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The Alliance Party and the Process of Political Integration in Malaysia

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THE ALLIANCE PARTY AND THE PROCESS OF
POLITICAL INTEGRATION IN MALAYSIA

by

Etty Zainab Ibrahim

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment
of the
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Etty Zainab Ibrahim
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL INTEGRATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meanings of Political Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Factors Influencing Integrative Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indicators of Political Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Re-examining the Concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integration, Political Parties and The Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>MALAYSIA: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Makings of Pluralism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Progress and Paradox: The Pursuit of Nationhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>THE ALLIANCE PARTY AND PARTY POLITICS IN MALAYSIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evolution of the Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Eastern Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>TOWARDS POLITICAL INTEGRATION: THE RECORD OF THE ALLIANCE PARTY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critical Choices for Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Politics of Disunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significance of the 1969 Communal Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>THE ALLIANCE AND THE FOUR PROBLEM AREAS OF MALAYSIAN INTEGRATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inter-ethnic Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intra-ethnic Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite-Mass Integration</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territorial Integration</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The study of Malaysian politics today is the study of its ruling Alliance Party for the Party is the government and the government is the Party. Since the outset of Malayan independence in 1957 and through the formation of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963, the Alliance Party has been the dominant ruling party controlling both chambers of parliament. The fusion of three ethnic parties—the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC)—representing the three major ethnic groups in the nation—Malay, Chinese and Indian—is perhaps the singular most frequently cited attribute of its success thus far.

In the following study, my interest lies less in the structural facets of this formidable entity as in its functional aspects, specifically as they relate to the process of political integration. Due consideration, however, is given to structural analysis as it relates to the functioning of the Party.

"The integration problems faced by new nations," posits Myron Weiner, "should be viewed as part of an historical process of political development through which Western political systems have gone as well."¹ Nonetheless, such problems do constitute a phenomenal challenge to any ruling party, especially one that professes to adhere to democratic principles. And they are compounded in the Malaysian case by the mul-

tiethnic composition of the social system attended by lingual, religious and other cultural variances. Economic disparities, almost invariably cutting along ethnic lines, serve only to exacerbate the delicate ethnic relations and further complicate the process of attaining political integration, a realization imperative in determining the viability of not merely the Party, or the economy, or any single ethnic group but of the nation as an entirety.

In putting the Malaysian integrational problems into analytical perspective, one cannot overlook the role played by the British in shaping the past which bears on the present and will persist into the future, for history has a way of leaving in its path both erasable scratches and more permanent scars. And these scars are the fuel that keeps Malay nationalism smouldering.

The Malay nationalists vent their grievances against the British not only on the basis of the latter's administrative usurpation of their motherland but, also, in view of their role in mobilizing the Chinese and Indians, educationally and economically, well in advance of the majority of the Malays. Retrieving the helm from the colonialists was interpretable to the nationalists as a means of restoring economic and educational rights and opportunities to the indigenous.

To follow this vein of argument, the Alliance Party as a concept is discordant with nationalist objective. The Chinese, especially, should be contained as they have been in Indonesia, not incorporated into a political concert. In theory, Article 153 of the Malaysian Constitution does make provision for the special rights of the Malays but, in theory as well as in practice, the government, embodied in the
Party, is committed to granting equal rights to all ethnic groups. Already, many nationalists are disillusioned by the disparity between theory and reality and members are falling out of Party ranks. In the language of Mosca, the Party will have to construct an effective political formula to sustain its organization and support for its quest for political integration.

From the vantage point of non-Malays, the Alliance Party is, unequivocably, controlled by its Malay branch—the UMNO. While there have been a few Chinese and Indians serving in the Cabinet, the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister have been and will continually be, hand-picked from the Malay contingent. The effort to assign Malays to top administrative positions seems only too conspicuous. A good proportion of non-Malays, particularly the Chinese, are leary of oppression despite the repeated assurance of equitable treatment pronounced by Party leadership. This apprehension, with its various manifestations, poses another problem and has to be arrested, or at least allayed, before political integration could materialize.

There are several other presently or potentially obstructive elements to the process of attaining and maintaining political integration. Some questions readily provoke the mind at this juncture. First, has political integration of the political culture been achieved to any significant degree by the Alliance Party? If it has, what are the factors or attributes of the Party that have contributed to such attainment and will this integration be sustained? Further, what are the elements of prime consideration for facilitating such sustenance? Secondly, perhaps more basic than the previous, is the question as to
whether political integration of any significant degree and viable nature is attainable by the Alliance Party, given the breadth and width of its politics and political leadership. Thirdly, yet most fundamental, is whether political integration for Malaysia is at all achievable regardless of whichever party is in the cockpit. Answers to these are explored in the ensuing study. More specifically, the following areas are investigated: 1) inter-ethnic integration; 2) intra-ethnic integration; 3) elite-mass integration; and 4) territorial integration.

Research for the study was based primarily on library materials—books and articles dwelling on theories of integration and on political parties, and those limited resources that directly pertain to Malaysia. The scarcity of data on Malaysia proved to be more constricting than I had anticipated prior to undertaking the project. I tried to be cautious so as not to distend the pieces of information available while putting them to full use as an analytical base.

The rationale for the ensuing study germinates from my concern with the future of Malaysia, where I came from and where I plan to return upon completion of my study at Western Michigan University. While many economists have marvelled at the country's economic development, there are those in other capacities who have expressed skepticism in regard to the nation's future, not excluding Malaysian nationals. It is hoped that this modest undertaking would be perceived not merely as a contribution to knowledge about the country in particular and political science in general but also, within the realm of objectivity, as an exercise of faith in the nation's potentialities.
CHAPTER ONE

THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL INTEGRATION

The usage of the term 'political integration' has been no less than inconsistent, with its meaning expanded or delimited to fit into the analytical framework of individual authors. In application, the term has been associated with the concept of political development and, like the latter, a succinct definition is hard to generate that would embrace all its common and inferred meanings.

With this note of caution, it is the purpose of this chapter to explore the various applications and implications of political integration as perceptualized by different authors in their respective studies. Discussion will invariably gravitate toward the topical area—Malaysia—and it is hoped that, in the process, an operational definition of the concept could be constructed for subsequent analyses of political integration in the milieu of the Malaysian political system.

Meanings of Political Integration

The elusiveness of political integration as a concept emanates, perhaps, from the elusiveness of the word 'integration' itself. One dictionary,¹ for instance, equates 'integrate' with 'desegregate'. But, as the American case has demonstrated, desegregating white or

¹The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, s.v. "Integrate".
black schools does not automatically foster integration beyond the numerical equality between blacks and whites in a given school, although the relocation of individuals may encourage integrative behavior that could eventuate in integration.

In Malaysia, equating integration with desegregation poses a somewhat unique problem. Democracy in that nation is manifested by giving each ethnic group the liberty to set up vernacular schools. These schools are not, in principle, segregationist as there are no known stipulations barring the admission of members of other ethnic groups. But, by their very nature, they would attract primarily members of that ethnic group to which they accrue. To desegregate such schools is an unmitigated form of ending vernacular education and freedom of ethnic expression. And, for the Chinese and Indians, this would be ominous of what they have had, in their pessimism, anticipated—oppression by the Malays. Instead of allaying skepticism and cultivating integration, a move to that effect would only impregnate the germs of fear and hostility.

Karl Deutsch, in several of his works, is an unabashed exponent of communications as a means toward integration or community of attitudes.¹ A common language is, ostensibly, a logical instrument to facilitate communications, and a common language for a new nation just relinquished from the clutches of colonialism would preferably be one

to assume the permanent role of a national or official language.

Edward Shils, in writing "On the Comparative Study of the New States," observes that "the official and the cultural use of the indigenous languages is felt to be necessary to their national dignity; to go on using a foreign language is regarded as an act of self-derogation."^1

By process of elimination, India instituted Hindi as its official language. In Indonesia, Soekarno translated nationalist sentiment into the realization of Indonesian as the national language, compelling the Chinese to accept that decision. In the case of Malaysia, Shils' observation may be an accurate representation of nationalist preference. However, with its persistent tradition of vernacularism and with the English legacy indubitably a part of the nation's lingual scenario, the implementation of the national language—Malay—has been crippled by the lack of cooperation or the will to cooperate among non-Malays. And, even among most Western-educated Malays, there is a tacit acceptance that it is more intellectually and socially impressive when English is employed as the medium of communication.

Fortunately, as other writers with different theoretical persuasions would contend, there are other formulae for political integration. Lucian Pye, for one, argues that national integration must be preceded by personality integration followed by political development and modernization.2 The assessment of personality integration, however, involves the intricate study of individual beings, permeating into the realm of

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psychology. For present purposes, especially, the concern is with the integration of several ethnic groups historically situated in a specific political culture.

A political culture, by definition, "consists of the system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols and values which defines the situation in which political action takes place."¹ These beliefs, symbols and values are embodied in individuals who are members of discrete, and in the case of Malaysia, competing, ethnic groups. In certain cultures, the disparities between ethnic groups are accentuated by accidents of history which tend to favor one ethnic group above another. For such a culture, then, what is political integration and what brings it about?

Obviously, in a case like Malaysia, there are some extant binding factors that have sustained the political culture. Thus, it would be more appropriate to perceive integration, as suggested by Philip Jacob and Henry Teune, in relative rather than absolute terms. In short, a political culture is either less integrated or more integrated than desirable for stability. Political integration, to use yet another phraseology, is a concept of rank.²

As a phenomenon, political integration is also multifaceted.

Myron Weiner, in "Political Integration and Political Development,"


introduces five facets: (1) national integration; (2) territorial integration; (3) value integration; (4) elite-mass integration; and (5) integrative behavior. National integration involves the process of establishing a national identity attainable, as has been argued by Clifford Geertz, by modifying, at least, if not transcending primordial sentiments. Specifically, Weiner indicates two public policy strategies for the achievement of national integration, both of which have been more often used complementarily than exclusively in almost all nations:

1) The elimination of the distinctive cultural traits of minority communities into some kind of a 'national' culture, usually that of the dominant cultural group—a policy generally referred to as assimilationist....

2) The establishment of national loyalties without eliminating subordinate cultures—the policy of 'unity in diversity'....

The problem of territorial integration shifts from the subjectivity of individual feelings towards the nation to the objectivity of control over the entire state. The central authority of the Philippines is experiencing difficulty, presently, in extending effective control, except by martial force, to the outer islands where its larger Moslem populace is constellated. These people feel a greater affinity with Indonesia and Malaysia where Islam is a salient religious force. West Pakistan has experienced a turbulent resistance to territorial integration that has led to the secession of its Eastern flap forming what is now Bangladesh. The disjunction between Singapore and the rest of the Federation of Malaysia that led to its disengagement in 1965 was the

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1 Weiner, op. cit., pp. 53-54.
2 Loc. cit., p. 56.
culmination, in effect, of failure to achieve the level of territorial integration that would provide the central authority with both de jure and de facto legitimacy over that region.

Over a decade since its inception, Malaysia is still confronted by a peculiar problem pertaining to territorial integration. While there has been no overt expression by its Eastern territory (comprised of Sabah and Sarawak) to resist control by the central authority, there is a tendency among mainland Malaysians as well as non-Malaysians to be evasive about that part of the Federation. For historical reasons, relatively little has been learned about Eastern Malaysia. Mainland Malaysia—Malaya—is the heartland of the Federation, the locus of most if not all of its major social, economic and political activities. The development lag of the East in the social, economic and political arena, already conspicuous, is inadvertently exacerbated. And the four-hundred miles or so of water separating the two regions has not made much positive contribution to mental outlook: many Easterners coming to the mainland feel or are made to feel that they have emerged from Appalachia into Manhattan. By the same token, Western Malaysians, assigned to work in the Eastern territory, must be pacified with liberal fringe benefits.

