

3. From Malay Nationalism to a Malaysian Nation?

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THE FEDERATION OF MALAYA gained its independence in 1957. Singapore and the Borneo states of Sabah and Sarawak joined with Malaya in 1963 to make the new country of Malaysia.¹ But the creation of an enlarged Malaysian federation never diluted Malay nationalism or confused the Malays as to “who belongs to the nation.” The cleavages dividing the Malays from the non-Malays—the latter a residual category comprising mostly Chinese and Indians—coincide closely for race, religion, and culture² and have been the most salient political problem in Malaysia. Nationalism in Malaysia has always been associated with the Malays, as the indigenous race, while the group aspirations of the “immigrant races” have been marginalized as expressions of ethnic chauvinism.

This chapter seeks to explore the evolution of Malay nationalism from its fiery inception to the proposed goal of an ethnically inclusive civic nationalism.³ Today, after three decades of elaborate economic preferences and with demographic changes making them a safe majority,⁴ Malays are more sociopolitically and economically secure. This has allowed the government to articulate an ambitious goal of transforming, in thirty years, the basis of national identity in Malaysia from an ethnic-based form to a civic one it calls *Bangsa Malaysia*,⁵ that is, from the fourth variant of Lowell Barrington’s typology (“ethnic nation-protecting”) to his third variant of “civic nation-building.” However, because the Malay elites can and do periodically manipulate Malay fears and raise nationalist feelings for immediate political advantage, it is doubtful that the goal of achieving a civic nationalism can be achieved in the short term.

This chapter considers nationalism, with its great mobilizing power, to be largely, but not entirely, an elite-driven or constructed process. Still, as Barrington notes in his introductory chapter to this volume, nations and nationalisms are “not constructed out of thin air.” In order for elites to be able to manipulate nationalist support, there must be some characteristics that seem to define the membership and territorial boundaries of the nation and make it somewhat cohesive and receptive to elite nationalist ideas. Elites and ideas cannot do everything—there must be some building blocks. These blocks are often described as “primordial” or “objective” characteristics by the cultural theorists, and they include such traits as language, religion, cultural values, and shared myths, especially concerning collective origins, as well as traditions fashioned by circumstances.⁶

While cultural distinctions and common objective characteristics help explain the identities of groups and nations, they cannot adequately explain the differences in political saliency and intensity of ethnic issues between different groups and nations at particular times, nor the actions taken or not taken. This has led some theorists to the conclusion that nations are subjective—the “largest community which, when the chips are down, effectively commands men’s loyalty.”⁷ These theorists believe that nations are malleable to elite manipulation and that nationalism is constructed by elites, their ideas, and their control of the media, language, and education.⁸ Hobsbawm and Ranger have shown how many “traditional” practices are quite recent inventions, and how an “existing customary traditional practice” is modified, ritualized and institutionalized to promote new national purposes.⁹ Thus, when conflict arises, it generally comes from elite initiation as a result of political, economic, or status competition, or rational responses to incentives, rather than from the existence of cultural differences.¹⁰

Fortunately, there is a middle ground between the cultural theorists and the social constructionists. Some writers, often institutionalists such as Horowitz and Lijphart, when looking at ethnic conflict and nationalism, consider the interaction of a number of variables—cultural characteristics, beliefs and passions, elite manipulation, competition, the use of ideas, and prevailing institutional arrangements—to evaluate how identity, status, and power can all be reshaped and changed by elites, circumstances, and events.¹¹ This is the approach taken in this chapter.

National Identity & Nationalism Development

Before British colonial rule was established in the late nineteenth century, the Malay peninsula was an underpopulated and relatively ethnically homogeneous area controlled by a number of Malay rulers and powerful chiefs residing in reasonably well-defined territorial units. Malay was the common language, and Islam the predominant religion.

The British “forward movement” led to two indirectly ruled and decentralized segments—the four Federated Malay States (FMS) and the five less-regulated Unfederated Malay States (UMS)—as well as the directly ruled Straits Settlements (Singapore, Penang, and Malacca). Collectively this was known as British Malaya. Both the FMS and UMS were governed with the collaboration of the Malay rulers and chiefs and members of the traditional elite, many of whom served in the civil service. For its labor supply and commerce, the British opened the doors to Chinese immigration and later encouraged the immigration of Indians to work on the rubber plantations. The Malays were told to follow the guidance of their state rulers and were given certain legal “protections” to ensure the survival of their traditional culture and agricultural economy, separate from the modern export economy rapidly developing in the non-Malay- and European-populated urban areas.

The Impact of British Indirect Rule

Malay nationalism was conditioned by the nature of colonial rule as well as the prevailing feudal traditions. It was slow in developing, primarily because the Malays were loyal to their feudal rulers. These leaders showed little interest in political change, particularly after the British raised their incomes and status and thus enhanced feudalism. Early Malay nationalism was inspired by pan-Islamic activism in the Middle East, leading to a growth of religious schools and the spread of Islamic literature on the peninsula.¹² This was contained by Britain’s promotion of a professional rural religious hierarchy, which struck an alliance with the rulers, who were in charge of state religious matters, and the traditional establishment.¹³ There was also a small pan-Indonesian left-wing nationalist movement led by a group of Malay intelligentsia that resulted in the formation of some pen clubs and later some radical political organizations. However, the movement remained small and on the fringe until it died out. There were no peasant revolts in Malaya to stimulate left-wing support.

These three major Malay nationalist factions—the traditional elite, the Malay left, and the Islamic group—all believed in the idea of a Malay nation (*Bangsa Melayu*), and all were engaged in the task of resolving what constituted a Malay. According to Shamsul, all the factions agreed on the Malay language as a marker of Malayness but disagreed over the role of Islam and the state rulers.¹⁴ The traditional elite supported language, religion, and royalty as constituting the key pillars of Malayness, but within a secular state that restricted the political role of Islam. The leftists concurred with the secular state but wanted to end feudalism, whereas the Islamic group favored ending royalty but sought a much larger role for Islam.¹⁵ The British favored the traditional aristocratic faction, whose nationalism was only faintly anticolonial. It was clear also that when exposed to prospects of change or perceived threats, the Malays on the whole “instinctively turned towards their traditional leaders.”¹⁶

During the war between Japan and China, the Chinese in British Malaya remitted large sums of money to China. The Malay elites, already fearful of Chinese numbers and startled by evidence of Chinese wealth, began expressing concern that they might end up like the “Red Indians” of North America, with their culture relegated to a museum. Nonetheless, as British historian Hall notes, “before the Japanese invasion [of Malaya] the Malays were the most unpolitically-minded people in South-East Asia. That blissful state of mind, however, was not to survive the occupation period.”¹⁷

