

NO. 78

ETHNICITY, INEQUALITY AND HIGHER EDUCATION  
IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA:  
THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS\*

Viswanathan Selvaratnam†

\* An earlier and shorter version of this paper was presented (not distributed) at the Regional Conference on Sociology of Education. The State of the Art: A View from the Third World from August 16 to 17, 1986. The meeting was organized by the Research Committee on Sociology of Education, International Sociology Association in conjunction with the XI World Congress of Sociology in New Delhi, India.

† Dr Selvaratnam is a Senior Fellow with the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. He would like to thank Professor Philip Altbach, Dr S Gopinathan, Dr S.N.R. Kazmi, Dr H.H. Khondker and Dr Simon Barraclough for their critical and useful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

All Rights Reserved

1987

## INTRODUCTION

Conventional wisdom among certain sections of sociologists has it that the children of the disadvantaged, the poor and the minorities do poorly in schools largely because of the inequitable distribution of resources for education. Therefore, a formal compensatory public education policy with a bias towards these children can better serve these underprivileged groups. Better educational credentials obtained by such children will result in better paying jobs that will lift these handicapped groups out of poverty and eventually move them up the social ladder. Thus, success in education, particularly in academic and professional education will lead to improvement in life chances. Entry into the more desirable and prestigious occupations in all modern societies is increasingly becoming closed to those who do not have the appropriate educational credentials, as there is a 'tightening bond' between years of education, jobs and income (Tyler, 1977:35). In the long run, therefore, an equitable educational achievement will work towards a more equitable distribution of income, wealth and status in society as a whole.

This macro-level theoretical contention has had and continues to have a profound influence on public policy makers in many developed and developing countries, including Peninsular Malaysia (Thurow, 1977:325-335).<sup>1</sup> Since independence in 1957, for the predominantly Malay dominated policy makers in Peninsular Malaysia, the idea that education can produce greater social equity has become the cornerstone of their redistributive strategy. At the macro-level they have deliberately conceived and implemented a highly controversial strategy to increase substantially the educational opportunities of the bumiputras<sup>2</sup> to enable them to achieve better educational credentials. It is contended that the increasingly

'tightening bond' between education and jobs will not only make them more eligible for the fast growing job opportunities but, with a rigorously discriminatory policy, provide more and more bumiputras with better paid jobs in the rapidly expanding economy. This is largely because, as in other developing countries, the level of incomes earned in Malaysia often varies directly with the level of academic credentials. It is also justified on the grounds of promoting national unity by reducing economic disparities between the ethnic groups. However, as this article will demonstrate the discrepancy between rhetoric and reality is striking. This is largely because there are various tensions and contradictions between the political desire for equality in educational opportunity and the sociological fact of inequality of educational opportunity. In addition, data collected by the Government on issues of this kind are kept out of the public domain because of the politically sensitive nature of the subject. As a result, any researcher working in this area has to depend on published data, most of which are incomplete and scattered in various government and other published documents. The present study is an attempt to put together the available data and investigate the sociological implications of higher education policy in a multi-ethnic and stratified society, both in terms of national unity and the distributional aspects of educational opportunity, employment and social mobility.

#### THE ISSUE

Peninsular Malaysia came under British rule in the later part of the 19th century. British rule brought about far-reaching changes to the traditional and feudal Malay polity. It also ushered the country into a dependent economy based on the production of raw materials for export, with

foodstuffs and manufactured goods imported from the metropolitan centres. The main raw materials exported are rubber, timber, palm oil, tin and crude petroleum. Until recently the ownership and control of this was predominantly in European hands (Puthucheary, 1960 and Malaysia, 1971b). The local Malay population, for various political and cultural reasons, either was not prepared to enter or was prevented from entering into these rapidly expanding export-oriented industries. Therefore to man these highly profitable export-oriented primary sectors, cheap Chinese and Indian immigrant workers were brought in large numbers from the economically depressed areas of China and India, especially between the 1850's and 1920s, under a 'new system of slavery'. Thus under British political and economic hegemony a multi-ethnic society was created: the Malays, the Chinese, the Indians and others, working in different jobs and cohabitating side by side in apparent harmony for over a century.