Obviously, this manifestation of bigotry, whether deliberate or otherwise, on the part of the Westerners has to be terminated or it may be inculcated in the minds of their Eastern counterparts that they have been consciously treated as second-class citizens. Their reaction to this awakening will likely be detrimental to the cause of unity.
President Soekarno¹ and his sympathizers had once tried to obstruct the merger of this region with the mainland and it took a United Nations commission to reveal the will of the people to partake in the union. Persistent territorial alienation, however, may well spur an attitudinal conversion among some, perpetrating another political collision; this, Malaysia, with its other internal strifes, cannot contain or endure.

A frequently cited aspect of political integration is the bridging of the elite-mass gap. Leonard Binder contends that the achievement of national integration requires the closing of the gap between the elites and the non-elites.² Shils alludes to a similar problem when he categorizes as observable disjunction in the new states the cleavage between the uneducated masses and the intellectuals.³ Samuel P. Huntington, in arguing that the pre-condition of political stability is the bridging of the rural-urban gap, is microscoping, in effect, the elite-mass problem of integration.⁴

The elite-mass polarity is compounded in the differences in goals and values between those who govern and those who are governed. The emergence of a middle-class would fill in the interval between the extremities serving as a "behavioral and ideological synthesis of

¹Soekarno was the President of Indonesia for almost twenty-two years. He was stripped of his powers on March 12, 1967.
³Shils, op. cit., p. 3.
⁴Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), passim.
historical values and the values associated with modernity.\textsuperscript{1} Generally, the concern with this problem invokes the creation of such infra-structures as political parties, newspapers and universities, and others that could provide the kind of reciprocity in communication to link the elite and the masses.\textsuperscript{2}

The problem of elite-mass integration as observable in Malaysia cuts across ethnic lines in that there is greater convergence between the elites of the different ethnic groups than between the elites and masses intra-ethnically. However, primordial sentiments do play a distinct role in creating or sustaining the existing gap. The elites who advocate the emulation of Western industrialism and modernization, for instance, run counter to the conservationist propensity of its rural masses. To mobilize their own developmental efforts, the elites have the elemental task of reconciling religious traditionalism with modernism and educating the masses in this regard. This is especially warranted for rural Malays, among many of whom the interest on capital borrowings or savings is still regarded as usury.

In Malaysia, there are at least three categories of elites vying for mass support—the Western-oriented ruling elites, the modern rising elites, and the parochial. All three categories of elites try to mobilize or rally sympathy from the masses to the tune of their goal values approximate one another’s. The Western-oriented ruling elites include in their midst the various ethnic groups. The staunch nationalists, not able to tolerate this form of affiliation that tends to keep Malay

\textsuperscript{1} Binder, op. cit., p. 630.

\textsuperscript{2} Weiner, op. cit., p. 62.
progression under check and balance, are increasingly aligning themselves with those leaders who have gained following through religious or provincial appeal. The modern rising elites are, generally, young and ambitious, usually the product of non-elite families. With sophistication of education and faculty, they cultivate their own political ideology, channeling stamina and imagination into such organizations as the Peoples' Justice Party and the Democratic Action Party. Thus, achieving substantial elite-mass integration for this nation is a more complex task than it would appear at first blush, particularly for the ruling elites.

To the present extent of discussion, only the various aspects of integration have been infused into the analytical context while a definition of political integration has yet to grace the theoretical framework. To reiterate, precision of definition is hardly conceivable of a phenomenon that is at once empirical and obscure. With cautionary remarks about its limitations, Jacob and Teune offer the following for definition:

Political integration generally implies a relationship of community among people within the same political entity. That is, they are held together by mutual ties of one kind or another which give the people a feeling of identity and self-awareness. Integration, therefore, is based on strong cohesiveness within a social group; and political integration is present when a political-governmental unit of some sort is cohesive.

To other writers, political integration entails some varied definitions. Ernst Haas perceives the concept as:

1 Jacob and Teune, op. cit., p. 4.
a process whereby political actors in distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations, and political activities toward a new center, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the preexisting nation state.¹

And to the great exponent of the cybernetic model—Karl Deutsch—integration of individuals in a society is measurable by "their ability to receive and transmit information on a wide range of different topics with relatively little delay or loss of relevant detail."²

In general, it has become apparent that most writers are inclined to approach the concept of integration from the standpoint of the problems leading to its attainment as the phenomenon is complex and, virtually, theoretically inexhaustible. Accordingly, it is more commonly found that, in the literature of political science, problems and/or aspects of political integration are expounded more incisively than the pure concept of political integration. The reason for this, as has been hinted at the outset, is that political integration is such a multidimensional phenomenon that it would be presumptuous and inaccurate to suggest that it pertains only and entirely to the limited theoretical area of any single writer.

Factors Influencing Integrative Behavior

If integration is understood as the state of cohesiveness, then integrative behavior refers to the 'human' process leading to that cohesion. One could wonder: What are the factors that are presently


²Deutsch, op. cit., p. 151.
operating and potentially of utility in fostering integration?

Ostensibly, there are many variables that may emit integrative behavior. Ake enumerates the following ten: (1) geographical proximity; (2) homogeneity; (3) transactions, or interactions, among persons or groups; (4) knowledge of each other; (5) shared functional interests; (6) the character or motive pattern of a group; (7) the structural frame or system of power and decision-making; (8) the sovereignty-dependency status of the community; (9) governmental effectiveness; (10) previous integrative experiences.¹

An enumeration such as the above, however, provides very little clue as to the formula for political integration: What proportion or combination of which factors is required and would suffice in eliciting a desired or desirable amount of integration? Would the absence of one influencing factor in a political system deny that system the chances for integration, or would a different mix of factors be desirable? Is there a rank order of significance among the factors?

These questions are not irrelevant in studying any society especially one that is making a quest for integration. In Malaysia, for instance, one could hypothesize that there would be a higher degree of political integration currently if it were a more homogenous nation. But, this is not the same as pronouncing that, given the extent of its heterogeneity, the desirable level of political integration is not achievable, not unless it is presumed that homogeneity is the necessary precondition for such attainment. Ake makes the encouraging contention that "it is

¹Ake, op. cit., pp. 11-12.
possible for a political system to achieve a level of integration quite out of proportion to its cultural homogeneity.  

Weiner enunciates that integrative behavior, essential in complex modern societies, is manifested in the willingness of individuals to work complementarily and in an organized manner towards common goals. It must be noted that this behavior has to be precipitated by political socialization, defined by Robert Levine as "the means by which individuals acquire motives, habits, and values relevant to participation in a political system." In childhood, Levine indicates, there seems to be three mechanisms involved in the acquisition of political orientations, viz. imitation, instruction and motivation. Such institutions as youth movements, schools and universities, military forces and others serve to socialize young adults and adolescents to a new political behavior amenable to national goals.

In summation, the role of political socialization in precipitating integrative behavior could be viewed through the vantage point of the learning theory. Like other forms of social behavior, integrative behavior has to be learned and integration internalized. The function of such socialization in the new nations is the moral domain of the political leaders: how they relate to the masses and how the masses relate to them and to political institutions determine the general attitude towards politics and political identification.

1 Loc. cit., p. 2.

Indicators of Political Integration

Philip E. Jacob and Henry Teune posit:

Political integration, defined roughly as a state of mind or disposition to be cohesive, to act together, to be committed to mutual programs, refers to more than one aspect or dimension of behavior. It has no one best indicator.¹

The authors have implied the very real difficulty of identifying indicators of political integration. However, there may be a few rules of thumb. It seems a valid assumption, for instance, that a society wherein the population is homogenous, or, at least, where there is linguistic homogeneity, and the system of government is efficacious, there is a proclivity to political integration. An illustrative case would, perhaps, be the United States. There is yet another picture of political integration or a situation that gives the semblance of such integration. The cohesiveness, in this instance, is extracted by authoritarianism or a totalitarian form of government. Examples that could be cited would be the communist countries.

At this juncture, a distinction has to be drawn between cultivated and coerced form of political integration. The present concern is, invariably, with cultivated integration, i.e., cohesion precipitated by various processes of reinforcement that are not forcible. This, it would be contended, is a more demanding and more rewarding attainment than through the use of coercive tactics to evoke compliance with the ideology of the ruling oligarchy.

While it is not easy to specify the indicators of political inte-

¹Jacob and Teune, op. cit., p. 10.
gration, there may be relative facility in identifying the empirical indicators of the degree of political integration. Ake suggests the following set: (1) the legitimacy score; (2) extraconstitutional behavior score; (3) political violence score; (4) secessionist demand score; (5) alignment pattern score; and (7) authority score. These indicators are, as the writer indicates, 'political' in nature. There are others which are of different orientation. For instance, the presence of economic integration would be conducive to integrative behavior politically.

Another pertinent observation brought to attention by Ake is that

...within certain limits, the level of political integration is determined by the degree of social integration (the extent of the sharedness of values, goal preferences, symbols of identity, modes of communication, such as language, common experience, etc., among members of a society). Social integration, like political integration, is the function of socialization, the responsibility for which rests, in the new nations, on the political leaders.

Re-examining the Concept

The brief survey of the meanings and implications of the concept of political integration has revealed its various facets and related aspects. It would be maintained that political integration is the highest level of cohesion attainable by a nation and that other forms of integration are sub-levels and contributive factors to political integration.

1Ake, op. cit., pp. 8-11.
2Loc. cit., pp. 11-12.
For different political systems, political integration is generated by different means. An authoritarian or totalitarian system will employ coercive tactics to procure a semblance of political integration and obedience to oligarchical ideology. In a country professing to adhere to the principles of democracy, the emphasis will have to be on more legitimate even if less effective means.

In Malaysia, the struggle for the ultimate—political integration—involves the containment of four problems of integration: inter-ethnic, intra-ethnic, elite-mass and territorial. It may be concluded that, for this nation, political integration means the disposition to cohesive behavior within and among the existing ethnic groups, between the elite and the masses and among territories, transcending primordial or regional sentiments, thereby manifesting political community. How this cohesion can be gestated and to what extent that it has will be the contextual pursuit of the subsequent study.

Integration, Political Parties and the Alliance

As the topic of the study would indicate, the process of integration in Malaysia will be analytically correlated to the performance of its political vanguard—the Alliance Party. In this connection, a brief mention seems appropriate in regard to the theoretical relationships between political parties and political integration.

It has been variously argued that political parties are affected by and, in turn, affect the problem of integration in a society.¹

The degree of this relationship is dependent upon the nature of the preexisting issues in that society and the disposition of the individual party and party leadership. It stands to reason that the determinative role would be played by the government or the party which has assumed the governance of the polity. The ruling elites may opt for an overtly non-party system or any other party system, justified in the name of integration, although it would be argued, on the premise of cultivated integration, that only a pluralistic system could generate significant political integration especially in a multiethnic culture.

Weiner and LaPalombara suggest that

...one way of coping with social diversity is to use forceful means to suppress and eradicate it; another is to search out institutional arrangements that will encourage dialogue, unblock communications channels, keep political and governmental leaders on their toes, facilitate the articulation and aggregation of conflicting interests and in these ways create a sense of political efficacy while building national unity out of ethnic diversity.¹

The Alliance Party, faced with a multiplicity of fissures in the Malaysian polity, has displayed an inclination to vacillate between the two measures of containing the problems while the tendency to constrain communications oftentimes prevail.

Political parties are, further, instrumental in the process of political socialization, influencing the political values and attitudes of the masses. By implication, the party leaders who would execute this functional responsibility must be mature and objective in their political conduct. The Alliance, being an incipient organization in

the history of political development, sometimes finds in its leaders an absence of such exemplary virtues that renders its task to integrate the polity a more horrendous one.