The Impact of the Japanese Interregnum

The Japanese occupation (1941–45) contributed to the growth of Malay nationalism by destroying the myth of European superiority and by promoting the anticolonial theme of “Asia for the Asians,” which found a receptive chord among Malays. It also had the effect of greatly worsening ethnic relations. Most Malays passively collaborated, whereas in the jungles the almost entirely Chinese Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army, later the Malayan Communist Party, worked with the Allies to oppose the Japanese. “The rigors of war and occupation . . . generated tensions that produced escalating political mobilization based on ethnicity.”¹⁸ At the end of the war, in the absence of authority before the Allies returned, widespread ethnic “score settling” and random violence left a legacy of ethnic fear and distrust. Still, it could be said in 1945 that “the development of nationalism in Malaya seemed twenty-five years behind the rest of Southeast Asia.”¹⁹

Nationalism Leading to Independence

But it was the British decision in 1946, without consultation, to implement a new and strikingly altered political system in Malaya that galvanized Malay nationalism. The Malayan Union, as it was called, represented a total departure from prewar policy. It called for liberal citizenship terms for the non-Malays, the end of Malay “special rights,” and the elimination of the powers and status of the rulers. One possible reason for this “about face” was that Britain wanted to get the tin and rubber industries stabilized quickly in order to help pay for reconstruction.²⁰

Malay popular reaction against the Malayan Union, to the surprise of the British, was swift, bitter, and intense. It was the key causal factor that provided the catalyst to Malay nationalism that prewar colonialism, pan-Islamic reform, pan-Indonesianism, and a world war could not stimulate. The Malay elites believed that a political system that offered a common citizenship and equal political rights for all would destroy the Malay race and unjustly strip Malays of their inherent rights as the historical community.²¹ The Malay congresses held in 1946, to ward off the prospect of “racial extinction,” led to the creation of a central organization, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), which became the primary organization for protecting and promoting Malay interests. The conservative, English-speaking traditional leaders, formerly supportive of British rule, now led the struggle against the Malayan Union. “They constituted the leadership core of UMNO . . . [and they] emerged as the undisputed leaders of Malay society as a whole.”²²

The British, occupied with fighting a communist guerrilla insurrection, agreed to abrogate the Malayan Union. They invited UMNO to draft a plan for a more suitable constitutional arrangement. UMNO then pushed through a plan for a federation with centralized powers, Malay special rights were restored, many of the powers of the rulers were reinstated, and citizenship regulations were made complex and strict. The Federation of Malaya came into force in February 1948. As Shamsul notes, the English translation of the federation does not capture the full meaning or emotive symbolism of the Malay words *Persekutuan Tanah Melayu*, which really mean “federation of the land of the Malays.”²³ With the federation, the Malays prevailed over competing visions of nation, state, and citizenship.

The non-Malays had been basically apathetic about the Malayan Union. Although supporting it seemed to be in their interest, most attention was

focused on important events taking place in China and India, respectively.²⁴ After the British announced they were abandoning the Malayan Union, there was a belated attempt to organize a nationwide protest, but it failed, and the non-Malays acquiesced to a federation with safeguards for the Malays.

The Membership Boundaries

The struggle to defeat the Malayan Union brought together Malays—elites and followers—from all the states under an umbrella organization, UMNO, and this served to set the membership boundaries and, at least informally, to define “who belongs to the nation.” In terms of “objective” characteristics, race itself was not a criterion, and the boundaries were to some considerable extent malleable.²⁵ Many Malays have ancestry derived from other groups—Thais, Burmese, Bugis, Acehnese, Menangkabau, as well as Chinese and Indian.

Thus, the issue of “who was a Malay” was worked out on the bases of culture, religion, and language. A Malay was a Muslim who habitually followed Malay customs and habits and spoke the Malay language. Additionally, to be a Malay, one needed to be the subject of a state ruler, since the state monarchical system was an integral part of Malay culture and helped make Malays distinctive from some of the groups in Sumatra that share certain racial, religious, and language similarities. While there was a growing identification with the federal state, state allegiances and identities gave way only slowly and incompletely. For the non-Malays, self-perceptions of identity, coinciding with those of the Malays, appeared to be more racial: a “Baba Chinese” who spoke Malay but not Chinese, and who dressed and ate like a Malay, was still a Chinese. In fact, religion was a stronger distinguishing marker than race.

With the membership boundaries relatively established, the emphasis of nationalism in the country turned to the threat the “other” posed to the essential survival of the nation. To the Malays, the “others” were the “non-Malays,” primarily the Chinese. A key feature of Malay nationalism was its highly developed sense of “us versus them” and its keen sense of purpose in defending everything considered Malay. For the non-Malays, on the defensive and belatedly recognizing that Malaya was in fact their home, the “other” meant the Malays and Malay demands that seemed to relegate them to second-class status.

After 1946, the British realized they could not cultivate a civic national-

ism in Malaya as the country progressed toward independence. The vast majority of Malays would not countenance the idea that there should be political equality or common citizenship. But the colonial authorities insisted that they would consider a transfer of power only when the major communities demonstrated that they could coexist peacefully. To this end, the British attempted to promote a multiethnic political party. However, the communities were already mobilized on the basis of ethnic political organizations: UMNO, PAS (Partai Islam), and the Malay Nationalist Party (MNP) for the Malays—the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) for the “others.” Few Malays were attracted to the idea of a multiethnic party.

Among the Malay elites and followers there was a high degree of agreement on the content and organization of Malay nationalism: UMNO, as the dominant Malay organization in the country, would protect the interests of the Malays while charting the course toward independence. “Protection” was the most important factor driving Malay nationalism. Any perceived weakening of protection generated an emotional outpouring of nationalist fervor designed to reinvigorate this protection. The case of the first president of UMNO, Dato Onn bin Ja’afar, provides an example. Influenced by strong British support for a multiethnic party, Onn tried to get UMNO to open its membership to all communities in 1950.²⁶ So strong was the Malay fear of the “other” that despite the fact that Onn was perceived as the preeminent Malay leader, the effect was that the membership rejected both him and his proposal. As Muzaffar concludes, Onn was viewed as “no longer capable of performing the role of a protector. . . . Unquestioning loyalty then had a condition: the leader had to guarantee the security of the Malay position in relation to the non-Malay situation.”²⁷ Because Onn’s new views were grasped out of “thin air,” it is a prime example of elite manipulation or social construction *not* working. UMNO elected a new president, Tunku Abdul Rahman, who vowed to keep UMNO exclusively as the vanguard of the Malays.

Onn went on to inaugurate a multiethnic party in 1951. The Independence of Malaya Party (IMP), however, was decisively beaten in municipal elections in 1952 because the Malays would not support it, and it was disbanded two years later. Ethnic issues were paramount, boundaries were becoming less malleable, and political support gravitated to the ethnic-based parties.²⁸

The Territorial Boundaries

Unlike many other postcolonial cases, the territorial boundaries of the Malay nation were largely established before colonial rule. The British contributed to the historical integrity of the peninsula by reclaiming the four northern states from Siamese (Thai) control in 1909. The post–World War II British proposal to unite the nine Malay states and add the enclaves of Malacca and Penang made sense demographically and politically. The Malayan Union and its successor, the Federation of Malaya, unified the peninsula. The only geographic aberration was the exclusion of the heavily Chinese-populated island of Singapore at the southern tip of the peninsula. The territorial boundaries proposed by the British were adopted by UMNO as the appropriate ones. Although some Malay nationalists coveted Singapore—for its riches and its historical connections—all agreed that demographically it was impossible to incorporate Singapore because it would make the Malays a minority in their own country.

