the achievement of the national development objectives, especially with the implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP). The overall objective of the education system is to promote national unity while orientating its programs to meet the growing demand for manpower. Thus education has been the biggest single medium for the implementation of Bahasa Malaysia as the national language.
The reasons for selecting Bahasa Malaysia as the national language were historical, linguistic, and political.

This historical basis for selecting Bahasa Malaysia stems from the fact that it is a Malay derived language and that the Malays, as the "definitive" ethnic group of the peninsular (Mohamad, 1970), are the inheritors of a long historic tradition of Malay states in the area.

The establishment of Malay as the official language was not a sociological innovation. It had been the language of the Sultanates of the Malay peninsular and archipelago not only before the coming of the British but also during the period of the British protectorate. It was only with the establishment of a central colonial government in Kuala Lumpur that English replaced Malay as the language of government. The Malay position at the time of Independence was that the use of Malay as the national language represented a switch back from English to Malay. The only obstacle (which was later overcome) was of course from the non-Malays who viewed the forced use of Malay as both repressive and regressive. Their opposition was used as a pretext to question their loyalty to the new country. The first Premier, Tunku Abdul Rahman, remarked that those who wanted to make Malaysia their home country should "make the grade." They had to "learn Malay." Basically, what he meant was that the non-Malays should make an effort to prove that they belonged locally.
The linguistic basis for selecting Bahasa Malaysia as the national language lay in the historic and modern position of Malay (usually Bazaar/Pidgin Malay) as the lingua franca of the whole region (Alisjahbana, 1971; Hj. Omar, 1979).

Malay had been the lingua franca of the area for over a millennium; the topography of Indonesia and Malaysia determined the emergence of some 250 separate but related languages, but the development of trade, political, and cultural contacts evoked the necessity of a lingua franca.

The rise of Malay in this area seems a natural outcome of these variables. Geographically, Malay was favored because it was used on both sides of the Straits of Malacca. Second, the fact that this area for centuries had been the political center for Southeast Asia while Srivijaya, Malacca, and Acheh were great centers of trade, only accentuated the already favorable position of Malay in this area. Third, it was the Malays who, from the earliest time seafarers, populated the coastal areas of Sumatra, Borneo, and other islands. Again, it has also been suggested that the simplicity of the Malay language when compared to the sociolinguistic complexities of the Javanese language enhanced its use as a lingua franca. Later colonizers (the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English, and the Japanese) had to recognize that fact that Malay was the only language that could be used to reach the large majority, which, in turn served—though unintentionally—to help the spread of the Malay language. Religious missionaries (both Islamic and Christian) also had to recognize this fact and helped as well in the spreading of Malay. Finally, it seems that Malay speakers are more tolerant than most native speakers towards foreign "abuse" of their language by non-native speakers. (Alisjahbana, 1971, p. 180)

Some people in Malaysia argued the merits of maintaining and promoting English as the prime medium of communication in secondary and higher education, politics, and commerce (Lim, 1978). Although this was primarily rejected for political reasons (see below), the greater linguistic accessibility of Bahasa Malaysia to the largest section of the population was also a factor.
The political reasons for selecting Bahasa Malaysia as the national language were the most fundamental and overrode any others. As has been explained in Chapter IV above, the political structure of Malaysia is dominated by aristocratic and bureaucratic Malay elites who operate with the tacit agreement of representatives of Chinese and Indian largely commercial and professional elites. The ability of the Malay elites to remain in power relies crucially on their capacity to get support from the rural Malay masses. The keynote to maintaining this support lies in stressing Malay unity through internal cohesion versus external threat. The Malay language, along with the Islamic religion, represent the most powerful media for manipulating Malay nationalism across socioeconomic lines.