In the final analysis, what the Alliance faces is an agglomeration of the problems enumerated by Weiner and LaPalombara, subsumed in this case under the rubric of political integration. It is this challenge which has defied the Party's earlier deeds and persistently takes its legitimacy to task. The adequacy with which this political demand is abated or disposed of will determine the viability of the nation, the federation, and, of course, the Party.
CHAPTER TWO
MALAYSIA: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

A brief discussion of the Malaysian social system is warranted for elucidating the ensuing analyses. It is a truism that, while history has contributed pervasively and intractably to the present configuration of the system, the cumbersome chronologies dating as far back as 50,000 B.C. could not practicably be accommodated within the limited space appropriate to the current task. Eclectically, the subsequent survey will be confined to such information as germane to the immediate topical context, i.e., the Alliance Party and the process of political integration.

The Makings of Pluralism

Malaysia's problems today are largely derived from the pluralistic composition of its society. It has been argued by some historians that the success of that nation is, also, attributable to the pluralism that was superimposed—myopically, it may be contended—on its relatively homogenous setting of earlier times. As expected, arguments to this effect have been advanced primarily by Western writers and constitute the kind of justification with which to extricate the colonialists for their part in transmuting the Malaysian ethnic complex. It may seem tautological to counter such arguments with the proposition that Malaysia's success is not because of its pluralism; rather, the environment naturally influences the character of a society's development or, phrased differ-
ently, development will have occurred in Malaysia regardless of its ethnic distribution but the nature of that development may be different from that which is observable presently.

Because of its deterministic role in Malaysian politics, the origins of pluralism in that society deserves some elaboration. Historians are agreed that Malaya had had contact with India and China for many centuries before the mass immigration of Indians and Chinese into the territory around the middle of the nineteenth century. Most of the early immigrants were concentrated in the area known as Malacca, a prosperous harbor centrally located on the East-West trade route. It was estimated that when the Dutch captured the territory from the Portuguese in 1641 there were between three and four hundred Chinese residing there, and by the middle of the eighteenth century the Chinese population had expanded to 2,161.¹

The Chinese immigrants came mainly from southern regions of China, viz. Kwangtung, Fukien and Kwangsi. They were generally dissatisfied with the Manchu rulers, and migrated to different parts of Southeast Asia, leaving their families behind. This first steady flow of migration occurred in the late eighteenth and around the turn of the nineteenth century. Then, with the outbreak of the civil war known as the Taiping Rebellion, the Chinese fled en masse to escape punitive actions taken by the government.

Malaya and Singapore were especially appealing to the Chinese, and the Indians, because their trade was substantially expanding while

labor was scarce. By the middle of the nineteenth century, moreover, the British had established their domination of the major areas of the peninsula and opened the doors to the immigrants. The discovery of more new tin fields after mid-century encouraged a great influx of immigration from China. By about the second half of the nineteenth century, the population of Chinese in the peninsula numbered some 25,000 while that of the Malays totalled some 150,000.¹

The immigrants brought with them their customs and traditions; with the Chinese came their secret societies and the overt rivalries that attend such movements. Clashes erupted not too infrequently at the outset, and this has been identified by some as the reason why the British were drawn into closer contact with the Malay states. Rationally, they could not have been expected to be passive by-standers while the fightings in the tin fields escalate into a major threat to the survival of the settlements.

Other historians directly or indirectly implicate the Malays for having encouraged Chinese immigration to render services necessary for the mobilization of economy, specifically in the area of tin mining. This is however, as simplistic a rationale as that which attempts to justify slavery in America on the premise that some Africans conspired in the trading of slaves. There have been further insinuations that, had the Malays been more diligent and astute in instituting their own economic development, Chinese immigrants would not have been widely persuaded to exploit the labor opportunities. This, again represents

¹Loc. cit., pp. 112&117.
a contention that hinges on circumstantial assumptions rather than evidential particulars; it prevaricates while disparaging the normative values of that era.

Both the Chinese and the Indians of the new wave of migration had considered themselves as transients; their singular objective was to amass sufficient fortune to retire comfortably to their respective homelands. Thus, the Chinese, especially, felt little need to demonstrate more than the minimum loyalty to either the Malays or the British and to be receptive to the native way of life. While many eventually repatriated, others stayed back but found difficulty in converting their attitude towards local authorities. In short, there was generalized apathy among the immigrants towards Malayan affairs except where they pertained directly to the survival of the respective communities and the freedom of their employment. There were so many of them that they could exist in closely-knit self-contained groups pursuing their ethnic modes of living. In this respect, they have remained relatively resistant to change unlike the earliest migrants who had permitted themselves to be assimilated.

Why did the Chinese and Indians stay on in Malaya and other South-east Asian countries? A compelling explanation is that the going was good for them in the area while life at home was less favorable. Where they were, no coercion was applied to induce them to change their ways, at least not until much later. Perhaps they became acclimatized, though not necessarily assimilated, to their surroundings, negating their will to transplant themselves in their mother-lands. The truth underlying the decision could only be speculated, but, whatever it is,
the Chinese and Indians chose to remain in the area permanently. And, for the politics of Malaya and those neighboring regions that were to partake in the merger subsequently, this decision has had many challenging ramifications.

Progress and Paradox: The Pursuit of Nationhood

Malaysia is a federation born, tumultuously, in September 1963 with the merger of the eleven states of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo (Sabah). The genetic idea for the merger has been attributed to Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore, while Tunku Abdul Rahman, then Prime Minister of Malaya, has been credited with providing the impetus, earning himself the designation of 'Bapa Malaysia' or 'Father of Malaysia'. Amidst a polemic involving the leaders of the Malayan Alliance Party and those of the ruling Peoples' Action Party in Singapore, the latter was politely ejected from an alliance that once appeared to be the quintessence of political synthesis. Henceforth, Malaya is referred to as West Malaysia while Sabah and Sarawak are collectively known as East Malaysia.

Malaya gained her independence in 1957 while Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak were still under British reigns. (In fact, the three countries were only 'free' upon their inclusion in the merger.) The leaders of the Alliance Party were operant in the negotiation for and the ultimate realization of independence for Malaya from the British colonialists who had partaken in the affairs of Malayan territories as early as 1786. It was with relative facility that Malaya retrieved her sovereignty,
being spared the goriness experienced by its neighbors in India and Indonesia.

From the outset, Malaya was beset by integrational problems, which smoldered beneath the veneer of peaceful coexistence. The constitution which attended Malaya's declaration of independence was designed as a bargain; the voting rights of the Chinese and other non-Malays were to be augmented while the special rights of the Malays were to be guarded under the provision of Article 153. This concession was infused into the constitution of Malaysia which is, in effect, a modestly revised version of the constitution of 1957.

The special position accorded the Malays and extended to the other 'indigenous' peoples of Sabah and Sarawak is rationalized on the grounds that (1) they are the 'Bumiputras' or 'sons of the soil', and (2) the Chinese, especially, are too far ahead economically that they will have to allow time for the Bumiputras to advance to a competitive level with them. The British have written off the disparity in economic attainments between the non-Malays and the Malays as a consequence of the former's entrepreneurship and the latter's indolence. This was a poorly disguised recourse to self-vindication for their lack of vision which perpetrated this unfortunate reality doomed to have many political ramifications.

In statistical terms, approximately 90 per cent of the vital domestic capital formation comes from the Chinese. The quoted figure

of M $986 as per capita income for the nation is a deceptive extrapolation of the distinct variance in incomes for non-Bumiputras and Bumiputras. To elevate the living standard of the latter, the government has established agencies such as the Federal Land Development Authority (FLDA), Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA), etc. If the names of these agencies carry a tone of ruralism, it is only because about two-thirds of the population, and mainly Bumiputras, are based in categorically rural areas. In West Malaysia, for instance, 71.3 per cent of the population reside in rural areas of which 63.5 per cent are Malays, 26.2 per cent Chinese and 9.7 per cent Indians. In contrast, of the 28.7 per cent of the population located in urban areas, 58.5 per cent are Chinese, and 12.8 per cent of the urban population. It is significant that the agencies designated by the government to assist the rural Bumiputras are being widely criticized for perpetuating their rurality.

The total population of Malaysia, accounted in 1970, is 10,650,000 accommodated in a land area of 128,430 square miles. Approximately 85 per cent of the residents are situated in West Malaysia where the ethnic composition is as follows: 53.2 per cent Malays, 35.4 per cent Chinese, 10.6 per cent Indians, and 0.8 per cent of other origins. The ethnic

1 Willard A. Hanna, Asia, Southeast Asia Series, Vol. XIX, no. 6 (January 1971), p. 3.


3 1970 Population and Housing Census of Malaysia, Table VI, p. 27, loc. cit., p. 21.

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distribution for the entire Malaysia presents a slightly different picture in terms of Sino-Malay numerical balance with the following enumeration: 44.0 per cent Malays, 35.0 per cent Chinese, 11.0 per cent Indians (including Pakistanis and Ceylonese), 8.0 per cent indigenous tribes people, and 2.0 per cent of other origins.\(^1\) Drawing on the statistical observation, Cynthia Enloe remarks that

Malaysian ethnic pluralism is not such that one ethnic group stands out clearly above several obviously minor ethnic groups, and thus the Malay political superiority is constantly in danger of losing touch with social reality.\(^2\)

Malaysia operates as a constitutional monarchy with a bicameral parliament. There are nine traditional Malay rulers and the titular heads of Penang, Malacca, Sabah and Sarawak constituting the Conference of Rulers. The Paramount Ruler (Yang di-Pertuan Agong) is nominated by this Conference from among the nine traditional rulers to reign for a period of five years. The hereditary rulers wield minimal political power but are accorded customary deference by conservationist Malays.

The Senate of Malaysia comprises 58 members—two each from the thirteen states are elected while the remaining 32 are appointed by the Paramount Ruler upon advisement of the Prime Minister. The House of Representatives has a membership of 144; 104 from West Malaysia, 24 from Sarawak and 16 from Sabah. West Malaysia conducted one general election after its independence and prior to the merger; since its

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\(^1\)Hanna, op. cit.

\(^2\)Cynthia Enloe, *Multi-Ethnic Politics: The Case of Malaysia* (Berkeley, California: Center for South and Southeast Asia Studies, University of California, 1970), pp. 116-117.
inception, Malaysia has staged two such elections, the second of which fomented an ethnic collision that mirrored the tottering political framework and launched Malaysia into its third emergency rule since 1948.

The emergency declared in 1948 and lifted in 1960 involved West Malaysia and her effort to contain the communist guerillas who retreated to the jungles upon termination of Japanese occupation and the return of British administration at the end of World War II. The guerillas are the vestigial forces of the Malayan Peoples' Anti-Japanese Army; mainly of Chinese origin, their number is estimated currently to be between 1,000 and 1,500 constellated in the thickets of the Thai-Malaysian border, conducting sporadic attacks on the border patrols.

When plans for the merger approached a conclusion, Soekarno instigated a massive 'confrontation' against the would-be Malaysian territories alleging that the alliance was the brainchild of the imperialists, thus prompting the declaration of emergency lasting from 1963 to 1966. Soekarno found many sympathizers, in both East and West Malaysia, in the devout Malay communalists who had entertained the idea of a Pan-Malaysian (or Greater Indonesian) union. Loyalists to this primordial concept still exist among the nationalists and pose a challenge to the inter-communalism of the Alliance.

The third state of emergency was a direct consequence of the communal violence which erupted in West Malaysia in May 1969, following an election wherein the opposition parties won a victory that made the Alliance's position highly precarious. The Prime Minister suspended parliament and created an interim administration by the National
Operations Council (NOC) headed by his deputy, Tun Abdul Razak. Skepticism was expressed as to whether Malaysia was ever going to be returned to parliamentary rule. Tunku's subsequent resignation and his replacement by Tun Razak served little to allay the fears of the non-Malays specifically; Razak does not have the reputation for being solicitous vis-a-vis the latter. But democracy was resurrected and parliamentary rule resumed its course in 1971.

Despite the many political setbacks that could have thwarted its growth, Malaysian economic progress has been no less than a model of success. The entrenchment of its economy in rubber and tin, of which it has been a leading exporter, has made its prosperity look like a delicately ephemeral accomplishment. To demonstrate its dexterity in managing the nation's livelihood, the government has taken measures to diversify the economy, providing incentives in such areas as timber and palm oil exportation. Presently, Malaysia is the world's leading exporter of logs and sawn timber and palm oil and palm kernels. The Gross National Product for 1973 was estimated to be M $14,450 million, presumably surpassing the 8 of 9 per cent annual growth anticipated by the government at the end of 1972.  