In 1986 Peninsular Malaysia had an estimated population of just over 13 million: 55% Malays and other "indigenous" people; 34% Chinese; 10% Indians; 1% "Others" (Sri Lankans, Eurasians and other communities) (Ministry of Finance, Malaysia, 1986:7). Superimposed on this multi-ethnic Malaysian society is a diversity of languages, religions and cultures. This multi-ethnic society on the eve of political independence in 1957 as indicated earlier was further polarized by geographical location and by economic and occupational activities. The numerically and politically dominant Malay community was largely a rural peasantry or small-holders cultivating uneconomic small-holdings and fishermen and thus earning relatively low incomes. The majority of the Chinese on the other hand, lived (and still live) in urban areas and were relatively better paid as wholesale and retail traders, petty traders, skilled and semi-skilled

artisans, professionals, wage-labourers and vegetable farmers and in recent years as manufacturers and entrepreneurs.

The pyramidal colonial educational system in the period 1786-1957 had created a grave imbalance in the distribution of opportunities for education. The exclusive English medium education that was provided by the colonial government and the Christian missions was restrictive as it was predominantly an urban phenomenon designed to create and nurture a colonial elite (Loh Fook Seng, 1975). Therefore, only a small section of the upper class of the Malays and non-Malays who lived in the urban areas and near them could benefit from it. This group, imbued with Western concepts of liberalism and style of life, was nurtured to remain loyal to the colonial government. With the exception of the Malay feudal class the majority of Malays were provided with only an elementary education in the Malay medium, and in some instances Islamic religious education in Arabic. This was inspite of the fact that the British pursued a pro-Malay policy and particularly to protect the Malays from the predatory Chinese. Not surprisingly, this education excluded them from the lower echelons of the colonial administrative and technical service and the predominantly European-owned and managed plantation and tin mining industries. It also kept the bulk of them from gaining access to the English medium and British oriented elitist secondary and tertiary education system.

The policy obviously disproportionately benefited the upper and middle classes of the numerically preponderant urban Chinese, the middle and professional classes of the Indians and elements of the Malay feudal class. These groups were either of direct or indirect use to the expanding colonial educational, administrative and allied services and the rapidly growing trading houses and plantations. The latter were largely owned and

managed by the British and supported by a predominantly Chinese compradore class. Although the Malays formed the majority of the population, their low educational credentials did not allow them to participate in adequate numbers in the growing and attractive jobs that were being rapidly opened to Malaysians in both the public and private sectors. The vernacular education that the colonial government provided for the Malays equipped them only with the elementary skills of numeracy and literacy, locking them into the low income generating rural economy. Thus emphasizing the British policy of insularity of the country's regions and population. Not surprisingly, therefore, on the eve of internal self-government in 1955 and independence in 1957 there was a wide disparity in income, close coincidence between ethnic identity and occupation, income distribution, and geographical location between Malays and non-Malays.

A small group of Malays, predominantly from a feudal background, who had obtained an English medium education from such institution as the Malay College, Kuala Kangsar, and subsequently had acquired a diploma at Raffles College, Singapore, and a degree from its successor, the University of Malaya when it was established in Singapore in 1949, or at a British or developed Commonwealth country university, were able to ensure a niche for themselves in the colonial bureaucracy. Many of them were later to involve themselves in the post-war Malay nationalist movement, particularly in the exclusively ethnically based United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the predominant Malay political party as well as the senior and dominant member and power base of the country's current National Front (and its predecessor the Alliance Party) government. The Alliance party was formed in the early 1950s as a marriage of convenience between the political parties representing the country's three major communities, namely UMNO and

the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malaysian Indian Congress as junior partners in order of importance. It was this Alliance Party that took the country through a peaceful transition to independence in August 1957. In 1974, the Alliance Party broadened its base to form a multi-ethnic party, the National Front which included the other predominantly Malay party, the Pan Malayan Islamic Party (PAS) and other non-Malay parties such as the Peoples Progressive Party (PPP) and the Gerakan (Selvaratnam, 1983:120-21).