Members of the rural Malay masses rarely could speak any language other than Malay and therefore would not have tolerated a government which excluded them from participation in the modern educational, political, and economic sector by requiring them to use a foreign language to gain access to it. These rural masses constituted the vast majority of UMNO's political support in elections and thus could not be ignored. They voted for a new breed of Malay nationalist politicians who had to be co-opted by the existing UMNO elite. Dr. Mahathir and Musa, the current Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, were both representative of the more extreme Malay nationalist viewpoint in the 1960s. After early ostracization, they were aftermath of the May 1969 riots. Both spoke out strongly on the national language issue. The UMNO political elite, therefore, had to select Bahasa Malaysia not only as the national language, but also as
the prime language of education, government, and commerce. The problem lay in persuading the non-Malays to accept this policy and in successfully implementing it.

UMNO became the leading component of the Alliance party because of its key role in the independence movement. It was made clear from the start that Independent Malaya was to be the home of all Malayans regardless of race and creed, on the condition that they honored the constitution which made Malay the national language of the country. The decision to make Malay the national language (and then the sole official language, 10 years after Independence) was among the recommendations of the Reid Constitutional Commission set up in the name of the Queen of England and the Rulers of the Malay States.

The Reid recommendations were in the interests of the Malay population. However, the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce of Malaya wanted the Malay, English, Chinese, and Tamil languages to be on par with each other. This was rejected by Tunku Abdul Rahman (first Premier) who said,

The recommendation of the Commission with regard to the use of the Chinese and Indian languages in either House of Parliament of the Legislative Assembly or of a State has, as you know, not been accepted. It would be most difficult to operate the clause proposed by the Commission but in any event it is very important that our people should converse with one another in one common language and there can be no doubt that that common language will ultimately be the Malay language. (Hj. Omar, 1979, p. 6)

However, before and for some years after independence, debates in the Federal Legislative ordinances were written in English language. As such, for the first Federal Election for self-governing pre-Independent Malaya which was held on October 16, 1954, to
November 16, 1954, the then President of UMNO, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, urged individual states to nominate people who could speak English (Hj. Omar, 1979, p. 7). The process of changing from English to Bahasa Malaysia was very slow in the initial independence period leading up to the riots of 1969. Since then the Malay elite has dramatically speeded up the process as part of the overall policy accompanying the implementation of the NEP.

In the granting of citizenship to the immigrant population, a language requirement was among those that had to be fulfilled. It was stipulated that an applicant for citizenship had to have an elementary knowledge of Malay (Hj. Omar, 1979, p. 7). The stipulation was determined by a language test. Resistance to this language requirement came from the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce of Malaya, which besides calling for a reduction of the qualifying period of residence from 10 years to 5 for citizenship by application, also urged the abolition of the language test. However, their resistance was unsuccessful.

The Implementation of Bahasa Malaysia and Its Problems

Malaysia's monolingual policy has been under fire from those who believe in multilingualism and bilingualism. However, for the reasons proposed above, Bahasa Malaysia became the only possible contender in a winner-take-all race. Article 152 of the Constitution of Federation of Malaya states that, "the national language shall be a Malay language" (Hj. Omar, 1979, p. 28). Thus Bahasa Malaysia
gradually replaced English and the immigrant languages. The pattern was for Bahasa Malaysia to gradually replace Chinese and Tamil among lower socioeconomic strata of non-Malays while it replaced English among the non-Malay elites. English remains the language of law and of much higher education in science and technology. The immigrant languages are protected as vernaculars in the primary school system, where the Pupils' Own Language (POL) scheme allows the teaching of the vernacular where 15 or more pupils request it.

The national language issue became important in the discussions involving the pre-Independence Constitution agreement concerning the barriers between the ethnic groups. It became a communal issue and was exploited for vote catching in general elections. In 1967 the National Language Act made Bahasa Malaysia the sole official language of the country (Hj. Omar, 1979, p. 28). This was one of the factors which led to the bloody ethnic riots after the general election of 1969. After these riots, the government enacted a law which forbade any person or political party to question the status of Bahasa Malaysia as the only national and official language of Malaysia. Two things happened with the adoption of the language. Firstly, the burden of development was placed on the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (Malaysia's language planning agency).