As educational advancement is imperative for societal amelioration, the Malaysian government has taken positive strides in augmenting educational facilities. Children are given six years of free primary education; in fact it is mandatory for all primary school-aged children to be enrolled in a school if they are within walking distance of one.

It is estimated that 91.4 per cent of children in this age group are currently enrolled. The proportion, as expected, is inversely related to the level of education. Approximately 4.7 per cent of college age youth are enrolled in institutions of post-secondary learning.\(^1\)

In 1967, the Alliance government implemented Bahasa Malaysia (Malay) as the national and official language in West Malaysia although English is, in practice, widely utilized in official circles. In 1970, Bahasa Malaysia was introduced as the medium of instruction in all the first grade classes of English medium primary schools. It is the intention of the government that, as this transformation is effected in successive years, all English medium schools would eventually become what are categorized as 'National Schools'.\(^2\)

By all counts, Malaysia's economic success and stability cannot be defined as anything lower than exemplary. The Alliance could justifiably claim most if not all of the credit and flaunt this feat as an administrative triumph. But, a provocative question comes to mind: Is this the stuff of which political integration is made? It would be contended that economic attainment per se has not fostered political integration and is not likely to do so unless attended by other socio-cultural ameliorations. That 'there is more to life than money' is not a mere cliche in the context of Malaysian politics. Inter-ethnic cleavages cannot be cemented with concrete but with a political blend of tangible achievements and a sense of security and efficacy. The riots of 1969 brusquely drove home this point to the political elites.


\(^2\) Loc cit., p. 339.
Although political parties are relatively recent phenomena in the Malaysian cultural scene, political awareness had been elicited at a much earlier turn in history. For the Chinese in Malaya, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's visit in 1900 invoked their patriotism directed, invariably, towards China. The empirical evidence of his clout was the establishment of thirty branches of the Kuomintang soon after its formation in 1912. For the Malays, the seeds of consciousness were strewn by returning students from Al-Azhar University in Cairo. The vicissitudes of Malay politics were marked by a shift from Islamic to more secular orientation with increasing political verbalization by the students of the Sultan Idris Training College which had been structured in 1922.

The 1930's witnessed the burgeoning of politico-cultural associations representing Malay interests. But, while the Malay-educated intelligentsia were striving to mobilize their youthful energy into moderately radical unions, some inspired by Soekarno's Indonesian National Party, the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) had already been initiated and drawing a primarily Chinese following. The party was responsible for citing the trade union strikes of the 1930's. It was banned at the onset of the emergency of 1948, but the Labor Party, formed three years later, had frequently been deemed the residual element of the MCP.
Evolution of the Alliance

The United Malays National Organization was founded in May 1946 by Datuk Onn bin Jaafar as a measure to protect Malay rights against further encroachment by the British. Since its inception, UMNO was destined to influence the course of Malayan and Southeast Asian politics, directly and indirectly. A mere couple of months after its birth, for instance, it attained a historic triumph by persuading the British to jetison the Malayan Union proposition that would have levied a severe curtailment of Malay liberty. It earned another distinction, shortly thereafter, as being the only political party represented on the Working Committee preparing the basic draft of the Federation Agreement, the foundation on which the Federation of Malaya was subsequently erected.

It is ironic that when Datuk Onn proposed to open membership of UMNO to non-Malays, he encountered opposition serious enough to prompt his resignation in 1951. He proceeded to form the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP). It was to contain the threat of the IMP in a 1952 local election that the Selangor branches of UMNO and MCA, which commenced its activities in 1949, agreed to combine forces. The victory won by the 'alliance' in that and a subsequent election was so impressive that what was initially a temporary conjugation for electoral expedient was to be perpetuated henceforth as a national strategy. In 1955, the MIC, which had been in existence since 1946, was drawn into the formal Alliance which elected Tunku Abdul Rahman as president of its National Council.
In the federal elections of 1955, the Alliance Party sponsored 52 candidates of which 51 were successful. The only candidate who suffered defeat succumbed to a member of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PMIP) which emerged as a potentially formidable opposition to the Alliance, appealing strictly to primordial sentiments. The returns of the 1955 elections were, nonetheless, a cogent victory to spur optimism. In a joint manifesto that same year, the Alliance Party promised independence for Malaya within four years. As it turned out, with assiduous effort on the part of the Alliance, independence was to be realized only two years later in a congenial spirit of political succession.

It is important to clarify that the Alliance which incorporated three parties representing the three major ethnic communities had never professed to be noncommunal in its political commitment. Rather, it is an inter-communal association and its success and failure should be viewed in this light. There is a host of purportedly noncommunal parties: among the best known are the Democratic Action Party, the Labor Party, People's Progressive Party, and Gerakan Raayat (People's Movement). But, in all these parties, the extent of their noncommunalism goes only as far as to include a few selected token figures from the thin stratum of elites to project on image of ethnic pluralism. Otherwise, they have demonstrably functioned in the interest of non-Malays, mainly Chinese. Then, there are parties that are ostentatiously communal, and the prime example in this category is the PMIP.

Jean Grossholtz says of political parties in Malaya that they
...grow out of discussions and arguments over the relative positions of the various communal groups. The form and character of the government obviously would affect the comparative advantage of each. Economic interests were involved, but these interests too were communal in nature.  

The Eastern Alliance

The complexion of party politics was altered slightly by the merger. In Sarawak, the first political party was born as late as 1959. This was the Sarawak's United People's Party (SUPP) whose stated objectives included the maintenance of racial harmony among the peoples of the state. From the outset of the Malaysian plan, SUPP implanted its banner in opposition territory but mellowed sufficiently by the bloody outbreak of 1969 to step on the Alliance bandwagon in 1970. Other parties were subsequently formed in Sarawak. Party Negara Sarawak (PANAS), Sarawak National Party (SNAP), Barisan Raayat Jati Sarawak (BARJASA), Party Pesaka Anak Sarawak (PESAKA), and Sarawak Chinese Association evolved in the early 1960's and formed the Sarawak Alliance in 1963. SNAP's leader, Stephen Kalong Ningkan, was appointed Chief Minister. However, following a cabinet crisis involving a volley of charges between him and the central Alliance government, Ningkan was dismissed. SNAP seceded from the Alliance and has remained in opposition since. Also in 1966, BARJASA was dissolved and its members merged with PANAS to form the present Party Bumiputra, affiliated with the Alliance.


As for Sabah, no political party was in existence when the Malaysia proposal was broached by Tunku Abdul Rahman in May 1961. By the end of that year, however, five parties were already in gear to express interest and concern regarding their status in the merger. After their apprehension had substantially been allayed, the United National Kadazan Organization (UNKO), United Sabah National Organization (USNO), Sabah National Party (SANAP), Pasok Momogun, and the Sabah Indian Congress (SIC) converged to form the Sabah Alliance.

Ongkill posits that

Apart from the utilitarian objective of supporting Malaysia, the Sarawak Alliance was constituted for basically the same reasons that the Malayan Alliance was founded in 1955. In the context of a multi-racial society, many leaders soon realized that a non-communal part could not possibly thrive as long as the electorate thought communally. The 1955 Alliance introduced a system whereby a number of communal parties were united in a communal political organization. As a body of parties which represented the major races in the country, the Alliance hoped to rally behind it the largest number of supporters (promising) to give the greatest good and hoped to gain the greatest number.¹

The creed of the Sabah Alliance depicts a similar profile.

The formation of the two regional alliances affiliating with the central governing body was a significant endorsement of the Alliance Party's formula, boosting its legitimacy vis-a-vis the adversaries to the merger. But this endorsement was accompanied by a ponderous responsibility added to the extant constricting yoke on the back of the central cadre. Now, along with its other endemic integrational problems, it will have to resign itself to the task of resolving the question of territorial integration.

Confidence in the Alliance Party was affirmed by the overwhelming victory which it struck at the polls in 1964, winning 89 out of 104 seats in West Malaysia. Soekarno's act of aggression was the primary factor in rallying this massive support behind the Party. The non-Bumiputras were only too conscious of the primordial designs that the Indonesian revolutionist and his sympathizers had conceived; if such designs were permitted to materialize, the stature of the non-Bumiputras would be reduced to political impotence. It is unfortunate that only during the existence of an external threat that Malaysians could make a concerted effort toward inter-communal harmony; devoid of such imminence, they have succumbed to their primitive instincts for inter-ethnic hostilities.

The Alliance Party, regretfully, is not without its frailties. The government is, in effect, operated by the UMNO. One would not be too far removed from reality to suggest that the affinity between the Alliance government and the Alliance Party is only to the extent that the Party is the banner under which legitimacy is derived and elections are won to return a miniscule clique within the Alliance to office. To the untrained layman, the Party is easier perceived than the cadre. But, power is wielded by that exclusive group of individuals and not the Party.

The Alliance is, also, fraught with internal cleavages. These shall be discussed within the ensuing analyses. It could safely be argued at this turn that the Alliance Party is not securely integrated and that its struggle for political integration is an uphill battle.
Figure 1: THE ALLIANCE PARTY HIERARCHY IN THEORY

ALLIANCE
NATIONAL COUNCIL

UMNO
MCA
MIC
SABAH
ALLIANCE
SARAWAK
ALLIANCE

Figure 2: THE ALLIANCE PARTY HIERARCHY IN PRACTICE

UMNO CADRE

ALLIANCE
NATIONAL COUNCIL

UMNO
MCA
MIC
SABAH
ALLIANCE
SARAWAK
ALLIANCE

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Cynthia Enloe writes that

...in relatively homogenous societies, political parties may be expected to give tacit assent to the society's political norms in their own internal operations. But they usually are not compelled to serve as models for national integration. In multiethnic states, especially during periods of insecurity, this role does fall to the parties. Any political party which claims to be a potential ruler is expected in its own organizational structure to provide an integrative blueprint which the polity as a whole can emulate.¹

In this vein of argument, the Alliance as a party has a good amount of introspection and self-absolution to conduct. This is not saying, however, that it lacks the potential for leading the polity to political integration.

¹Enloe, op. cit., p. 103.
CHAPTER FOUR
TOWARDS POLITICAL INTEGRATION: THE
RECORD OF THE ALLIANCE PARTY

The political system is Malaysia predicated by the Alliance Party may be categorized as 'one-party pluralistic'. By definition,

These are quasi-authoritarian systems dominated by a single party which is pluralistic in organization, pragmatic rather than rigidly radical in outlook, and absorptive rather than ruthlessly destructive in its relationships to other groups. ¹

LaPalombara and Weiner suggest that

it may be that by seeking to accommodate the conflicting interests within a society the one-party pluralistic arrangement may demonstrate a superior capacity to bring about effective economic and perhaps political development.²

Of economic development, the general prosperity of the country has emerged as the most tangible achievement of the Alliance, and is, prima facie, deserving of the generous compliments paid by interested observers. Economic development, to a certain extent, is material evidence that some degree of economic integration is in existence within the society. And it has been argued that such integration is a positive step in the direction of the higher level of integration.

In implementing its various economic policies as well as its political philosophy, however, the Alliance may have inadvertently vitiated the extant forces of integration. On the one side, for instance, the

² Loc. cit., p. 40.
government is committed to its policy of laissez-faire, stimulating the mobilization of the private sector. This invariably augments the wealth of the non-Malays who have had a headstart in business enterprise. Furthermore, major industries are oftentimes established in the urban areas where the majority of the populace are of non-Malay origin. The growth in the industrial sector, in short, deposits assets continuously to the wealth already amassed by the non-indigenous.