While Malays' allegiance to their states remained strong, the idea of the larger federal state as the historic "homeland" of the nation took hold. The concept of territory became a highly emotional feature of Malay nationalism vis-à-vis the other communities as the country progressed toward independence. The Malays were constantly told by their elites that, unlike the Chinese or Indians, they had no other homeland and that the Malays were the rightful "sons of the soil" of the Federation of Malaya. The "others" were always immigrants, no matter how long they had been there, because they could always "go home," whereas the Malays had no where else to go. This argument complemented the perception of threat posed by the "other." Integrated into Malay nationalism was a deeply ingrained fear that if the Malays somehow lost control of their territory, they would become racially extinct.

Nationalist Movements/Parties in Malaya

UMNO, the Malay mass movement that was set up "to save" the Malays from the constitutional changes proposed by the British in 1946, transformed itself into an independence movement and then the leading nationalist party competing for political power. When the Tunku was elected president of UMNO in 1951, one of his first actions was to amend UMNO's slogan from *Hidup Melayu!* (Long Live the Malays!) to *Merdeka!* (Independence!).²⁹ However, in order to attain independence, the Malay elites

understood it would need to make some accommodation with the non-Malays.

Municipal elections were held in the early 1950s, and the first major test was the Kuala Lumpur election in 1952. The electorate was overwhelmingly Malay. UMNO expected a strong challenge from the British-favored IMP, and UMNO badly lacked campaign funds. The winner was likely to emerge as the party that would lead the country to independence. Complicating matters by playing a spoiler role, the wealthy MCA indicated that it would put up some non-Chinese candidates. Then came the serendipitous solution. The local leaders of UMNO and the MCA concluded an ad hoc electoral agreement that called for joint candidates and for the MCA to finance the campaign. There was no attempt at a common platform.³⁰ The election results revealed the utility of such a pact: UMNO-MCA won nine of the twelve seats.

This arrangement was institutionalized at the national level, and in 1953 an alliance was inaugurated as a permanent coalition, with the MIC soon added to it. The elites of the three ethnic parties then worked out, after tough bargaining, a series of compromises that settled some key constitutional problems and became known as “the bargain.” It became evident “that the price to be paid by the non-Malays for full participation in the activities of the Federation was acceptance of certain forms associated with Malay traditions.”³¹ Specifically, the bargain offered liberal citizenship requirements and *jus soli* (citizenship by right of birth in a country) as the major concession by the Malays in return for the acceptance by the non-Malays of the position of the rulers, Malay special rights, Islam as the state religion, and Malay as the sole official language in ten years’ time.

Hence, the three pillars of Malayness—language, religion, and royalty—would now have constitutional protection. There was also an informal understanding among the ethnic elites: UMNO and the Malays would be *primus inter pares* (first among equals) in politics, while in return the business pursuits of the non-Malays would remain free of hindrances or persecution. Although much was purposely left vague, the constitutional bargain and elite understanding satisfied the major claims of each of the communities and led to ethnic solidarity favoring independence. Lijphart considers the arrangement that evolved in Malaysia a “reasonably successful case” of “consociational democracy” until 1969, despite the fact that the Malays were quite dominant.³²

The degree of support for the Alliance and its elite accommodation was

evident at the first general elections in 1955, when the Alliance won all but one seat and 82 percent of the popular vote. All of the non-Malay Alliance candidates won, some of them against Malay opposition, despite a predominantly Malay electorate. The results attested to UMNO's nationalist credentials and the viability of the Alliance concept.

After the elections, progress toward independence was swift, and in August 1957, the Federation of Malaya became independent in a peaceful and cordial transfer of power. The Tunku, whose leadership was undisputed, became the first prime minister and formed a multiethnic cabinet.

Nationalism after Independence

A desire for independence and the threat posed by the communist guerrilla insurrection constituted strong causal factors leading the respective ethnic elites to reach compromises and understandings. However, by the same token, many aspects of state organization and governance were not resolved with independence. As stated in the preceding, it was understood among the elites that the Malays would be the senior partner politically and that the non-Malays would not be hindered in their economic pursuits. But other questions, such as who in ethnic terms was eligible for the top federal and state governmental positions, lacked clearly spelled out answers. Zakaria argues that the younger generation never really understood the tacitly agreed provisions.³³

Furthermore, some troubling circumstances existed at independence. The Malays were the most feudalistic, least educated, least urbanized, and least economically advanced community in the country despite the fact that the feudal Malay nationalist elites would dominate politically, and Malay culture and traditions, religion and language, were protected in the constitution. The "bargain" seemed to promise protection of the status quo in terms of intergroup relations, except that there were suggestions that the Malays would somehow slowly catch up economically. In fact, the Malays failed to make up ground economically. As the result of compelling the non-Malays to learn the Malay language, its protection as a pillar of Malay identity collapsed. Increasingly, the social marker of substance was Islam.

How Ideas of Nationalism Changed Following Independence

Superficially, one might think that not much has changed concerning nationalism since independence—the ethnic basis of nationalism remains

supreme, the parties and party system are largely unchanged, UMNO remains the dominant party in the dominant coalition, and the Malays still control the political process and still enjoy certain special rights. Ethnic divisions have slowed the growth of any unifying nationalism.

In fact, the ideas central to Malay nationalism have evolved from wanting “to save” the race from extinction and gain independence, to protecting Malay political, cultural, and religious symbols, to gaining an equal and more secure social and economic footing with the other communities. In other words, the basis of Malay nationalism has evolved generally, but incompletely, from primordial to instrumental concerns. The ideas that have guided Malay nationalism since 1957 can be divided into rough time periods: the period of being *primus inter pares* amidst ambiguities from 1957 to 1969; the assertion of Malay hegemony from 1969 to the early 1990s; and now Malay control with some modification by invoking a new, external enemy (the West) and holding out the promise of converting the bases of identification in Malaysia to a nonethnic national identity by the year 2020.

1957–69

The period from 1957 to 1969 was typified by a *modus operandi* of leaving ambiguous the difficult ethnic demands not easily settled by trade-offs and at the same time trying to maintain the public fiction that the communities were “basically” equal in the ruling Alliance. During this period there were three episodes that served, in different ways, to challenge UMNO and Malay dominance and gradually radicalize Malay nationalism.

The first episode occurred in 1959, when a new group of MCA leaders decided to take a tougher stand with UMNO in order to secure more liberal policies on language and education, as well as a larger allocation of candidacies for the MCA in the upcoming elections. The leaders were stunned at the ferocity of UMNO’s response to the challenge to its dominance. The Tunku ordered a withdrawal of all demands, the purging of Chinese “chauvinists,” and the authority personally to select all MCA candidates, or else UMNO would rule without Chinese participation. This shattered the myth of equality within the Alliance.