In 1959 the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka acquired the status of a corporation under the Ministry of Education (Hj. Omar, 1976, p. 42). Its tasks were:

1. To develop and enrich the national language.
2. To promote literary talents, especially in the national language.

3. To print or publish or assist the printing or publication of books, magazines, pamphlets, and other forms of literature in the national language as well as in the other languages.

4. To compile and publish a national dictionary.

The Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka had published by the end of 1966 a total of 475 titles; most are books for the primary and secondary schools and general reading materials for a wider public (Alisjahbana, 1971, p. 30).

Important also is the coining of a modern Malay terminology. At the beginning of 1967 about 70,000 terms had been coined in the Malay language in connection with government, agriculture, engineering, economics, commerce, telecommunication, linguistics, medicine, etc. (Alisjahbana, 1971, p. 36).

A comprehensive dictionary of the Malay language was published in 1970 (Alisjahbana, 1971, p. 40).

The Dewan is also the center for the National Language Campaign, to encourage people to use the national language in their daily lives.

The second development was the gradual implementation of the language for official communication and instruction in institutions of learning. Knowing that the split between the Malays and the non-Malays was a problem, the Ministry of Education announced that English-medium schools would switch to Bahasa Malaysia in 1970 (Hj. Omar & Mohd. Noor, 1981, p. 28). The full conversion from the lowest
level of education to the highest level of education was to be com-
pleted by 1983 (Hj. Omar & Mohd. Noor, p. 28). Research was later
conducted and it was found that the Malays were under-achieving in
education. Because of the under-achievement, the government started
to give aid to the Malays, and especially to those in the rural
areas. This aid was in terms of books, school uniforms, and shoes.

A number of international justifications and explanations for
the national language policy have emerged. Firstly, Malay is not
only used by Malaysia but also by Indonesia. The use of a Malay
national language in Indonesia greatly motivated Malay intellectuals
to adopt it as a national and official language. As such, the lan-
guage is a means of political integration for both Malaysians and
Indonesians. Imitating the Indonesians' nomenclature, the Malay
language was named Bahasa Malaysia. Despite some lingering post-
confrontation fears of the giant big brother to the south, Malaysia
has growing political, economic, and cultural, especially linguistic,
ties with Indonesia.

Secondly, the use of Bahasa Malaysia was justified as a means of
asserting national identity. It showed that while Malaysia was anti-
communist, it was not totally in the pocket of the West. National
language is thus seen as the entity of sounds and symbols which are
the primary vehicle of thought of a specific nation. A newly inde-
dependent nation in many respects needs a new attitude, different from,
or contrary to, the traditional attitude. The models available to
base this new attitude on are commonly taken to be communism,
westernization, or nationalism. The Malaysian elites naturally
reject communism. However, they do not want to adopt western cultural values and norms although they are most willing to adopt western technology and the West's capitalist economic system.

Standardizing and Improving the Status of Bahasa Malaysia

There have been a number of linguistic problems in implementing the national language policy. These will be discussed briefly.

The biggest issue for the linguists responsible for standardizing the national language was on which dialect of Malay they were to base the "new" national language. Johore Malay was chosen because of its widespread and its perceived higher status.

In planning for a writing system the process requires selection and implementation. Originally the Malay language (Bahasa Malaysia) was written under an assortment of spelling systems in Roman script. The first systems of spelling was the Wilkinson System (Hj. Omar, 1979, p. 70). During the Japanese occupation the "Ejaan Fajar Asia" (the Spelling System of Dawn of Asia) was adopted (Hj. Omar, p. 70). In 1946, the "Ejaan Congress" System of Spelling was developed (Hj. Omar, p. 70). After Independence the Malindo System was produced but was never implemented (Hj. Omar, p. 70). The Malaysia-Indonesia System of 1967 was agreed upon but was never made public (Hj. Omar, p. 71). Finally, this confusion was brought to an end when the "Sistem Ejaan University of Malaya 1971" (University of Malaya Spelling System 1971) was adopted (Hj. Omar, p. 71). Finally, on August 16, 1972, the standard system for both Malaysia and
Indonesia was declared official simultaneously in Jakarta (the capital of Indonesia) and Kuala Lumpur (the capital of Malaysia) (Hj. Omar, p. 71).