Most of the early English-educated Malay members of the feudal class found themselves at the helm of Malay society when the country achieved self-government, followed by independence. This Malay ruling class was quick to realize that the imbalances between the Malay and non-Malay communities would not long remain unchallenged by the Malays particularly with a Westminster type of parliamentary government and an overwhelming number of the country's parliamentary and state constituencies weighted in favour of the numerically preponderant Malay rural population. Thus the Malay ruling class envisaged that through an institutionalized national socio-economic development policy and strategy they could encourage and assist the underprivileged rural Malays to play a greater role in the administrative and economic life of the country. In other words, the priority target in the country's developmental planning was an avowed commitment to eradicate poverty among the rural Malays and ironically at the same time to prop up a Malay middle-class, in income, occupational status and wealth. This could be done only through an educated and trained Malay personnel who could be a crucial ingredient for efficient growth and effective government. This strategy, it was envisaged, would not only redress the prevailing economic imbalance between the Malay and non-Malay

communities but also ultimately abolish rural poverty and in the process, the rural-urban imbalance. All this was expected to help the country to move towards a more egalitarian and just multi-ethnic nation.

### Policy Prescriptions Untill May 1969

A massive countrywide rural development programme to accelerate the modernization process and the diversification of the agricultural sector was conceived and pursued within the framework and context of the country's five year plans which were purported to be a laissez-faire economic policy. This policy was aimed to channel additional resources to the needy rural peasants and was thus expected to raise their productivity and income and eventually their overall well-being. It was accompanied by the rapid provision of universal primary and secondary education accompanied by the democratization of education. This considerably enhanced the access to educational opportunity to all children particularly for the needy Malay children from the rural areas. In statistical terms the total enrolment in all the assisted schools rose from 394,142 in 1947 to 1,014,193 in 1957, to 1,729,713 in 1967 (Ministry of Education, Malaysia, 1968:27).

In addition, in order to accelerate Malay economic and educational development in both rural and urban areas the special privileges under which were provided for in the 1948 pro-Malay Federation of Malaya Agreement were entrenched under Article 153 of the country's 1957 Constitution. Through this constitutional provision the Malays were ensured the reservation of such a proportion as might be deemed reasonable in the public service, scholarships and similar educational and training privileges. An additional provision was incorporated into Section 47 of the University of Malaya Constitution which, inter alia, provides that



"...students who had been awarded Federal or State scholarships or other similar financial assistance from public funds for University degree courses, shall not be refused admission if they satisfy such requirements" (University of Malaya, 1969:34). These discriminatory provisions were incorporated to enable the Malays to be provided with greater access to education and therefore better opportunities for employment and commercial activities in the country's rapidly growing bureaucratic and professional services as well as commercial and manufacturing sectors.

Employment opportunities were further stimulated by the rapid Malayization of the bureaucracy. To stimulate and facilitate Malay participation in commerce and industry, a statutory body called the Rural and Industrial Development Authority (RIDA) was established. Under RIDA, a Training Centre was established to educate and train Malay professionals and businessmen. This Centre was up-graded to the MARA Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1967. Though controversial, the incorporation of privileges into the country's and the university's constitutions was defended as a moral necessity by the Malay leadership.

The above policy of preferential treatment or ethnic discrimination, accompanied by an investment in higher education to benefit the special needs of the Malays was accepted, or at least acquiesced to, by sections of the non-Malay communities' leadership as a necessary political strategy. However, no clear cut criteria were laid down to determine who among the Malays were economically and educationally backward and therefore eligible for preferential treatment. In other words, in spite of marked social and educational inequalities between the ruling Malay class and the mass of the Malay population, the preferential treatment policy both in education and economic activity took no notice of social class divisions and

contradictions among the Malays as a social category. Thus this preferential treatment was to benefit the Malays as a community neglecting the existing intra-ethnic socio-economic inequality among the Malays, particularly between the ruling class and the bulk of the rural population.

The developmental programmes within the framework of the five-year plans, when implemented, did enable the country to achieve high economic growth. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at an average 5.8% per annum during 1957-70 (Rao, 1976). In addition, in spite of a 3% annual growth of population, the per capita income rose from Ringgit 806 to Ringgit 1080, an increase of 30% (Malaysia, 1971b:16). However, these impressive figures did not help to alleviate Malay rural poverty. In 1970 the agricultural sector had the greatest incidence of poverty, and the majority of those engaged in this sector were Malays (68%), compared with the Chinese (21%) (Young, Bussink and Hassan, 1980:31). According to official estimates, about 49.3% of all households in Peninsular Malaysia in 1970 received incomes below the poverty line, which in the same year was officially defined as equivalent to Malaysian Ringgit 33 per capita per month or Ringgit 396 per annum (Jomo and Ishak, 1987:8). In contrast, in the key sectors of the modern economy, which generated most of the wealth, the Chinese were over-represented (66%), whereas the Malays held only 26% (Young, Bussink and Hassan, 1980:3). Neither did it bring about any significant change in occupational structure in the professional levels or in ownership and control in the economy in favour of the Malay community. Instead, it brought about occupational and economic benefits to the high-income groups in both rural and urban areas, helping to create a new elite both among the Malays and the non-Malays. Among the Malays a large bureaucratic class and among the non-Malays a growing professional and

business class were both widely separated from the mass of workers and the rural populace.