The second episode followed the creation of Malaysia in 1963 and focused on Singapore’s tempestuous two years in the federation before it was expelled in 1965. Singapore’s People’s Action Party (PAP) challenged the entire basis of Malay nationalism and Malay claims to dominance. The

Chinese-dominated but multiethnic PAP called for a “Malaysian Malaysia” based on racial equality rather than a “Malay Malaysia” that gave special rights and privileges to the Malays. It contested seats in peninsula Malaysia, and in 1965 it began putting together an opposition coalition to rival the Alliance.

The PAP challenge alarmed the Malays, stirred up old (supposedly “settled”) issues, and heightened the expectations of the Chinese, particularly the youth, for a political realignment. The issue of language became a focal point. The Chinese called for the wider official use of the Chinese language, or even its elevation to co-official status. This move was countered by Malay determination to secure the full implementation of the bargain over language. UMNO Youth threw down the gauntlet: if language was to be reconsidered, so should citizenship. There were nasty race riots in Singapore in the summer and fall of 1964, and UMNO “ultras” called for action against the PAP and the arrest of its leaders. Ethnic outbidding started to erode the leadership of the moderates. The Tunku decided that Singapore must be kicked out of Malaysia. The separation was announced in August 1965.

Singapore’s expulsion did not, however, resolve all the problems. The Tunku had alienated the UMNO ultras, who had wanted him to send in the army to take over the island, and now they wanted him replaced. For the non-Malays, a new party, the Democratic Action Party (DAP), which espoused the by now familiar formula of a “Malaysian Malaysia” with ethnic equality, was allowed to register. It is clear that the PAP’s actions set off a whole chain of reactions that reverberated through the system for years.

The third episode was Indonesia’s limited “war,” called *Konfrontasi*, against Malaysia from 1963 to 1966. Because of its territorial enlargement in adding the Borneo states of Sabah and Sarawak, and also Singapore, to Malaya to form Malaysia, Indonesia challenged the new Malaysia as a “neo-colonialist plot.”³⁴ *Konfrontasi* did not constitute much of a military threat, but it posed both a minor problem and an opportunity politically for the UMNO Malay leaders. It was a minor problem because initially it split Malay sympathies. Some of the Malays who supported the small opposition Partai Islam and the Socialist Front were sympathetic to a pan-Indonesian perspective. However, it also provided the government with the opportunity to isolate and discredit (and occasionally arrest) these same small pockets of left-wing and Islamic nationalists. Further, it helped solidify non-Malay loyalties at a time when the government was still fighting the

(primarily Chinese) Communists in the jungle and problems with Singapore were beginning that could have alienated the non-Malays. Thus while *Konfrontasi* did not have much of an effect on Malay nationalism, it contributed mildly to state-building efforts while it lasted. UMNO and the Alliance emerged from the 1964 general election with their dominance strengthened, but this was not to last.

1969–90

The second period began with the May 1969 elections. The elections were conducted in an atmosphere of escalating ethnic militancy. The Tunku was perceived by many Malays as having sold out the country to the non-Malays, and at the same time the Alliance non-Malay leaders found themselves no longer able to keep their followers in line.³⁵ The election results revealed that the opposition had made considerable gains against the dominant Alliance. The non-Malays were jubilant, while the Malays felt that they were once again in danger of losing control of their country. The tensions generated exploded into serious ethnic rioting and led to a proclamation of a state of emergency and changes in the political system. Under the state of emergency, parliament and the constitution were suspended, and the country came under the *de facto* rule of a Malay-dominated joint military-civilian National Operations Council under the directorship of Deputy Prime Minister Tun Razak, who would become prime minister in 1970. Clearly this challenge to the ethnic status quo when coupled with growing Malay perceptions that independence had not delivered sociocultural security or economic progress resulted in this watershed event. This led in turn to changes in the political system that ushered in a period of Malay political hegemony and the introduction of preferential policies favoring the Malays.

Razak and his advisers decided that Malay economic grievances were the chief causal factors leading to the riots on May 13. Just protecting the three pillars of Malayness—language, religion, and royalty—was no longer enough for the Malay masses. The brand of Malay nationalism espoused by the UMNO ultras had inflamed the Malays with resentment against the non-Malays, and this frustration was aggravated by a growing belief that the Malay-led government was not doing enough to help the Malays “catch up” to the other groups economically.

Politically, Razak told the country that there needed to be a “new realism” about ethnic relations, that “we have swept these problems under the

carpet. Now we must face up to them squarely. . . . We have to have some form of code of conduct or ground rules.”³⁶ Razak’s government countenanced no ambiguity: the Malays would openly dominate, although in a spirit of ethnic cooperation. Political competition and debate would be restricted by constitutional amendments and new sedition laws. At the same time, Razak embarked on a coalition-building scheme to broaden representation in the government and thereby reduce “politicking” that might interfere with economic development plans. This eventually resulted in something resembling a grand coalition of parties under a new umbrella organization, the Barisan Nasional (National Front).³⁷ Although grand coalitions constitute an important conflict management technique in Lijphart’s consociational democracy scheme, Lijphart believes that after 1971 Malaysia could no longer be considered a consociational case because the Malays were virtually hegemonic and the state was not democratic enough.³⁸

Parallel with political initiatives, the government decided on a set of preferential policies favoring the Malays that was aimed at restructuring society to correct economic imbalances—by reducing and eliminating the identification of race with economic functions—and to eradicate poverty.³⁹ The key instrument was an elaborate New Economic Policy (NEP) designed to redistribute wealth in the country over a twenty-year period with active government assistance.⁴⁰ The most prominent target was for the Bumiputera (Malays and other indigenous people) to own and manage at least 30 percent of the total commercial and industrial activities in the economy in all categories by 1990.

As 1990 approached, the Malay leaders stated that the NEP targets would not be reached and that preferential policies would have to continue. Many non-Malays, including some from the ruling coalition, disputed the government’s statistics and contended that the Malays had already reached their targets. They believed that the figures were distorted by a statistical sleight of hand.⁴¹

It was clear that the NEP experiment produced some dramatic successes in restructuring society. “The NEP . . . was Malaysia’s true ideology, at least for Malays.”⁴² In general, the Bumiputera appeared to have substantially reached their 1990 targets, and poverty was also significantly reduced. There had been a huge increase in Malay university enrollments and graduations, and there were many times more middle-class Malays living and working in urban areas. The cities in Malaysia increasingly reflected a

Malay and Muslim appearance. There was also a new, obvious, superrich, politically well-connected Malay entrepreneurial class that could rival the wealthy non-Malays.⁴³ Likewise, while many non-Malays resented the preferential policies and some were victimized by them, for most of the non-Malays life was better than had been expected after the riots; many had found ways to survive the restrictions of the NEP.⁴⁴ The economy was experiencing consistently fast growth, averaging 6.7 percent GDP growth per year between 1971 and 1990, and there was enough to go around for most everyone to prosper.