As a countervailing measure, the government has begun setting up several institutions such as the National Investment Corporation and appropriating multiple forms of assistance to provide the momentum for and eventually enhance the rural economy, thus generating substantive incomes to the Bumiputras. There is, however, a blemish that easily eludes the uncritical eye; while the incomes accruing to the urban areas are utilized for elevating the standard of living in that sector from comfortable to increasingly more comfortable positions, those generated in the rural areas are, for the most part, absorbed by the effort to convey the sector to an acceptable level of subsistence.

Thus, while the economy as a whole has displayed an impressive statistical progress, advancement for the populace has not been equitable. It is not worth arguing that the rights of the indigenous could only be protected and not innovated and that the non-Malays would only regard their special position as a temporary quid pro quo. Nevertheless, it would certainly be presumptuous to expect the Bumiputras to achieve in about a decade what the Chinese have accumulated for over a century.

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As things stand presently, while theory holds that favoritism is enjoyed by the Bumiputras and overt gestures are supportive of this contention, growth in manufacturing, a partial euphemism for the non-Malay sector, has been a lucrative 17 per cent per annum for the period 1967-1970. In contrast, the annual growth in agriculture for the years between 1963 to 1971 averaged 6.8 per cent. The Bumiputras of West Malaysia have verbalized their discontentment, alleging that the government has not been sufficiently firm and rigorous in affecting their development. The complaint from East Malaysia is that its Bumiputras have been foreshadowed by those in the West in meeting the attention of the central administration. The non-Malays, meanwhile, resound their cries of deprivation by the priorities accorded to the Bumiputras in the economic field.

These centrifugal demands, pulling the government in three apparent directions, are hardly the making of economic integration, less still political integration. The hierarchy of needs is the rational guideline for responding to the competing demands. J. M. Gullick identifies his priority in the following argument:

It is necessary for political reasons to pour money into improving the traditional peasant economy of the mass of the Malay population and into developing the backward Borneo territories. Only if these sectors of Malaysian society feel that the government is striving to narrow the gap between them and the modern, urban sector will multi-racial, federal Malaysia hold together.

The development of East Malaysia is imperative if the Alliance is to achieve a significant measure of territorial integration. The

amelioration of Malay peasant economy is also necessary to instil faith and evoke the willingness of the community to attain inter-ethnic integration. However, the 'constant pie' syndrome is prevalent and the same factors that foster integration on one level are prone to its destruction on another.

The paradox does not end here. Since its inception, a covenant made by the Alliance has been to mobilize political participation in Malaysia. True to its words, all ethnic groups have since been widely enfranchised. But the immediate result of this expanded participation by the respective ethnic groups in the political process is derogative from the intention with which it was brought to bear. Instead of promoting, it has undermined Malaysian national unity as opposition parties are increasingly able to draw competitive support from those individuals and associations who approach the political system for rewards and assistance.

In effect, the wider political participation has worked against the diverse efforts of the Alliance to achieve a healthy level of integration. And, as if politics itself has been less than demanding, many areas that are generally in themselves apolitical have been entrenched in politics by virtue of being the discriminating factors of ethnicity. Language and education are, inter alia, the pressing issues confronting the government.

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1 It was estimated by B. Simandjuntak in *Malayan Federalism 1945-1963* (Kuala Lumpur and Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 69, that 85-90 per cent of the potential electorate in Malaya have been registered as voters. It could be assumed that the estimation for the entire federation would not vary too widely from his quotation.

2 Enloe, op. cit., p. vii.
Critical Choices for Integration

In a modernizing country, education is an imperative vehicle for transporting the polity from the state of ascription-oriented to that of achievement-oriented, from traditionality to modernity. The Alliance government presently allocates about 20 per cent of its annual budget to the cause of education. By providing free primary education, the government demonstrates its capacity to move expeditiously towards development.

Education, however, does have its implications that are not necessarily ingratiating to the ruling elites. Huntington posits that

...in virtually all modernizing countries no government can count for long on support from the intellectual community. If there is any cleavage which is virtually universal in modernizing countries, it is the cleavage between government and university.¹

Prior to the establishment of the University of Malaya in the federal capital—Kuala Lumpur—in early 1962, higher education for Malaysians was catered to by the University of Malaya in Singapore, since renamed the University of Singapore. In 1969 and 1970, the University of Penang and the National University respectively came into existence. While neither of the latter two institutions was in the position to involve itself in the events of the last federal elections, 1969 witnessed the emergence of the student body of the University of Malaya, particularly the Malay faction, as an interest articulation group.

¹Huntington, op. cit., p. 371.
Also taking an historic step towards an overtly active role in politics were the students of the Mara Institute of Technology (ITM), an institution dedicated to providing higher vocational education to Bumiputras. Their mobilization into political participation, even before reaching the eligible age for voting in most instances, has a significant implication on the inter-ethnic integrative effort of the Alliance government. It seems that the Party has arrived at that inevitable stage in progress when it is to be confronted by hard core resistance among the very individuals it has nurtured for societal development.

When the Alliance first formed the independent government, it placed a high expectation on being able to integrate the younger educable generation. By 1969, however, it was obvious that, coincidentally perhaps, it had been reinforcing latent communalism. The rallying calls of the students were in support of Malay interests (or non-Malay interests) and not those of the Party.

But to try and quell such unrest and assure future non-violence could easily invoke authoritarianism. The Alliance has to tread on delicate terrain: it cannot afford to suppress the dynamism of intellectual pursuit; equally important is the need to de-socialize the individuals who constitute the most fertile source for political recruitment. To impose its formula for inter-ethnic integration could well provoke the wrath of its intelligentsia in proportions it could not effectively contain. Yet, to let them proceed with their communalist views unmodified is to acquiesce the permeation of destructive impurities into the political culture.
As in the case of the economy, educational development has not yielded for the Alliance the political integration to which it aspires. A closer look at certain policies of the Party is in order so that they might explicate the nature of the drawbacks.

The Alliance, from the outset, has been imbued with the concept of Malaysianizing its public sector. It has also promulgated a quota system whereby the recruitment in the social services is to be in the ratio of four Bumiputras to one non-Malay. To convert its dream into reality, the educational facilities have had to be expanded to allow more of its educable adolescents the opportunity for higher and better education.

As in colonial times, however, educational centers are constructed in urban areas, where they are more accessible to non-Malays. It is reported that, as recently as 1966-1967, 70 per cent of the students enrolled in the university were of non-Malay origin.¹ Subsequently, a quota system for the university intake was proposed by Dr. Mahathir Mohamed (who later became a key opposition figure against Tunku Abdul Rahman's political stance). It has, ostensibly, been seriously espoused, for the proportion of Malay students in the University of Malaya had increased to 43.73 per cent by the 1971-1972 academic session.²

The numerical gain does little in the way of attracting the Malays to either the Alliance or the non-Malays. To begin with, the increment in their numbers has expanded only their ethnic student body in the non-science departments; the areas of science, engineering and medicine remain almost totally dominated by non-Malays. Since qualification in

² Malaysia Year Book for 1972, op. cit., p. 351.
the latter disciplines furnishes the individual with more rewarding compensations, both in terms of salary and social status, the Malays persistently feel that the government has been dilatory in safeguarding their interests in the realm of education.

Under all these centrifuging circumstances, it is difficult to objectively gauge whether the polity, in terms of political integration, has thus far progressed or regressed. Regardless of this assessment, the realities are strongly indicative of the fact that the ultimate integration is not to be attained by random successes in disparate areas but by the generalized and synthesized development in all the relevant facets of the political culture.

It must be conceded that the Alliance is working against great odds. The political culture willed to it by the British was marred by many fissures cutting across and along ethnic lines. Secondly, the leaders of the Alliance belong to a small class of the privileged in education, wealth and political knowledge, persuading observers to conclude that they have more in common with each other than with the communities they purportedly represent. Thirdly, and most importantly, the Party is fraught with internal disparities that exude contradictions to the goal of political integration.

Politics of Disunity

It is no secret that the central Alliance Party has been suffering from a cancerous affliction known as disaffection. As early as 1959, trouble began to brew when Dr. Lim Chong Eu, the President of the MCA protested the inequitable allocation of seats for a forthcoming election.
He had made a request for 40 but was allowed 28 by the Alliance National Council. He remarked, then, that:

The fear of Malaysians of other racial origins—Chinese, Indians, Eurasians—is simply one of fear of Malay communism....The fear still remains and it is kept alive by the provision of the constitution, which allows amendment of the constitution with a two-thirds majority.

An ultimatum was finally sent to the Tunku: either the MCA was allowed 35 seats or it would contest the election under its own banner. The Tunku issued a reply that did not disguise any conciliatory effort. The allocation for the MCA was subsequently raised to 31, but the extent of the rift had been too wide for Dr. Lim to be appeased by the afterthought. He resigned shortly thereafter and later formed the United Democratic Party to channel opposition against the Alliance's educational policies.

The Tunku, himself, had temporarily resigned in 1959 to undertake reparation of the Party for the election. Ominously, he pronounced that "The real danger facing the Alliance is not from the opposition. I do not fear their challenges. The real danger is from the Alliance itself."

After the formation of Malaysia, the sources of crises are expanded with added responsibilities. UMNO, which has appointed itself the patriarch, is now to have to accommodate several other progenies from the distant East. This soon proved to be a domestic chore for which it is rather ill-equipped. On several occasions, it has stooped to the tactical practice of pulling rank to resolve intra-party conflicts.

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The resignations of Donald Stephens and Stephen Kalong Ningkan from the Chief Ministerial posts in Sabah and Sarawak, respectively, were thus precipitated in the mid-60's.

The Alliance cadre is prone to the kind of emotionalism that is unbecoming of a leader. The 'old guards' have not been reasonably receptive to criticism or opposition; instead they invoke hegemony to evoke compliance. Many of the dissidents have been ousted or eased out of the organization: those who sense the adverse consequences to their own future have chosen to purr instead of bark. The Party is, residually, given the guise of cohesion. And a cynical conclusion that would not be difficult to entertain is that the euphoria for having snuffed the fire may have blinded the elite to the smoldering.

The emotionality of the Alliance cadre was never more evident than in the period immediately surrounding the 1969 communal violence. Even as the party was returned to power, albeit with deflated support, the leaders reacted in the surly manner that would convey the impression that they had been dealt a total defeat. This behavior could be understood, not excused, in light of the fact that, since birth, the Party has been pampered by never having to experience defeat. Ready to lynch a scapegoat and propagate their communalist ideology, the few 'ultras' within it hastily pointed an accusing finger at the MCA for making a poor showing at the polls. Implicit was the suggestion that without it UMNO would have gained a more decisive victory. The Tunku

\[1\] The Alliance won 66 out of the 104 seats and 48.41 per cent of the vote in West Malaysia in 1969. In addition, 10 seats were won uncontested in Sabah. PMIP won 12 seats, Peoples' Progressive Party 14 seats, Gerakan Party 8 seats, and the Democratic Action Party 10 seats.
was, also, ridiculed as a Sinophile.

The most audible voice to denounce the Tunku was that of Dr. Mahathir, an Alliance member of Parliament, who called for his resignation with a letter and a petition for which he mustered the support of the Malay students of the University of Malaya. This is the very kind of setback which the leadership, thus far, has not conditioned itself to accommodate with objectivity; the Tunku ordered the immediate expulsion of the man from the Party. Dr. Mahathir, however, was a respected intellect and the students rallied behind him, reverberating his demands across the campus. After all, they too have had their grievances against the Administration. Dr. Mahathir subsequently wrote a book entitled *The Malay Dilemma* which was promptly banned in Malaysia based on the justification that it was provocative literature. The conduct of the government in the entire matter disenchanted the intelligentsia and the rest of the Malay masses, transporting them further towards alienation.