This was accompanied by growing income disparities, particularly intergroup inequality among the Malays (Ragayah and Ishak Shari, 1978:244). In addition, there was a lack of tertiary education, employment and economic opportunities to rapidly growing sections of the bumiputra and non-bumiputra school leaving population; political and cultural in-security among non-Malays; and a fear among the Malays, particularly among the ruling class, that there might be an erosion of political power of the Malay ruling class. This could lead to the Malay community being depressed and poor in their own land of plenty (Mahathir, 1970) and an ascendancy of non-bumiputra political power. All these issues gave rise to Malay dissatisfaction. At the same time among the non-Malays there was a growing feeling that they had been discriminated against for too long (Lim Mah Hui, 1985:262). These were some of the major issues that contributed to the Alliance's setbacks in the 1969 elections and the intercommunal flare-up which followed on May 13, 1969 (Selvaratnam, 1983:102-103).

#### Policy Prescriptions After May 1969

The changes that were brought about by the Malay ruling class under the leadership of Tun Abdul Razak after the May 1969 ethnic conflict marked a watershed in the history of the country. They were a drive to assert and consolidate the "Malayness" of Peninsular Malaysia once and for all. Apart from the radical political changes which strengthened the political power of the Malay ruling class, the country adopted and implemented a new economic blueprint with a 'two-pronged' development strategy. This blueprint launched in 1971 as the New Economic Policy (NEP) (Malaysia,

1971b) was a shift in emphasis from mere growth to an egalitarian growth distribution policy aimed at the eradication of poverty, irrespective of ethnic origin. The emphasis was the "restructuring of Malaysian society to reduce and eventually eliminate the identification of race with economic function." In particular, "the identification of the Malays and other indigenous people with low paying" agricultural pursuits are to be eliminated (Malaysia, 1971b:7). This meant the correction of economic imbalances between Malays and non-Malays and the creation of a viable Malay industrial and commercial community. The contention among the Malay ruling class was that Malay poverty and the inequality between Malays and non-Malays could not be eradicated unless the institutional structure and the social-cum-economic values and motivation too were restructured simultaneously. Therefore, to effect the desired change, besides other areas, a major change in the higher education policy of the country was conceived and implemented immediately.

In this major policy change, a sponsored mobility system through tertiary education as a major catalytic agent of change was incorporated into the NEP. This policy was initiated by the Report of The Committee Appointed by the National Operations' Council to Study Campus Life of Students of The University of Malaya (Malaysia, 1971a). The Committee pointed out that "the composition of the student population itself, which until the current academic year has not even reflected the composition of the nation as a whole and which, even now, does not reflect it when considered on a faculty by faculty basis" (Malaysia, 1971a:30). This was particularly so in the science-based faculties. The underrepresentation of bumiputra students was substantiated by the fact that when the University of Malaya first started in 1959 non-bumiputras constituted 80% of the

student population, while bumiputras constituted only 20% (Malaysia, 1971a:31). By the session 1970-71, this ethnic imbalance in the student population was rectified and the student population had "succeeded to a degree in reflecting the racial composition of the country" (Malaysia, 1971a:31).

However, the University in 1970 produced out of a total of 493 graduates in the Faculty of Science only 22 Malays, while the figures for the Faculties of Engineering, Agriculture and Medicine too were far from comforting. They had one Malay out of 71 graduates in the Faculty of Engineering, 15 Malays out of 49 in the Faculty of Agriculture and 4 Malays out of 67 in the Faculty of Medicine (Malaysia, 1972:6). This was in spite of the fact that 54.7% of the 10.8 million people in Malaysia in 1970 were bumiputras. Therefore, one of the issues that confronted the University of Malaya was its inability to widen its social base of entry in order to give greater access to the increasing number of school leaving bumiputra students, particularly in the science based faculties. This was largely because, as the Committee pointed out, admissions to the University of Malaya were based solely on merit. In other words, the concept of open competition or contest mobility did not help to reflect the ethnic composition of the country (Malaysia, 1971a:45); neither did it help the rural poor to get access to the university.