All of this had a striking impact on Malay mass attitudes that made them somewhat less receptive to the kind of nationalism that UMNO had always proclaimed as feudal protector of the Malays. There was now a higher percentage of Malays in the population of the country—an important security factor—and many were better educated and more prosperous and self-confident. With years of high economic growth, they had become believers in the culture of success promoted by the government and signified by the slogan *Malaysia oleh!* (Malaysia can!).⁴⁵ They no longer felt so threatened, and they were slower to close ranks behind UMNO when it rattled its saber about the threats posed by the non-Malays. As this transpired, criticism grew about official corruption and the use of preferences to enrich party cronies and their clients. In the mid-1980s, disagreements over the distribution of resources and issues of patronage and cronyism resulted in a split in UMNO that threatened its dominance and led to a marked increase in repression and an end to the independence of the judiciary.⁴⁶

The 1990 elections mark the end of the second period. It was a difficult election for UMNO and the Barisan Nasional. Those who defected or were expelled from UMNO formed a new Malay political party and set out to put together a rival multiethnic coalition. The non-Malays were generally dissatisfied that there was not going to be an end to preferential policies. The Barisan Nasional turned in its worst ever performance in this election, losing two states to the opposition, although it retained a clear majority in parliament.

1991 TO THE PRESENT

The third period began in 1991 and continues to this day. Politically, a wounded UMNO needed to hold its share of Malay support by delivering on economic growth while at the same time shoring up flagging non-Malay support. The period is marked by four developments: the gradual easing of

some ethnic preferences through the National Development Policy (NDP), the proclamation of “Vision 2020” with its promise of a civic nationalism in thirty years, a shift in the “other”—with the West taking the place of the non-Malays as “the enemy,” and the resultant electoral successes in 1995 and 1999 by the Barisan Nasional because of solid non-Malay support.

The NDP became the successor to the NEP in 1991. It retains some of the basic restructuring and poverty alleviation goals of the NEP but has no numerical targets or a specified time frame. The policy is vague and seems focused more on growth.⁴⁷ Implementation has been more accommodating to the non-Malays, without seeming to betray Malay interests, and thus it has been less controversial and has helped moderate ethnic tensions.⁴⁸ Stafford offers an interesting explanation for what has transpired. He believes that globalization required some liberalization of economic policy, which meant a scaling back of the NEP. So, while the successes of the NEP helped alleviate Malay grievances, its subsequent scaling back helped alleviate the non-Malay backlash it had created.⁴⁹

Vision 2020, Bangsa Malaysia, and the “New Malay”: Toward a Civic Nationalism?

The second development is the idea, launched in 1991 by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, of Vision 2020.⁵⁰ A document “meant to seize the imagination and to inspire,”⁵¹ it offers some appealing goals and challenges, basically envisioning Malaysia as a fully industrialized state with no ethnic divisions by 2020. By far the most ambitious challenge is the one directed to nation-building: to establish a united Malaysian nation with a sense of common and shared destiny, at peace with itself and living in harmony “in full and free partnership, made up of one ‘*Bangsa Malaysia*.’”⁵² Vision 2020 appears to mean a transformation of the ethnic principles underlying Malaysian society, away from Malay nationalism and toward a civic nationalism with more inclusive membership boundaries.

Part and parcel of the Vision 2020 is the concept of the “New Malay” introduced by Mahathir in 1991. The New Malay has many positive attributes, but these can be pared down to the image of a successful and ethical businessperson or professional, one who has thrown off the feudalistic cultural shackles of the “Old Malay” and can meet all challenges without government assistance. Clearly, if the ethnic bases of the state are going to be discarded, the Malay community must be able to compete successfully on its own with the other communities.

The idea of Bangsa Malaysia has captured the imagination and raised the

expectations of many non-Malays, especially the youth.⁵³ Further, it accompanies a relaxation of some ethnic restrictions—for example in the implementation of the NDP; the opening of the Amanah Saham National Savings Scheme to non-Malays; the Education Act of 1995, which allows for private universities; and the reduction of the quota for university places reserved for Bumiputera after 1985 to 55:45. As Stafford points out, the economic achievements of Malaysia “have created a high level of national pride” for all ethnic groups, which he sees as the basis for creating a Malaysian identity.⁵⁴

However, the notion of Bangsa Malaysia leaves not only critical questions unanswered and vital details unspecified but some contradictory trends as well. The issuance of new identity cards, for example, throws doubt on the government’s sincerity concerning working toward a civic nationalism. While the new IDs have eliminated race, they have added the category of religion, a move that the leader of the opposition finds a “retrogressive step” for the nation-building process.⁵⁵ So intense were objections by the non-Malays that the government has altered the regulations so that only Muslims will have to state their religion on the cards, an unsatisfactory concession that seems to miss the point about identity and division.⁵⁶ In another incident, a government minister said that a prominent opposition leader, the wife of the jailed former deputy prime minister, could not lead the Malays because she “did not have a Malay soul,” implying that she was Chinese and therefore unfit. Not only was the accusation untrue, it was offensive and led a Chinese journalist to note, “It’s difficult to be a Malaysian in Malaysia.”⁵⁷

Meanwhile, the Bangsa Malaysia idea has serious implications for Malay nationalism and Malay hegemony, and it has created a mixed reaction among Malays. The construct of the New Malay, as pointed out by Sham-sul, means compromising two of the old central pillars of Malayness—royalty and language.⁵⁸ The notion of Bangsa Malaysia—a civic nationalism—has been superficially, or theoretically, endorsed by UMNO Malays. At the same time, when concrete changes have been mentioned, like altering the constitution to remove Malay special rights or opening up UMNO to the non-Malays, there has been no consensus.⁵⁹ This leads one to ask whether any withering away of ethnicity can occur without a Malay backlash and whether Malays would really be content to submerge Malay nationalism in favor of a Bangsa Malaysia?

A third development affecting the nature of Malay nationalism has been

a shift in the “other”—the enemy—away from the non-Malays and to the West.⁶⁰ This has been primarily the work of Mahathir, who has apparently long-harbored anti-Western feelings (although he also viewed the Chinese as “the enemy” and he blamed them for his electoral defeat in 1969⁶¹). Malaysia itself, including the Foreign Affairs Department and most Malays, has not been particularly hostile to the West, although there has been a rise in anti-Americanism as a result of Muslim perceptions that the United States has launched a war against Islam. What is unclear is whether shifting the target in the 1990s from the non-Malays to the West was a deliberate move to advance the notion of Bangsa Malaysia or simply a domestic political ploy. However, the focus on the West as the enemy has taken considerable pressure off of the non-Malays, who are now only occasionally depicted in the media as a “threat,” and this has undoubtedly helped improve ethnic relations.⁶²

The final development was the electoral turnaround in 1995—sustained in 1999—after the setbacks in 1990. This reversal of fortunes was largely a result of renewed non-Malay support. The economic climate was good for both 1990 and 1995, and the election issues were basically the same. The difference appears to be the way the non-Malays responded to the easing of the NDP, the idea of Bangsa Malaysia, and the shifting of the target of Malay nationalism away from them. These causal factors help explain why the non-Malays voted so heavily for the Barisan Nasional and helped provide it with its greatest electoral performance ever—winning 65 percent of the popular vote (up 13 percent from 1990). In the November 1999 general election, with the Malays again badly split as a result of the firing and jailing of former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim, the government again needed, and received, the solid support of the non-Malays to offset a considerable loss of Malay votes. To get their vote, government propagandists resorted to frightening the non-Malays with the specter of ethnic violence and/or an opposition-imposed Islamic state. At the same time, the government continued to woo them with the prospect of a not-too-distant end to ethnic distinctions that would open the membership boundaries of the nation to all citizens.