The internal struggles of the Alliance snowballed, invariably weakening the Party at each turn. The MCA and the MIC declared their intention, in the heat of the riots, to abstain from participation in the cabinet although it shall remain in the Alliance. While the *conservatives* in UMNO lauded this action, the moderates, who persist as the power wielders in the Alliance, were not ready for this drastic rearrangement of the Party decor. The deliberate exclusion of Tun Tan Siew Sin from the Cabinet at that critical point would have been a severe laceration on the political kinship between the UMNO and the MCA. Not only is he a direct descendant of the founding fathers of his party
and the Alliance but he is also the most prominent Chinese in the cadre and one who is well-liked and accepted by many Malays. He was restored to his former position as Minister of Finance but resigned in April, 1974, on the grounds of failing health. His departure does not merely create a void in the Cabinet but, more importantly, it also enervates the already receding ties between UMNO and the MCA.

The Tunku himself resigned in September 1970 when it was made plain to him that he no longer claimed the confidence of the majority of the Malay populace. The personal weaknesses he displayed towards the end of his reign superseded the many historic deeds that he had performed for the nation. But, in the political process, this form of turnover is as common as it is dreaded.

The leadership transition was relatively peaceful with Tun Abdul Razak assuming the position of Prime Minister and appointing a close friend and associate, Tun Dr. Ismail, as his Deputy. The latter was an experienced and able politician who had consistently maintained a moderate posture vis-à-vis the non-Malays. Unfortunately, he passed away in 1973. The Prime Minister has found himself drawing increasingly on the services of newer and younger political aspirants whose appendage to the Party lacks the link of sentimentality characteristic of his fellow pioneers. What this will do in terms of bridging the intraparty cleavages and those between the Party and the masses will be put to the test at the general elections scheduled to take place in 1974.

In the final analysis, what has been revealed by the brief survey of the intra-party politics is the pressing need for the bridging of the multiple rifts threatening the decomposition of the Alliance. Only
after the Party itself has achieved a measurable level of integration will political integration be a meaningful objective within its competence. Its conduct as a party is projected on its performance as a government. Unfortunately, it took a bloodstained catharsis in 1969 to make the Party more circumspect.

Significance of the 1969 Communal Violence

The communal violence of 1969 was a historic point in Malaysian politics that bore a strange irony. On the one hand, it was massively destructive, materially and psychologically, especially to middle-Malaysians. On the other hand, however, it was a functional phenomenon in that it sensitized the Alliance leadership as well as other politicians to the societal truisms that they had constantly eluded. Most never bothered to re-examine their role and efficacy in affecting the political life of the society; feedback was neither actively sought nor effectively discharged in the decision making function. Thus, preoccupied with grandiose plans for the nation of the future they myopically neglected the people of the present.

The bitter lesson learned post facto, and upon the demise of the laymen, is that political integration is not purchasable with the granting of either political privileges or economic compensations. Neither the Bumiputras nor the non-Malays would accept one without the other. Nor is political integration manifestly synonymous with political participation. The incident further illustrated that integration cannot be forged by the conjuration of an imaginary enemy such as the
communists. True, the terrorists still exist in the border jungles and pose a lingering threat to the country; but, to hang every infliction on 'communist infiltrators' is a simplistic interpretation of complex politics. It is both irresolute and illusory. Also, the nation was made to realize that political integration for Malaysia is not derivable through a communal formula which indulges one ethnic category and constrains others. Lastly, except to the obstinate, it has driven home the point that neither the victory nor the defeat of the Alliance or any one party could resolve the problem of political integration. Resolution could only be predicated on the collective effort of the polity with the guidance of able leadership. While governance could be entrusted to a few, political integration requires the will and the support of all, for any one group, at this vulnerable stage in Malaysian politics, could subvert the entire contributions towards this end.

With these realizations lodged in their conscience, the Alliance leaders finally braced themselves to make a long overdue gesture for a 'coalition' with their most prominent opponents, viz. the PMIP, the Gerakan Party headed by Dr. Lim Chong Eu (formerly of the UDP) and the Democratic Action Party. At first, with the creation of the National Operations Council (NOC) and the suspension of parliament upon declaration of emergency rule, many skeptical inferences were made in regard to the confiscation of democracy. But parliamentary rule was resumed and with it the mobilization of efforts to establish a working relationship with the Oppositions. Through diplomatic agility the government achieved this feat with the pledge of cooperation by the leaders of PMIP
and the Gerakan at the national level. The former, with its exclusively Malay following and the latter, with a largely Chinese membership, would give the Alliance a better sense of purpose maintaining its inter-communal position. And the integration achieved at this height, if sustained, will in time trickle to the grassroots.

Communalism as an ideology is obstructive to political integration. In fact, by virtue of the demographic distribution of the population, it is not even practicable beyond a limited sense and the confines of ethnic boundaries. Non-communalism is, on the other end of the continuum, too idealistic a configuration to procure, especially in view of the fact that the respective ethnic groups are too deeply entrenched in certain primordial considerations. The Alliance, from all vantage points, has struck a happy medium in its inter-communal persuasion. However, its brand of inter-communalism could stand a few revisions beginning with the restructuring of the Alliance itself. The diminutive role played by the members of the MCA and MIC is no substantiation for its claim to be integrative.
CHAPTER FIVE
THE ALLIANCE AND THE FOUR PROBLEM AREAS OF MALAYSIAN INTEGRATION

As mentioned at the outset of this study, for Malaysia to attain political integration, four levels of integrational problems have to be contained, viz. inter-ethnic, intra-ethnic, elite-mass and territorial. At this juncture, the role played by the Alliance in countering these social enigmas will be evaluated. It should be borne in mind that these are not disparate problem areas; as such, the activities of the Alliance with regard to them are diffused and overlapping. They will be dealt with separately in the ensuing discussion merely as an analytical expedience.

Inter-ethnic Integration

The Alliance, by the terms of demography, ideally symbolizes the 'ought' of society, that no one ethnic group should exclusively dictate and disseminate the socio-political rights of the multi-ethnic culture. The Alliance, by the terms of indigenous history, is a traitorous compromise of basic rights: it reflects the cowardly acceptance, on the part of the Malay elites, of the colonial sin. And the Alliance, by its own terms, is a merger of equals by default as opposed to popular representation; its legitimacy, in this respect, is subject to skepticism.

With these inherent contradictions, it is little wonder that the Alliance exudes the misunderstanding and is itself often misunderstood. A government that is predicated on ambiguity cannot beget definitive
results. Enloe contends that, underlying the encouragement of cultural pluralism and institutional pluralism, is the policy of procrastination; the government is merely postponing judgment and perpetuating ambiguity.¹

That the Alliance has tried cannot ever be doubted. Most of its leaders have conscientiously directed their energy towards promulgating a progressive society. However, as argued earlier, a society that is progressive economically is not necessarily a society that is politically integrated for the two are not synonymous. Granted, for progress to take place, a minimum amount of integration has to be present in the polity because lacking this, a society either stagnates or regresses. Minimal integration is, nonetheless, an insufficient condition for ensuring the viability of the nation.

The Alliance has hoped that the symbols of national unity which it had initially introduced, e.g., the national anthem and language, would suffice in bringing about such unity. These symbols are being used in other nations and, generally, they are effective provided the people themselves have the will to cooperate with the leadership. Such a will, however, has either been consciously repressed or never evolved in the political mind of the people. The status of the national anthem, for instance, has been reduced to a mockery. An accurate observation made in this regard is that

The distance that must be traversed before Malaysia can be considered as a unified nation is demonstrated every evening in Kuala Lumpur's Chinese cinemas where not a single member of the audience (except for an occasional foreign diplomat) will rise for the national anthem.²

¹Enloe, op. cit., pp. 45-45.

The fate of the language as the symbol of unity has been protected only by the legislative order which makes it mandatory for a student completing his senior year in high school to obtain a passing grade in Bahasa Malaysia before he is awarded a full diploma. The non-Malays, not surprisingly, construes this as another manifestation of authoritarianism prejudicial to their interests. One must, nevertheless, sympathize with the government's position in this context. The non-Malays want their cake and eat it too; they have demanded all the rights of a fully domiciled citizen while insisting on asserting their cultural preferences regardless whether these obstruct the path of unity. Even the most democratic of leadership cannot tolerate this insolence and maintain its integrity.

The application of language as an integrative factor is inadvertently mitigated by the freedom allowed in various other cultural expressions. Even though vernacular education has been permitted to continue with drastic delimitations, for instance, the fact that it does exist in organized form invariably and inevitably exposes successive generations to and perpetuates communalism. Yet the Alliance could only restrict such education so far; to exceed the present constrictions is to eviscerate the institutions and perpetrate a bloody battle for survival.

It is obvious that in attempting to integrate the various ethnic groups the Alliance is working with limited resources; accordingly, its achievements have been limited. At times, those resources that are available are not deployed with the best of strategies. More often than not the government is negligent about communicating with the masses to enlighten them of their environing situation. Knowledge may help
to moderate fear but ignorance only reinforces it. When masses are not
advised of but protected from the events of political significance, they
speculate and imagine the worst, and their enemy is always embodied in
an ethnic group other than their own.

To a certain degree, this paucity in communication stoked the major
communal violence which erupted in 1969. About four days after the
crisis began, it was ruled that all news of the crisis were to be dis­
seminated by the Information Coordinating Center (ICC) under the aegis
of the NOC. The ICC, however, released "infrequent bulletins...couched
in repetitious generalities." It was further reported that "Rumors
contribute to tension because the Malaysian Government's official pro-
ouncements are believed by no one." Subsequently, the 1948 Sedition
Act was amended to make the raising of issues that will incite communal
resentments a federal offense. This enactment, in addition,

...prohibits utterances or printed statements which appear
to question (1) special position of Malays and other Indigenous
groups; (2) Malay as national language; (3) citizenship
rights of any ethnic group; and (4) rights and sovereignty
of Malay rulers.

If the Alliance has hoped to foster integration by these legislative
actions, it has a considerable amount of reckoning to do and must
delete the erroneous premise. The curtailment of the freedom of ex-
pression does not promote congeniality between the ethnic groups;

1Felix Gagliano, Communal Violence in Malaysia 1969: The Political
Aftermath (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies,

by Gagliano, loc. cit., p. 27.

3Marvin Rogers, "Malaysia/Singapore: Problems and Challenges of
instead, it breeds resentment, suspicion and distrust that are all repressed. At the sign of the slightest provocation, there is every reason to believe that these emotions are going to prevail over common-sense.

Perhaps, the immediate result of such restraint is peaceful coexistence. But, as has been argued earlier, political integration of a viable nature is cultivated; any situation which projects the semblance of unity and materializes overnight must be suspect in terms of its longevity. The Alliance was not totally oblivious to the dangers. The party cadre espoused a plan for a Malaysian ideology or 'Rukunegara' which advances five principles of national unity: Belief in God, Loyalty to the King and Country, Upholding the Constitution, Rule of Law and Good Behavior and Morality.

While the timing of the gesture is of empirical interest, the ideation which cradles the plan is neither original nor inspiring. It is a rehash of what any Malaysian of average intelligence could identify as constituting some of the basic requirements for personal and the higher level of political integration. This marked another flight into generality.

Enloe describes the Malaysian government's integrative strategy as being two-pronged.

First, there has been an effort to leave the ultimate vision of an eventually unified Malaysia relatively vague, open to numerous interpretations. In addition, policy-makers have shown a distinct preference for proceeding toward integration through gradualism and administrative tinkering rather than by sweeping reform.¹

¹Enloe, op. cit., p. 36.
As indicated earlier, the main thrust of Alliance's policies has been to propagate economic well-being. While it is approaching its destination quantitatively, the success has not delivered the nation's populace to the desired level of inter-ethnic integration. The statistical gains, however, belie the fact that progress among the Bumiputras has not been in proportions that have been intended. And the Bumiputras are no longer satisfied with hollowed political privileges and platitudes: instead, they demand a greater share of material wealth for the assets accruing to the non-Malays constitute their relative deprivation. Somehow along the course of development, the zero-sum theory has been fed into the psychological repertoire of the nation, to the detriment of integration.