Another problem was the need for a Malaysian-Indonesian standardization of technical terms. The party standing to gain most from common spelling was Malaysia, but nevertheless Indonesia seemed to believe that in the long run it would be advantageous to the development of Indonesia as well. The spelling agreement of 1972 was the first step towards cooperation in the fields of language and culture. The follow-up was the collaboration to produce standardization of technical terms.

Apart from standardizing the Malay language in Malaysia and Indonesia, much consideration had to be made for improving the status of the language. In the last 20 years the language has moved from being a simple language restricted in use to become a language of wider communication. It is used to replace English not only in the classroom and government offices, but as the language of public communication such as in road signs and cinema subtitles. Notices and signs in other languages were translated into the Malay language. In the process, problems occurred.

Translations were done by people who were ignorant of the structural differences between languages and some extraordinary results emerged. The effect of this was to promote confusion for language learners.

Language corpus planning for Bahasa Malaysia has now reached a high standard. The Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka continues its publishing
and translation works finding or creating Malay roots for terminology from other languages.

Evaluating Malaysia's National Language Policy

This final section attempts to evaluate the success and failure of Malaysia's national language policy in promoting national integration over ethno-cultural division. Once it is accepted that the driving force behind the national language policy is the maintenance of Malay political unity, the use of Bahasa Malaysia becomes evident. The continuing dominance of the westernized and cosmopolitan Malay elite, however, has enabled the non-Malay elites to identify with and accept the culturally pluralist political system. On the other hand, the political integration of the Malay elite with the Malay peasantry has enabled them to close the communication gap between non-Malays and the Malay majority. These policies and efforts create the conditions necessary for building and expanding national community.

The basis for evaluation has been to compare the degree of national integration existing in the period between Independence (1957) and the ethnic rioting of 1969 and the period following the implementation of the NEP (1971 to the present).

Although on the surface there appears to be continuity in the policies throughout the whole post-Independence period, closer inspection reveals a much more serious commitment to implementing the national language policy since 1969. Indeed the whole post-1969 political structure is different from that of the first 12 years after Independence. Whereas the Malay ruling elite was largely of
aristocratic origin in the British educated tradition prior to 1969, it has come increasingly to consist of products of the new Malay bureaucracy since 1969. The roles of the non-Malay elites in the political process have been limited and the right to criticize the government has been severely curtailed. Von Vorys (1975) explained the post 1969 political setup:

the Directorate would continue to implement the constitutional contract. There was still room for bargaining and for a "give and take." But the final decision on cultural integration, the appropriate marginal rates of growth in the Malay access to the economy and Chinese access to government would not be resolved by a compromise among more or less equal parties. They would be decided by what the top UMNO leaders considered fair and in the interest of Malaysia. It was, of course, a very much simpler system. (p. 344)

The evaluation of the effect of language policy on the relative degrees of ethno-cultural integration pre- and post-1969 must consider the extent to which Bahasa Malaysia was used in Malaysia before and after that date.

In education Bahasa Malaysia had become the medium of instruction at all levels in most schools in West Malaysia by 1983. In 1968 only about one-third of the total number of students in schools in West Malaysia were educated in Malay. The ability of students to pass the Form 3 proficiency examinations in Bahasa Malaysia rose by over 200% between 1968 and 1982 (Malaysia Economic Report, 1983, p. 17). The implementation of the national language policy in education has also ensured that all secondary schools are ethnically integrated. Prior to the implementation of the policy many children attended secondary schools which excluded members of different ethnic
groups because of the language of the medium of instruction.