Conclusion: Lessons from Malaysia about Nationalism after Independence

Malay nationalism has shifted from a defensive, almost frantic, posture depicted in such stark terms as the “survival of the Malay race and culture”

to an independence goal phase and then, after independence, gradually from a primordial phase to an instrumental phase where Malay nationalism demanded socioeconomic parity. Throughout, successful Malay leaders have presented themselves as protectors. The proclaimed goal of Vision 2020 to achieve a civic nationalism as the next phase is an interesting idea. While nationalism is a normative concept, many would agree that a citizen-oriented notion of national identity with inclusive membership boundaries constitutes a more tolerant brand of nationalism than that of the potentially volatile ethnic nationalisms.⁶³ The ability of Malay elites to raise ethnic fears and ignite Malay nationalism remains, however, a potent force, and each time it is manipulated for political advantage, the Vision 2020 goal seems farther away.

During the lead-up to the 1999 elections, the cabinet endorsed “in principle” the seventeen points designed to lessen discrimination put forward by Suqui (the Malaysian Chinese Organizations Election Appeals Committee). However, in mid-2000 Mahathir denounced Suqui, likening the group to Communists and religious extremists, and he stated that the seventeen points could not be accepted. Soon after, the government proposed creating integrated “Vision Schools,” an idea that was strenuously rejected by the Chinese community as a plot to end Chinese-language education.⁶⁴ Following a government by-election loss in a previously safe mixed constituency of Lunas, Kedah, because of the desertion of 60 percent of both Chinese and Malays, the government-controlled Malay press emotionally lambasted the loyalty of the Chinese.⁶⁵ This was followed in early 2001 with an impassioned call for Malays to unite to prevent the non-Malays from taking advantage of their disunity. Once again, for a short while, the non-Malays became the enemy.⁶⁶ The readiness with which the UMNO elites have been willing to sabotage the goals of Vision 2020 and a *Bangsa Malaysia* for purposes of political expediency makes one question their seriousness in achieving these aims.

The Malaysian experience suggests that postnationalist concerns may be sequential, in the sense that the defense of primordial characteristics may take precedence until the dangers to these passionate issues seem to subside, and then nationalism may evolve to more instrumental and “rational” concerns. However, the Malaysian case also suggests that primordial passions remain close to the surface and can be rekindled under certain circumstances, thus making ethnic emotions easy for elites to manipulate. Hence, however sequential the route followed, it is not always unidirec-

tional—the intensity of nationalist feelings ebbs and flows, depending on circumstances and elite manipulation.

This case also confirms the merits of taking the middle ground between the cultural theorists and the social constructionists. Nationalism in Malaysia has been largely elite manipulated, but the example of how abruptly the Malays dropped their top leader when he tried to change the direction of Malay nationalism illustrates that elites cannot just bend identities and construct nationalism “out of thin air” without the risk of losing followers. Elites, to manipulate, must construct with the “raw materials” and “building blocks” that they possess. The Malaysian experience also indicates that a policy of ethnic preferences, handled skillfully, *can* work, so long as it is accompanied by rapid growth that expands the economic pie.

Barrington’s five variants of postindependence nationalism illuminate some interesting facets of the Malaysian case. His idea of a combination of variants seems relevant as well. Territory was an issue during the first postindependence phase, 1957–69. Malaya became Malaysia in 1963 with the additions of Singapore, Sabah, and Sarawak, and then Singapore was dramatically expelled from the federation in 1965. The expansion of territory in 1963 seems to confirm the “external-territory-claiming” impulse of variant 1, while the expulsion of a valuable piece of territory seems to contradict it. The answer to this apparent paradox is that variant 1 does not really fit the Malaysian case. For a number of reasons (the Communist influence in Singapore, the urging of the British, ethnic considerations, etc.), Malaya somewhat reluctantly incorporated more territory to become Malaysia. But to the Malays, there was no homeland beyond Malaya, and they had no strong attachment to the new territories. This made the expulsion of Singapore in 1965 a reasonably risk-free task for the Malay elites. Thus it could be said that the causal factor of having a perceived homeland outside the original territory of the state did not obtain and did not influence Malay nationalism.

The second (“sovereignty-protecting”) variant of responding to internal, external, and mixed threats also has limited applicability to the Malaysian case. Internally, despite constituting 40 percent of the population, the minority communities are territorially dispersed and have never contested the Malay assertion that Malaya is Bangsa Melayu—the rightful homeland of the Malays. Externally, despite the fact that most non-Malays would call Malaysia their “home”—and some desperately want to make Malaysia the focus of their loyalties—it would not be considered by them

or by the Malays as their “ancestral homeland.” Many Malays think the Chinese and Indians identify with, and perhaps harbor secret loyalties toward, China and India.⁶⁷ Certainly the Communist insurgency, comprising mostly Chinese insurgents, impugned the loyalties of all Chinese, but this was basically over before independence.⁶⁸

Variant 5 has some applicability to Malaysia, but only mildly, to the extent that some Malays believe they are entitled to make the treatment of the Malay minority in Singapore their business. However, the Singapore Malays do not look to Malaysia for protection and often bluntly reject Malaysian outbursts on their behalf. It is mainly a ploy in the turbulent foreign relations of Malaysia and Singapore, although Kuala Lumpur is careful to control the extent and duration of “outrage” Malays are encouraged to feel occasionally over events or conditions in Singapore.

There are lessons to be found in variants 3 and 4, both of which concern membership and the question of “Who is the nation?” The “ethnic nation-protecting” variant 4 fits the Malaysia case closely, for all three phases. This can be seen in preferential or “positive-discriminatory” state policies designed to protect and enhance the opportunities of the Malays. Some of these were agreed upon before independence. In return for liberal citizenship provisions, non-Malays agreed to a number of “special rights” and constitutional guarantees for the Malays, Islam as the state religion, Malay as the sole official language in ten years’ time, and an understanding that politically the Malays would be *primus inter pares*. However, the savage May 1969 ethnic riots and state of emergency demonstrated that difficult ethnic issues remained contested and unresolved (including even the language issue, despite earlier agreements). May 1969 was a watershed: after this the Malays strongly asserted their political hegemony. Not only was the Malay language made official but it became the language of instruction in government schools, and its predominant display was required in all public places. Further, as indicated earlier, a number of social, economic, and educational preferential policies were put in place, led by the New Economic Policy.