It was therefore recommended by the Committee that admission should not be based solely on academic merit (Malaysia, 1971a:45). A "quota system" was deemed necessary to erase this handicap, particularly for the Malay students from rural areas, so that a larger number of Malays could be admitted into the country's tertiary institution. This meant, according to the Committee, that standards and rules of admission should be applied

with discretion, common sense and flexibility by all parties concerned in this exercise in order to achieve the national objective. In other words, bumiputra students who were below the cut-off point in academic terms were to be admitted.

The other main recommendations of the Report (Malaysia, 1971a:128) were that the university should

- (i) decide and state clearly that its policy is to ensure as far as possible that the racial composition of the student population in the University as a whole and in each of its faculties should reflect the racial composition of the country;
- (ii) ensure that faculties with poor Malay representation (which was the case with all the science-based faculties with the limited exception of agriculture) should make every conscious effort to admit more Malay students;
- (iii) in each faculty, students who come from rural areas, where facilities for the study of science are limited, should be given special assistance and tuition and pre-Medical, pre-Sciences and pre-Engineering courses should be instituted.
- (iv) Scholarship-awarding authorities should award more scholarships in the sciences to Malay students in order to rectify the present racial imbalance in the sciences.

Within the NEP the role of education was explicitly envisaged to be crucial in the furthering "the realization of the full potential of the vast human resources of the country ... contribute significantly towards promoting national unity ... play a vital role in increasing the productivity and income of all Malaysians" (Malaysia, 1971b:22). Also, the NEP called for the creation and nurturing of a new 'community' of bumiputra commercial and industrial entrepreneurs of all categories so that within one generation Malays and other indigenous people could become full partners in the economic life of the nation (Malaysia, 1971b:22). The education policy that was introduced with the NEP in the 1970s continued

to be pursued in the subsequent plans, which envisaged not merely rapid economic progress, but equity and socio-political progress as well (Mukherjee and Sarjit Singh, 1985:289). As a result, the higher education policy underwent a process of 'indigenization' to meet national aspirations and needs, in particular to meet the rapidly growing bumiputra aspirations and the country's increasing middle- and high-level manpower needs (Selvaratnam, 1986).

### Policy Implementation

#### (a) Equity of Access to Higher Education: Local

With the introduction of the NEP, the Malaysian Government immediately embarked upon a highly bureaucratically centralized and 'Malaynification' top-down strategy to eliminate the identification of race with economic function. For the first time the issue of bumiputra backwardness became synonymous with a national problem that had to be solved through nationally prescribed public policy and implemented by development strategies that were to be prescribed in terms of what the Malay ruling class thought to be an appropriate and pragmatic solution. This emphasized the role of education, employment and asset ownership policies for bumiputras within a given time-frame of twenty years i.e. by 1990. As a result of the NEP, a whole phase of new ethnic relations was ushered into Malaysian socio-economic, political and cultural life.

To accelerate and facilitate actively the bumiputra demand for access to higher education, a new national education policy, highly controversial as far as the non-bumiputras were concerned, was spelt out in 1969 by the then Minister of Education, Abdul Rahman Yakub, for immediate implementation.

Through this new policy a time-table was specified for the conversion of all English-medium schools to national schools from the school year beginning in January 1970, with Bahasa Malaysia as the sole medium of instruction for all subjects and with English as a compulsory second language. However, provisions were made to enable non-bumiputra students to learn their mother tongue if they so desired. The universities in the country were directed to use Bahasa Malaysia<sup>3</sup> the sole medium of instruction for all courses, other than languages, by the year 1983. The Razak Report (Report of the Education Committee 1956) which spelt out in 1956 for the first time the policy to make Bahasa Malaysia as the sole medium of instruction at all levels of the country's education system, became a reality both legally and in practice. A common curriculum to promote a common value system and a national examination system using both Bahasa Malaysia and English were introduced (Malaysia, 1986:483).