By the mid-1970s all material emanating from and going between government departments except the legislatures and the Law Courts was in Bahasa Malaysia. (The exceptions produced material in both Bahasa Malaysia and English.) Whereas non-Malay politicians and others making official speeches tended to use English or the Chinese or Indian vernaculars prior to 1969; all speeches now at least begin and end in Bahasa Malaysia. Government information, signs, and advertisements are now all in Bahasa Malaysia. All government forms, including those pertaining to taxes and licenses, are now in Bahasa Malaysia only, instead of in English and the non-Malay vernaculars.

In the private commercial sector the effect of the national language policy has also been felt. Companies need to communicate with the government, and increasingly with other Malaysian private business concerns, in Bahasa Malaysia. They are also required to have 30% bumiputras on their payrolls which increases the need for using Bahasa Malaysia as an integrating lingua franca (Malaysia Economic Report, 1983, p. 32). Advertising too has to be increasingly conducted in Bahasa Malaysia. Moreover, since almost all young Malaysians under 21 years old have been educated exclusively in Bahasa Malaysia, a large and growing part of the work force communicates only in the national language when not involved in dialogue with a speaker of the same vernacular.

The media too has witnessed an enormous increase in the use of Bahasa Malaysia. The number of hours of broadcasts on television and radio in Bahasa Malaysia increased by 60% between 1964 and 1972,
while the number of hours in English, Chinese, and Tamil increased by only 10%, 15%, and 40%, respectively, over the same period (Malaysia Economic Report, 1983, p. 27). Although more recent figures are unavailable, the results would certainly be much more indicative of the increased exposure to and use of Bahasa Malaysia.

Bahasa Malaysia newspaper circulation figures too have increased at a much faster rate than other language editions. The circulation of Bahasa Malaysia daily newspapers rose from 110,000 in 1969 to 830,000 in 1979! The comparative figures for English dailies were from 272,000 to 636,000; for Chinese from 148,000 to 222,000; and for Tamil from 19,000 to 17,000 (Henderson, 1970, p. 38; Malaysia Economic Report, 1983, p. 30). Since newspaper circulation figures are outside the control of the government, they provided the most compelling proof of a massive voluntary shift to using Bahasa Malaysia.

However, the strongest evidence for greater ethno-cultural integration in Malaysia post-1969 is the simple fact that there has not been a repeat of the ethnic rioting that occurred in that year since then. Another possible indicator of greater inter-ethnic integration has been a decline in the number of votes cast for more ethnically polarized parties.

In the elections since 1969 the number of seats won by UMNO and its fellow National Front parties and votes cast by Malays for UMNO have increased, while the number of seats and Malay votes for other parties have decreased.

In the 1978 elections the National Front won 131 out of 154 seats in the Federal parliament and the leading Malay opposition
party, Party Islam (PAS) was crushed, winning only 5 seats. PAS even lost the control of Kelantan, its stronghold since independence in the state elections (*FEER Asia Yearbook*, 1979, p. 238). The 1982 elections further increased the overwhelming dominance of the UMNO and gave the National Front 140 seats. The opposition parties were transformed into weak minorities winning only 14 seats (*FEER Asia Yearbook*, 1983, p. 193).

In summary, while it is beyond the scope of this study to measure the impact of other factors in promoting national integration in Malaysia, it is reasonable to conclude that the increased use of Bahasa Malaysia has contributed to both inter-Malay political integration and inter-ethnic social and economic integration in Malaysia.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This thesis has investigated the role of a national language policy in promoting political integration in a new nation: Malaysia.

A thorough theoretical investigation of the political uses of language showed the advantages of adopting a single linguistic code for fostering national development through political, economic, and ethno-cultural integration. An examination of the origins of Malaysia's ethno-cultural diversity revealed the socioeconomic bases to the cleavages. The nature of Malaysian politics as seen against the socioeconomic and ethno-cultural backdrop was given as the complex set-off reasons for the selection of Bahasa Malaysia as the sole national and official language of the country. The processes and problems of implementation were reviewed before finally evaluating the practical effects of the language policy on Malaysia.