The third variant, “civic nation-building,” is of considerable interest. It fits the Malaysian case only imperfectly, but it seems to indicate possible future directions. Corresponding to the period from 1991, already the severity of preferences has been reduced, the Malay elites have proclaimed a goal of achieving a civic nationalism by 2020, and the target of Malay nationalism has been shifted to a new “other”—the West. As a result, there

have been improvements in ethnic relations, and there may be an incipient “Malaysian identity” emerging, existing side by side with, but subordinate to, the traditional ethnic identities.⁶⁹ Certainly, the idea has raised non-Malay expectations, especially among the young.

Still, achieving a Malaysian identity will be difficult, and, even if achieved, as Resnick points out, this is “no guarantee of comity.”⁷⁰ There are huge problems involved in the dismantling of what is a state that is centrally constructed around ethnic institutions and politically based on the principles of Malay hegemony and Malay nationalism. Vision 2020 offers no insight at all into how specific problems related to achieving a *Bangsa Malaysia* are to be overcome, nor are its economic targets likely to be attained, given the setbacks suffered in the 1997–98 recession. Further, and most significantly, there is no concurrence at all among Malays for major reforms.

The causal factors examined in this chapter show that the nationalist route most strongly pursued in Malaysia is variant 4, although current policy directions indicate the possibility that it may be moving toward variant 3. These are perhaps the most benign of the nationalist patterns. Malay nationalism has escaped the compulsion to exercise control of external territory, the state does not have to contend with secessionist movements, and the role of Malays in seeking to protect ethnic brethren living outside the boundaries of the state is minimal.

A lesson from the Malaysian case seems to be that nationalist aims after independence are unlikely to be static or unidirectional from primordial to instrumental. Rather, there can be an ebb and flow to nationalist emotions and concerns, often constructed, and the possible routes they follow can change over time and backtrack as well. The resilience of nationalism is confirmed. The Malaysian case also shows that, depending on what variant or combinations of variants of nationalism are applicable, sharp divisions along ethnic lines need not always result in persistent violence or instability. Rather, with skillful leadership, it may be possible to arrange a form of the Malaysian “bargain” and, over time, even to pursue a civic form of national identity.

NOTES

1. In 1965, Singapore was expelled from Malaysia after a series of misunderstandings and two race riots.
2. And previously for language, occupation, and urban-rural residence.
3. As noted by Barrington in his introduction, the idea of civic or political nationalism versus ethnic nationalism is not accepted by all nationalism scholars. See Anthony

Richmond, "Ethnic Nationalism; Social Science Paradigms," *International Social Science Journal* 39, no. 111 (1987): 3–18.

4. At independence, the Malays made up only about half the population.

5. Literally, "Malaysian nation," but with the meaning of a civic national identity based on shared citizenship.

6. The cultural theorists would include, among others, Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); and Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

7. Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 95–96. He writes that perhaps the "simplest statement that can be made about a nation is that it is a body of people who feel that they are a nation; and it may be that when all the fine spun analysis is concluded, this will be the ultimate statement as well" (101). Ernest Gellner, in his last book (*Nationalism* [New York: New York University Press, 1998]), observes that it is "better to try to deal with the conditions which engender nationalism than to preach at its victims and beg them to refrain from feeling what, in their circumstances, it is only too natural to feel."

8. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983). He believes that through various media, people acquire a sense of belonging to a larger group, most of whom they have never met. Also see Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), for a neo-Marxist treatment of nationalism. He makes the point that the elites and governments construct nationalism by using language and education particularly.

9. Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 6.

10. The social constructionists include Anderson, Hobsbawm, Ranger, and S. and L. Rudolph, "Modern Hate," *New Republic*, March 22, 1993, among others.

11. See Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); and Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979).

12. Radin Soenarno, "Malay Nationalism, 1900–1945," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 1, no. 1 (March 1960): 17, 28.

13. W. R. Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1964), especially chapters 3 and 7.

14. A. B. Shamsul, "The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism," *The Developing Economies* 35, no. 3 (September 1997): 240–43. Also see Anthony Milner, *Kerajaan: Malay Political Culture at the Eve of Colonial Rule* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982).

15. Shamsul, "The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism," 243.

16. R. S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, *Politics and Government in Malaysia*, rev. ed. (Singapore and Vancouver: Times Books International and University of British Columbia Press, 1980), 26.

17. D. G. E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1964), 753.

18. Gordon P. Means, "Soft Authoritarianism in Malaysia and Singapore," in *Democracy in East Asia*, ed. Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 96.

19. John Kerry King, *Southeast Asia in Perspective* (New York, 1956), 43.
20. Chandra Muzaffar, *Protector?* (Penang: Aliran, 1979), 56.
21. *Ibid.*, 61, from an UMNO Congress resolution in March 1946.
22. *Ibid.*, 59.
23. Shamsul, "The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism," 244. Further, the Malay word for "federation" is derived from the base word for "united" (*sa-kutu*).
24. The leftist Malayan Democratic Union Party, led by some Singapore intellectuals, was at this time trying to promote a nonethnic civic nationalism based on loyalty to Malaya. The party hoped to inspire in the Malays a loyalty to the territory that was greater than their natural loyalty to their rulers, while at the same time "weaning the non-Malay races from their nostalgia for their homelands." See Cheah Boon Kheng, *The Masked Comrades: A Study of the Communist United Front in Malaya, 1945–48* (Singapore, 1979), 5, quoted in Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (London: Macmillan Press, 1982).
25. See Judith A. Nagata, "What Is a Malay? Situational Selection of Ethnic Identity in a Plural Society," *American Ethnologist* 1, no. 2 (1974): 331–50.
26. See Ishak bin Tadin, "Dato Onn and Malay Nationalism, 1946–51," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 1, no. 1 (March 1960): 56–88.
27. Muzaffar, *Protector?*, 67–68.
28. Milne and Mauzy, *Politics and Government in Malaysia*, 127.
29. *Ibid.*, 132.
30. For details on the birth of the Alliance, see *ibid.*, 127–31.
31. *Ibid.*, 38.
32. Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*, 153–54.
33. Zakaria Haji Ahmad, "Malaysia: Quasi-Democracy in a Divided Society," in *Democracy in Developing Countries: Asia*, vol. 3, ed. Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset (Boulder: Lynn Rienner, 1989), 354.
34. See J. A. C. Mackie, *Konfrontasi: The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute, 1963–1966* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974). Malaysia had help from British (and Australian and New Zealand) troops in opposing Indonesia's army incursions.
35. Ahmad, "Malaysia," 357.
36. Tun Razak, *A New Realism*, TV and radio speech, June 13, 1969 (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia Information Department, 1969).
37. For details, see Diane K. Mauzy, *Barisan Nasional: Coalition Government in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Maricans, 1983); and Milne and Mauzy, *Politics and Government in Malaysia*, 173–91.
38. Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*, 154. However, conflict management structures in Malaysia still remained closer in spirit to consociationalism than to Ian Lustick's control model ("Stability in Deeply Divided Societies: Consociationalism versus Control," *World Politics* 31 [April 1979]: 325–44). Some analysts have used the term *coercive consociationalism* to describe the situation where the groups are unequal but some consociational techniques are used. See Diane K. Mauzy, "Malaysia: Malay Political Hegemony and 'Coercive Consociationalism,'" in *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation*, ed. John McGarry and Brendon O'Leary (London: Routledge, 1993), 106–27; and Brendon O'Leary, "The Limits to Coercive Consociationalism in Northern Ireland," *Political Studies* 39, no. 4 (1989), 562–88.
39. For details, see the *Second Malaysia Plan, 1971–1975* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1971); *Mid-term Review of the Second Malaysia Plan, 1971–1975* (Kuala

Lumpur: Government Press, 1973); and *Third Malaysia Plan, 1976–1980* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1976).