In the last analysis, inter-ethnic integration has not been successfully attained by the Alliance Party, at least not to the extent and tenacity that would ensure the nation's longevity. As in other instances, there seem to be many reasons one could draw on for rationalizing the situation. In general, two broad explanations could facilitate the understanding of the problem: (1) the Alliance itself is not well-integrated as an institution. As such, it could only fall short of being efficacious; and (2) the odds are higher against than for the achievement of inter-ethnic integration. By accident of history and by recent developments, partly perpetrated by the Alliance and partly circumstantial, the forces operating against the Party often exceed its competence.
Intra-ethnic Integration

The area of intra-ethnic integration is a delicate one to the extent that it underlines the alienation of peoples within the same communal group. To a large degree, the problems defined in this context approximate those in the area of elite-mass integration. There are many similarities between the factors that precipitate intra-ethnic dissonance and the ones that effect elite-mass disparity.

The focal point of intra-ethnic differences is the lack of consensus in regard to values. In each ethnic group, there is always a small contingent of elites who are almost invariably the products of Western education and who have wittingly adopted a Western life style. At the other extreme of the hierarchy are the sizeable masses still deeply entrenched in the conservative, ethnic modes of living. Their attitudes towards some facets of modernization have yet to undergo a time-consuming process of permutation before they are reconciliable to those of the elites.

These groups of individuals who are mostly illiterate or semi-illiterate are often easily swayed by rhetoric, particularly the type that is charged with primordial sentiments. Their choices in politics, in short, are predisposed to irrationality. Thus, those leaders who can convincingly claim to 'speak their language' can go to them directly for support. The PMIP, for one, has effectively exploited the religious values of the Malays in traditionally very conservative areas of West Malaysia. Others who cannot purport to have strong affinities require active services of 'intermediaries', usually individuals who have won
the respect and confidence of their local communities. The Alliance cadre belong mainly to the second category. This is especially true of those in the UMNO.

The impact of intra-ethnic cleavages has been projected most conspicuously in the last general election. The loss of electoral seats by the MCA was the reflection of the waning support given by the Chinese to its leadership. This, in turn, mirrored the lack of confidence in the MCA. The Chinese had strengthened their own belief that the party has betrayed them by not adequately advancing their interests to the government.

The threat to intra-ethnic integration comes not only from those on the lowest rungs of the society but also from the restive individuals perched on the margin between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. Such individuals are resentful of the destitute in their respective communities for their fatalistic acceptance of their lot in society. At the same time, they are disenchanted with the leaders for seemingly withholding the wealth for themselves and for not having alleviated the sufferings of their own people.

Wittingly or unwittingly, the marginal individuals or middle-Malaysians play a catalytic role in the determination of the nation's future. They are generally young and of varying levels of educational attainment. Being widely scattered, they may not be the source of substantial votes to any single candidate but should not be evaded only for this reason. In fact, they are the ones that the leadership must reach because they stand at the crossroads not only of intra-ethnic but all aspects of integration.
The Alliance has been conscious of this need to tap such sources or at least keep them in political perspective. The UMNO Youth Organization, the MCA Youth Organization and other such movements constitute a collectivized effort to channel energy and creativity into keeping the spirit of the community alive. However, this form of activity cannot avoid intensifying communalism which is, in turn, inimical to the cause of inter-ethnic integration.

The most critical intra-ethnic chasms have been found in the Alliance Party organization itself. Within each of the three main ethnic branches factionalism has, at one point or another, threatened the very foundation of the organization. UMNO had been the stage for the polarization of the 'ultras' and the 'moderates'. The former were, to varying degrees, sympathetic to the Pan-Malaysian union envisioned by Soekarno and his cohorts. What these individuals were striving for was not a Malaysian Malaysia but a Malay Malaysia. They wanted to mobilize the Malays to the position of unassailable and unequivocal supremacy. Thus, they were highly critical of UMNO's concessions to the non-Malays. The moderates, meanwhile, were set on maintaining at least the semblance of inter-communalism in the Alliance and in the policies enacted by the Party.

Similarly, there have been conflicts within the MCA and MIC between the 'reformers' and the 'old guards'. In late 1966, Sim Mow Yu, an MCA youth leader was ejected from party membership. Sim, who was the head of the Chinese School Teachers Association, had expressed a resentful view of the language policies of the government as recommended by the Razak and the Talib Reports. As recently as 1973,
An intra-party faction fight between 'reformers' and those ranged behind the veteran Tan Siew Sin...broke out publicly with the announcement on June 8 that a reform movement within the MCA had been inaugurated...Lin Keng Yaik, a leader of the reform faction...and the reformers alleged that Tan Siew Sin and his party veterans were allowing the Chinese case to go by default through inadequate presentation of their point of view in government deliberations. On August 9 Tan Siew Sin expelled several of the rebels....

In the MIC, the intra-ethnic conflict took the form of a scramble for leadership between the party veterans, Tun V.T. Sambathan and Tan Sri Manickavasagam, with victory for the latter in 1973, and, purportedly, for Indian economic reforms.

On the one hand, the cleavages just described are construable as nothing more than intra-party conflicts that support the contention that the Alliance Party itself is malintegrated. But, in a real sense, these discordances reflect the intra-ethnic differences regarding the role that each community should play in the functions of the polity. There are some in each group who are resigned to the Malay special position and to the inter-communalism promulgated by the Alliance as fait accomplis. There are also others among them who would challenge Malay primacy and seek to be partners whose equality is more than just lip-service. And finally, there is a miniscule faction in the larger communities who believe in the narrowest form of communalism that precludes participation by all others but those belonging to their own group.

There are other more peculiar differences within each ethnic group. Each community has its own pluralism of culture. It is estimated that

there are at least five commonly spoken Chinese dialects—Cantonese, Hokkien, Teochew, Hakka and Hailam—and nine Indian dialects. The generic term Malay is, also, deceiving. About the only point in common that the Malays of West Malaysia and East Malaysia have, culturally, is their profession of Islam as a religious preference. Among those defined as Chinese or Indians, there is not even this coterminality. There are many Chinese who are Buddhists while others are Christians, of several denominations, or pagans. The Indians are mainly Hindus and Christians. While these internal cultural variations are significant in intra-ethnic considerations, they are not as menacing as politically-induced ones and do not portend a veritable threat to their communal existence.

It may be concluded that, at least through primitive empiricism, the Alliance Party has managed to contain the environing obstacles to intra-ethnic integration. As mentioned earlier, the cooptation of 'congenial' leaders of opposition communal and allegedly non-communal parties into a working coalition have been successfully undertaken by the ruling elites, thus constellating the diverse intra-ethnic political viewpoints. However, the settlement of intra-ethnic disputes have not always been amicable. The methods employed for removing recalcitrants have, at times, verged on the realm of extra-constitutionality. Intra-ethnic integration, in general, is less than a formidable task to the Party cadre. There are, to begin with, factors of ethnicity that will always tend to hold each community, albeit loosely, together.
Elite-Mass Integration

The problem of elite-mass integration is not restricted to Malaysian politics; rather, it is a commonplace in the new nations and often prevails in older ones. It is only peculiar to the extent that, in the multiplicity of its ethnic constituents, the elite-mass cleavage cuts not along but across ethnic lines. However, it must be clarified that although the elites have a coterminality of interests, they are not to be presumed as being integrated.

It is suggested by Myron Weiner that more important than the attitudinal gap between the governors and the governed is the question of the attitude of the government towards its citizens.¹ In this regard, Grossholtz writes:

The language of politics (in Malaysia) is the language of the pulpit, exhorting the electorate to stay united, work hard, appreciate what the government has done, trust the leaders.... Inherent is the idea that the government knows best and will carry out programs to accomplish the common welfare.²

Growwholtz could not have been more precise for it is not a mere image that the Alliance government is constrictively paternalistic. Especially prior to the communal violence which shook the Party out of its political trance, communication with the masses have been sporadic and unilateral. The government has a knack for tuning off feedback especially those that are not amenable to its policies. More often than not, popular opinions are not being pursued.

¹Weiner, op. cit., p. 61.
²Grossholtz, op. cit., p. 337.
It stands to reason that this state of affairs cannot be prolonged without spurring public resentment. It has been posited that

The mere existence of differences in goals and values between the governing elite and the governed mass hardly constitutes disintegration as long as those who are governed accept the right of the governors to govern.¹

The diminishing mandate afforded the Alliance at the last (1969) polls² is indicative of the fact that this right is being widely questioned. The Alliance would have to make amendments, allowing the public more credibility in the conduct of politics.

Recognizing this fact yet unprepared for mass involvement in dialectics, the government implemented the National Consultative Council in 1970, congregating some 60 members of the government, the opposition, civil servants, and representatives of religious, business and other dominant institutions. The Council is encouraged to discuss issues that nourish discontentment within and among communities to promote "intercommunal cooperation, social integration, and the growth of a Malaysian sense of national identity."³ Cynically, one could dismiss this move as 'noblesse oblige'; the people drawn into the Council are, moreover, not from the grassroots. But, if the government has found itself lacking the capacity to engage in direct dialogue with the masses thus far, this is indeed an unpretentious measure of cybernetics.

¹Weiner, op. cit., p. 60.

²In 1964, the Alliance Party won 89 out of the 104 parliamentary seats for West Malaysia and 58.3 per cent of the popular vote. In 1969, the Party secured only 66 seats and 49 per cent of the vote.

³Rogers, op. cit., p. 122.
The differences underlying the divergences between the elites and the masses are manifestly couched in the scheme of values, transcending ethnicity. While the masses are encouraged or compelled to comply with governmental policies, particularly in the areas of language and education, the elites display little effort to minimize their veneration of things Western, including the English language. They enroll their children in foreign schools and universities where they adopt not only the knowledge but also the alien way of life, removing themselves further from the masses and accentuating the lines of stratification.

In conclusion, while the government cannot be vindicated for the laxity in elite-mass communication, many other manifestations of the elite-mass gap are products of societal evolution that are beyond the preventive means of the Alliance unless it exercises the tools of oppression. Undeniably, some of the champions of Bahasa Malaysia are guilty of contributing to the preservation of the colonial legacies by sponsoring the education of their progenies in English-speaking countries. Their action, however, has been rationalized, and justifiably so, on the grounds that the pursuit of advanced education for the amelioration of society must outweigh immediate communal interests. Also justifiably, from the viewpoint of the masses, this has created a credibility gap. For the Alliance as a ruling body, the primary concern must be to foster elite-mass integration through establishing better reciprocal communication between itself and the citizens. Towards this realization it has taken a modest but commendable initiative.
Territorial Integration

The problem of territorial integration for Malaysia, as suggested earlier, pertains mainly to the political synthesis between its Western and more developed region and the Eastern wing of the nation. The challenges posed by this problem are thus pertinent not so much to issue of the viability of the nation, although ultimately it would arrive at that, but to the immediate question of the viability of the federation. Theoretically, "In time the control over territory may be accompanied by a feeling of common nationality... but there must first of all be territorial integration."¹

For the peoples of Sabah and Sarawak, the termination of British colonial rule in their native land, the gaining of their sovereignty and the realignment with another Asian country occurred simultaneously and perhaps a little too rapidly for them to gain their political bearing. Latent politicians enterprisingly availed of the opportunity which this situation presented to create political parties purportedly to defend local interests. Most of these parties were sufficiently impressed by the intentions of the Alliance Party to form their own regional alliances rallied behind the central government.

For Sabah and Sarawak, there were cogent reasons to persuade acquiescence to the merger plans even if they had had strong misgivings initially. About the time that the merger was in the offing, the Philippines pronounced its claim on Sabah, invoking the mandate of the

¹Weiner, op. cit., p. 57.
Sultan of Sulu. Soekarno, then, occupied the stage, first with his verbal denunciations of the proposal and, subsequently, with armed aggression. The British may not have instituted sweeping reforms for modernization in both the states, but their administration was perceived as benevolent. With Soekarno's designs of Pan-Malaysianism, it was doubtful if he would have been equally disposed to the populace, particularly those of Chinese origin.