While one may conclude that Bahasa Malaysia is a necessary ingredient and the logical choice among languages for Malaysia, it would be wrong to view the implementation of the national language policy as devoid of less altruistic intent. It must also be seen as one of the political moves on the part of the Malay ruling elite to satisfy the demands of the Malay masses and thus keep the Malays as an ethno-cultural entity unified politically. Whether the success of this and related ethno-cultural policies (such as increasing Islamization) will continue to hold the Malays together is debatable,
especially in the light of growing evidence that the huge socio-economic differences between Malay elites and masses are challenging Malay political unity.

The Malay elites' ability to remain in power (largely by securing the continued grass roots support of the Malay peasantry without alienating the non-Malay elites) has enabled Malaysia to remain unified across socioeconomic and ethno-cultural lines. Moreover, by maintaining a semblance of democracy, more than any other Southeast Asian nation, it has sustained economic growth. Social stability, economic success, and relative political unity, as well as Malaysian democracy are dependent on an elitist political system. That system must increasingly manipulate such cultural symbols as language and religion in order to maintain Malay mass support, while progress towards equity in the peasant economic sector must be made.

Non-Malay, Chinese and Indian elites are aware of the volatility of the Malay voters and of the Malay peasantry's poverty, increasing religious fundamentalism, and growing disenchantment with their rulers. Therefore, they are willing to support the Malay elites' language policy, even at the cost of living in a more Malay and less Malaysian Malaysia.

Whereas language dominated the cultural dimensions of Malaysian politics in most of the period under review in this thesis, religion has recently become more prominent. The Malay peasantry have always placed their faith foremost with their God and secondly in the leaders of their race. However, growing numbers of the Malay masses seem inclined to be mobilized in the name of the former against the real
and imagined neglect received at the hands of the latter. This is evidenced not so much by political support for opposition Islamic parties, but rather through support for officially nonpolitical Islamic organizations, such as the powerful Islamic Youth Movement (ABIM), and by changing UMNO from within. The marked fundamentalist radicalization of UMNO's grass roots activists is evident in the virtual absence of uncovered women party workers now, whereas it was rare to find an UMNO woman political activist who covered her head 10 years ago.

The increased surface Islamization of Malaysia, as depicted by the government dress codes, restrictions on gambling for Muslims, and the opening of an Islamic University and an Islamic bank described in Chapters IV and V, has been compounded by the co-optation of fundamentalist leaders. Anwar Ibrahim is the most notable of the young Islamic intelligentsia to be brought into the UMNO elite camp. He has enjoyed a meteoric and unprecedented rise to power within UMNO since 1982, and now ranks as third in the UMNO leadership after the Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir, and the Deputy Prime Minister, Musa. Such political astuteness on behalf of the UMNO elite Malay leadership has brought in a great number of potential opposition Malays to the party. This practice resembles the way that Malay nationalist leaders, such as Mahathir himself, were brought into UMNO on the national language issue in the 1960s.

The role that the national language policy occupied in the 1960s and 1970s in uniting the Malays now appears to have been superseded by religion in the wake of Islamic revivalism. Whatever the outcome
of the Malaysia's divisions—religious, ethnic, or socioeconomic—the national language issue should not feature prominently again. The Malay elite has so successfully used and implanted the use of Bahasa Malaysia among the country's diverse population that it is likely to remain the dominant language. Bahasa Malaysia's impact as a force for political unity and stability, and the acceptance of its permanence by most Malaysians, have served to institutionalize this once contentious language.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Far Eastern economic review (FEER) Asia yearbook. (1979). Hong Kong: South China Morning Post, Ltd.
Far Eastern economic review (FEER) Asia yearbook. (1980). Hong Kong: South China Morning Post, Ltd.

Far-Eastern economic review (FEER) Asia yearbook. (1983). Hong Kong: South China Morning Post, Ltd.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