40. See Just Faaland, J. R. Parkinson, and Rais B. Saniman, *Growth and Ethnic Inequality: Malaysia's New Economic Policy* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1990).

41. Diane K. Mauzy, "The Tentative Life and Quiet Death of the NECC in Malaysia," in *Managing Change in Southeast Asia: Local Initiatives, Global Connections*, ed. Jean DiBernardi, Gregory Forth, and Sandra Niessen (Montreal: University of Montreal, 1995), 77–92. This included not counting toward Malay ownership any company that was a joint venture, a nominee company, or ethnically mixed. This included most of the largest companies in the country and some of the giant companies owned by UMNO or its proxies. On UMNO's extensive business interests, see E. T. Gomez, *Politics in Business: UMNO's Corporate Investments* (Kuala Lumpur: Forum, 1990); and E. T. Gomez and K. S. Jomo, *Malaysia's Political Economy: Politics, Patronage and Profits* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

42. R. S. Milne and Diane K. Mauzy, *Malaysian Politics under Mahathir* (London: Routledge, 1999), 51.

43. *Ibid.*, 50–64.

44. James Jesudason, *Ethnicity and the Economy: The State, Chinese Business, and the Multinationals in Malaysia* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989).

45. Chandra Jeshuran notes that there has been "a tremendous build up of national euphoria in the country over Malaysia's achievements." See, "Malaysia: The Mahathir Supremacy and Vision 2020," *Southeast Asian Affairs 1993* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993), 220.

46. On the mass Internal Security Act arrests in 1987, and the events leading to firing of the chief justice of the Supreme Court and the dismantling of the independence of the judiciary in 1988, see Diane K. Mauzy, "The Corrosion of Checks on Executive Power: Deinstitutionalization in Malaysia," in *The Quality of Life in Southeast Asia: Transforming Social, Political and Natural Environments*, ed. Bruce Matthews (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1992), 1–18; and Mauzy, "Malaysia," 106–27.

47. This can be seen most clearly in the *OPP2*, the *Second Outline Perspective Plan, 1991–2000* (Kuala Lumpur: National Printing Department, 1991).

48. Milne and Mauzy, *Malaysian Politics under Mahathir*, 74.

49. Geoffrey Stafford, "Economics and Ethnicity" (paper prepared for the Second International Malaysian Studies Conference, Kuala Lumpur, August 1999).

50. Mahathir Mohamad, *Malaysia: The Way Forward* (Kuala Lumpur: Centre for Economic Research and Services, Malaysian Business Council, 1991).

51. Milne and Mauzy, *Malaysian Politics under Mahathir*, 165.

52. "Vision 2020: The Way Forward" (keynote address by Mahathir Mohamad at the Vision 2020 National Congress, Petaling Jaya, April 29, 1997), 2–3. Also see Jeshuran, "Malaysia," 203–23.

53. This was impressed upon me firsthand by the keen interest in and high hopes for the idea taken by virtually all of the non-Malay Malaysian students that I have had in class the last several years.

54. Stafford, "Economics and Ethnicity."

55. "DAP Calls on Cabinet to Drop the Retrogressive Step. . ." media statement by Lim Kit Siang, October 11, 1999, <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/3939/sg1971.html>. Also see Aliran media statement, "Withdraw Decision to Include Religion in our ICs," October 13, 1999, <http://www.malaysia.net/aliran/ms991013.htm>.

56. See "A Matter of Identity," *Asiaweek*, November 12, 1999, http://cnn.com/ASIANOW/asiaweek/magazine/99/1112/ed_malaysia.html.

57. S. Jayasankaran, "Spoiling for a Fight," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 27, 1999, 18–19.

58. Shamsul, "The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism," 257–58.

59. Milne and Mauzy, *Malaysian Politics under Mahathir*, 165–67; and Jeshuran, "Malaysia," 221.

60. See Khoo Boh Teik, *Paradoxes of Mahathirism* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995), 88. Khoo sees both continuity and change in Mahathir's nationalism. The continuity can be seen in his penchant for seeing conspiracies against himself or Malaysia all around him. The change was shifting the "target" from the Chinese to the West. Also see Milne and Mauzy, *Malaysian Politics under Mahathir*, 134. The conspirators include the neocolonialists (like the International Monetary Fund and "ethnic Europeans"), the Western press, Zionists, human rights advocates, and, most recently, foreign currency speculators. See, for example, Thomas Fuller, "A Fiery Warning in Malaysia: Mahathir Discerns Threat from 'Ethnic European' Colonizers," *International Herald Tribune*, June 19, 1999.

61. Mahathir Mohamad, *The Malay Dilemma* (Singapore: Donald Moore for Asia Pacific Press, 1970), *passim*.

62. The November 1999 general election represented a setback. While the non-Malays were not portrayed as the enemy, the specter of ethnic violence and the implication of threat were raised in the ruling party's massive negative advertising that swamped all the media.

63. Philip Resnick, "Civic and Ethnic Nationalism: Lessons from the Canadian Case," in *Canadian Political Philosophy: Contemporary Reflections*, ed. Ronald Beiner and Wayne Norman (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001), 282–97.

64. From *Malaysiakini*, an electronic newspaper on November 17, 2000, <http://www.malaysiakini.com.my>.

65. Media statement by DAP national chair Lim Kit Siang, December 3, 2000, bungaraya@listserv.net-gw.com.

66. Chandra Muzaffar, "Malay Unity—A Shift; Not a Split," January 10, 2001, sangkancil@lists.malaysia.net.

67. In an interview with former prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman in the 1970s, he told me in all seriousness that Chinese leader and finance minister Tan Siew Sin kept a large map of China hung over his bed. Tan denied this.

68. Interestingly, the most direct postindependence threat to Malaysia's territory came from the Malays' ethnic cousins in Indonesia during *Konfrontasi*, 1963–66. (Indonesia's nationalism was strongly following variant 1.) It provided an opportunity for the minority communities to demonstrate their loyalty, while the only Indonesian sympathizers were a small number of Malays.

69. However, a large survey of three hundred students at the premier University of Malaya revealed that there is almost no interaction between the different ethnic communities outside of classes. Reported online on October 12, 1999, sangkancil@malaysia.net. University of Malaya professor Sheila Abraham's study also revealed other disturbing findings, including the fact that only 10 percent of the students sampled identified themselves as Malaysians first.

70. Resnick, "Civic and Ethnic Nationalism."