It would not be accurate to argue that the peoples of Sabah and Sarawak acted under duress although they did have compelling reasons to pitch their support in the merger. They saw in Malaysia a satisfactory pluralist structure for the safeguard of the future. Thus, it is imperative that inter-communalism persevere; political communalism will defeat the fundamental intent of the merger.

To allay the basic fears of East Malaysians, mainly in those areas to which West Malaysians have been sensitive such as language and special rights, the government expanded the competence of Article 153 to embrace all the tribal groups defined as 'indigenous'. In regard to the language issue, while 1967 was set as the target date for implementing Bahasa Malaysia as the official language in West Malaysia, East Malaysia was allowed a grace period to end in 1973. The Malaysianization of the civil services was, further, allowed to proceed at a lesser velocity. Freedom of religious expression is permitted as in West Malaysia with a slight difference: while Islam has been declared as the official religion in West Malaysia, this piece of legislation was waived in the case of the East.
Apparently, these have not been effective stimuli for territorial integration. The special rights, it has been charged, have not been equitably maintained; a specific charge that the Malays in Sarawak enjoy preferential treatment in the allocation of development funds as opposed to other indigenous groups has been levelled at the central government. With regard to the question of language, Bahasa Malaysia has been an integral part of the West Malaysian culture by virtue of being the mother tongue of the Malays. In East Malaysia, the lingua franca is adulterated or 'bazaar' Malay while the purer form of the language is quite alien to the masses. Facility of usage could only evolve slowly. In terms of the Malaysianization plan, East Malaysia lacks the manpower to fill most of the positions vacated by the repatriation of the colonial officers. They do not cherish the idea of having West Malaysians invade their civil service and neither are the West Malaysians generally enthusiastic about serving in that region.

Because the Alliance government is highly centralized, Sabah and Sarawak affairs are discussed and determined in Kuala Lumpur instead of in Kota Kinabalu (the capital of Sabah) or Kuching (the capital of Sarawak). The Alliance feels comfortable with this centralization of power because it generally allows the leadership to dictate the allocation of resources on its own political terms. This arrangement has worked well prior to the merger when the Alliance needed only to control the eleven states of mainland Malaya where there is widespread knowledge of one another.

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But a formula that has long been accepted in West Malaysia has invoked resentment in East Malaysia. The Easterners are disturbed by the fact that their lives are being manipulated by the claws of an invisible government. The highhanded manner with which the Alliance cadre handled the disputes involving Donald Stephens, then Chief Minister of Sabah, and Stephen Kalong Ningkan, then Chief Minister of Sarawak, mainly for questioning the policies of the central clique toward their respective states, reinforced the fear of oppression in East Malaysia.

In 1969, the Alliance government made another move that was construed as contradictory to democratic principles. Upon the outbreak of violence in West Malaysia, the administration issued a restraining order to postpone the election that was in process in East Malaysia. Observers were inclined to interpret the step as a strategy to prevent the excessive loss of seats in that area. These and other reasons such as the superiority complex of West Malaysians in their relationship with their Eastern counterparts have mitigated the efforts geared specifically towards promoting territorial integration. Ongkili is only optimistic when he concluded that "The 1970's should experience fewer problems and an increasing understanding of the process of federalism and a lessening of regional feelings."1

It would not be unreasonable to speculate that the lack of such understanding emanates from the fact that federalism, in the general sense of the word, does not operate in the Malaysian government.

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1Ongkili, op. cit., p. 37.
"Federalism has been used in the Federation of Malaya," it is argued, "but unitarianism to govern."¹

In assessing the events leading up to the present, one could only conclude that territorial integration of East Malaysia has not been substantially obtained by the Alliance. By the last count, there are two East Malaysians serving in the Federal Cabinet. But these minor concessions do not make territorial integration. In fact, territorial integration cannot be achieved as long as (1) the Alliance's blueprint of federalism is not adequately revised to relinquish some of the powers of central to the state governments; (2) the special rights of the indigenous are not equitably safeguarded and transformed into economic progress, and (3) East Malaysians are not treated and respected as equals by the leaders and the peoples of West Malaysia. The attitudinal change required is the function of political socialization for which the government should necessarily assume responsibility.

Summary

The preceding overview has revealed that the Alliance Party has not satisfactorily rectified all the problematic, indeed sometimes exacerbated some, aspects of integration. It must be concluded, therefore, that political integration has not been substantively attained by the Party. There are two ostensible factors that have impeded such attainment: (1) the ineptitude of the Alliance Party emanating from the fact that its organizational structure is not cohesive; and

¹Grossholtz, op. cit., p. 327.
(2) the accelerated growth in the economic and the educational institutions and mobilization of political participation have inspired the curiosity and articulation by the masses to question the disparities that these have elicited. There is however, the other side of the coin. The Malaysian polity is fraught with inherent cleavages many of which are not conducive to integration in the immediate future.

In the last analysis, it is not so much that inter-communalism is non-effectual for it would be maintained that, at least momentarily, it is the most practical political formula in contrast to communalism and non-communalism. Rather, inter-communalism within the Alliance Party itself has not been effectively exercised; thus, the inter-communalism. Rather, inter-communalism within the Alliance Party itself has not been effectively exercised; thus, the inter-communalism which it tries to superimpose on the polity cannot be effective.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The problems of integration for Malaysia are visibly compounded by diverse variables, some generated by accidents of the historical past and devolved to successive generations while others are imputable only to present political leadership or lack of it.

The catalyst of malintegration in the Malaysian society is its pluralism. Like a cancerous infliction, the problem may have had a chance of being remedied conclusively at its infancy. But, the colonials, or, for that matter, the Malays, had no premonition (or wittingly ignored it) that the multiethnicity they brewed was to ferment into a phenomenon as potent as that which presently threatens the viability of the nation.

It was, indeed, a tarnished society that the Alliance Party inherited from its governing predecessors. Clearly, the Party assumed command with a severe handicap; guidance of a neophyte nation is demanding in itself without the corrupting legacies of historical indiscretion. However, one cannot extricate the Alliance just as one cannot overlook the part played by the British in perpetrating the political disjunctures in Malaysia. The executive role consigns responsibility to the Party while investing it with power. The Alliance is, therefore, morally obligated to demonstrate as well as exercise leadership to harmonize the centrifugal elements of the society.

As apparent through the preceding discussion of the Alliance
operations, however, the Party leaders are prone to discharging the kind of leadership that is fused with authoritarianism released by emotionalism. Their capability for moral leadership in an exemplary capacity is limited on account that the Party is fraught with infrastructural cleavages that are tangible to the masses. A Party of such demeanor cannot effectually integrate the polity which it purports to lead.

What the Alliance has achieved for the society since its investiture are, theoretically, the dynamics of development: economic progress, educational advancement, and mass political participation. Yet, the society is less politically stable today than it was at the outset of independence. This is due, ostensibly, to the fact that the proceeds of that development have not been meted out equitably among the contending ethnic groups.

The Alliance's manifest leadership function is to promote the economy of the Bumiputras while expanding the political privileges of the non-Bumiputras to attain a socio-economic equilibrium that would abate political tensions. What it has done, in effect is to increase both the economic and political well-being of the non-Bumiputras in greater proportion and more rapidly than what is materially accomplished for augmenting the economic base of the Bumiputras. Meanwhile, the policies designed and displayed appear, semantically, to be overly solicitous towards Bumiputras, causing concern and disaffection among non-Bumiputras. In substance, however, the policies have backfired in that the advancement of the Bumiputras lag behind that of the non-Bumiputras, agitating the former and reinforcing their resentment towards the latter. Consequently, instead of attaining an increasing amount of integration,
the society may, in fact, have been dissolving some of the cohesiveness that pre-existed.

In retrospect, the Alliance has, perceivably, tried to institute widespread institutional reforms which exacerbate the integrational problems because they accentuate inter-ethnic disparities simultaneously, thus allowing the leaders little opportunity for attending to each cleavage before it transcends manageability. A combination of the 'blitzkrieg' strategy and Fabianism, perhaps, would have been more efficacious. Incrementalism affords ruling elites regular intervals wherein to review and assess their programs and determine whether any group or ethnic community is being alienated and showing disaffection toward the government or any other community. A government which confines its attention to vertical growth risks losing sight of horizontal relevance, and the Alliance has fallen into this empirical trap.

In the language of Deutsch, bilateral communications have to be developed between the government and the governed to effect understanding and cohesion. Towards this end, the Alliance has made a modest start. Weiner and Levine have suggest the significance of political socialization in fostering a community of attitudes among members of a society. This is the task of political leaders; in terms of performing this function the Alliance has demonstrated a lack of aptitude.

While the Alliance has failed to achieve a meaningful amount of political integration for the Malaysian society, it is pertinent to contemplate whether integration is attainable and, if so, by what formula.

At this juncture in Malaysian politics, inter-ethnic disparities
are more conspicuous especially because there is a growing class of articulate and informed masses who are politically conscious and observant of social realities. On the one hand, this is a mark of development as the masses increasingly make demands upon the system that becomes progressively difficult, quantitatively and qualitatively, to satisfy. These demands appear even more inordinate when they are articulated by two competing ethnic blocs—the indigenous and the non-indigenous—whose interests are, generally, diametrically opposed, and will remain so as long as the 'constant pie' syndrome prevails.

In view of the repelling circumstances, speculations have been audible with regard to the activity of the military as a contender for political primacy. Since the riots of 1969, the Alliance government has formulated a comradely working relationship with the military's top brass. In fact, to many foreign observers, the riots woke the sleeping giant; and, a military regime is not a novelty in that region of the world. However, the military in Malaysia is not dominated by any one ethnic group. While the niche at the vertex is the privilege of a Malay, a rough distribution of ranking personnel is such that the Malays command the army, an Indian directs the navy, and, while the chief of the air force is a Malay, many of his pilot officers are Chinese. Given this pluralism, the military, if it were to assume the executive stance in the foreseeable future, could only reconstitute inter-communalism as a governing policy.

And inter-communalism will never foster the highest desired and attainable level of integration. By its very nature, it supports the equal rights of the ethnic groups and is obliged to safeguard these
rights as impartially as possible. In doing so, it invariably perpetuates extant disparities, thus causing or reviving disaffection and resentment among one group toward another. The alternative—communalism—is not a pragmatic solution for cultivating political integration while it may produce a semblance of cohesiveness through coercion. In light of the multiethnicity of the society, coercion could only be effected with the cooperation of a unified military and, possible, exogenous assistance. However, even if such an oppressive tactic is operational, the governing body could be no more than ephemeral for it will eventually trigger a massive conflict involving interested foreign factions. The ideal—non-communalism—could only remain an ideal. There are too many inherent cultural differences between ethnic groups to render such a solution practicable.

Given the contradictions that beset its society, a cogent conclusion is that inter-communalism is Malaysia's option for survival. Paradoxically, if it follows this route, Malaysia will not achieve the highest level of observable political integration. Morally, one can advance the argument that partial success in cultivating political integration is more worthwhile than complete attainment of coerced integration, for only with the former can Malaysia survive as a nation.

If one accepts the contention that inter-communalism is the answer to Malaysia's quest for integration, then, it may be asked why the Alliance, professing inter-communalism, has failed to achieve a substantial level of political integration. The explanation lies, ostensibly, in the fact that there is a discrepancy between the inter-communalism that the Party professes and that which it practices.
The Alliance is not, as supposedly, an association of equals, with the waning role of the MCA and the diminutive role of the MIC. Only after a reorientation towards equitability will the Party be able to apply its philosophy as a national ideology. In short, the Party has the right 'political formula' but its ingredients will need an improvement in quality.

In the final analysis, it is difficult to visualize the obliteration of a nation that is thriving economically just as it is difficult to envision its total integration emanating from an amicable spirit of political identification. What is easier perceived is its survival, perhaps not as a paradigm of integration, but with enduring countenance that will outlive the Alliance Party.
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