The main objective in promoting Bahasa Malaysia as the sole medium of instruction at all levels of education was to provide for national identity and promote unity. This policy was envisaged as a bridge to national unity and thus help to reduce the country's long standing inter-ethnic disunity and growing polarity. A prominent Malaysian educator claimed that "From the common language [Bahasa Malaysia] comes a common awareness which ultimately develops into a commonly accepted national identity" (Aziz, 1972:29).

Education, particularly university education, is highly valued by both the bumiputra and non-bumiputra communities as an avenue of self-advancement. A university degree as has been demonstrated for long in the Malaysian context till recently was a passport to life long, security, comfort and status. Not surprisingly, according to Hussin Ali (1975:135), for the poor rural Malays if there is any avenue open to their children to



bridge the gap between the upper strata of their society and themselves, it must be through education. This was true also for the non-bumiputra communities. For example, for the Malaysian Indian workers on the plantation frontier, education in education is "the talisman of hope and a symbol of success" (Marimuthu, 1971:91). Therefore, as in other developing countries, in Malaysia too there is a growing aspiration for education as a whole and higher education in particular due to structural, socio-psychological and group variable influence (Carpenter and Western, 1982). Therefore, the Bahasa Malaysia policy gave the growing aspiring number of Malay students, particularly from the rapidly growing Malay medium schools, access to the various post-secondary school, and tertiary education institutions within the country, the main channels of upward mobility (Bee-Lan Chan Wong, 1977:110). On the other hand, in the past, when English was used as a medium of instruction, it was "linked with the feeling of unfair competition on the part of the Malay medium students vis-a-vis the English medium students who are at a decided advantage" (Malaysia, 1971a:50).

The Government immediately embarked upon a major developmental and interventionist policy in higher education. In addition to the massive increase in public expenditure to expand the facilities and thus provide greater access to higher education, it accelerated the establishment of the proposed Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (National University of Malaysia). This University was also to meet the country's growing national i.e. bumiputra aspirations and respond to their needs (Selvaratnam, 1985:491). Under the provision of the Constitution Amendment Act of 1971 and the Universities and University Colleges Act of 1971, the universities and other tertiary institutions within the country were required to admit more

bumiputra students. This was done in order to close the gap in educational opportunities among the country's regions and races (Malaysia, 1971b:232).

In order to coordinate the administration and implementation of the requirements of in this constitutional provision effectively, the government established a Unit Pusat Universiti (Central University Admissions Unit) within the Ministry of Education to ensure that future admissions into the universities were in line with the NEP. The implementation of this tightly controlled process of selection and admission into the country's universities eroded one of the deep-rooted and jealously guarded academic traditions of university autonomy, i.e., to allow each university to determine its own admissions policy and criteria. The Government's justification was that it had to modify the structure of its educational institutions and gear their operations in a direction congruent with the needs, aspirations and expectations of the people, in this case, the bumiputra community (Selvaratnam, 1986:46-47).

In numerical and percentage terms bumiputra students were predominant in the humanities and social sciences courses. This was largely because the majority of them were educated in rural schools where there were few or no facilities for basic science education. Furthermore, the Malaysian Civil Service (MCS), the Malaysian Administrative Service (MAS) and the State Civil Services are highly prestigious and well-paid services. Up till very recently they were easily accessible to the majority of the Malay candidates who had an honours degree for the MCS and a pass degree for the other two services. Therefore, pursuing a course in the humanities and social sciences was quite popular with Malay students.

With the NEP they were encouraged through active government intervention and quotas to move into the sciences and science based

professional courses like medicine, dentistry, engineering and pharmacy. In order to actively facilitate and accelerate this policy and in particular to create a visible Malay industrial and business community as outlined under the NEP it was found necessary to widen the base of science and technological education of the rural bumiputra students. Therefore, over a period of time eleven residential science schools were established by the Ministry of Education. It was envisaged that these superior schools would provide for talented but poor rural Malay students as well as a small number of non-Malays, to get greater access to science education. This policy was expected to improve the supply of suitable bumiputra candidates to take up the increasing number of places in the science based courses in the country's institutions and their massive overseas training programmes. By the end of 1980, the eleven residential schools had a total enrolment of 6,162. In addition MARA (Majlis Amanah Raayat)<sup>4</sup> has set up eleven residential junior science colleges to provide additional secondary science education facilities for bumiputra students. The total enrolment of these colleges was 3,390 in 1980 (Malaysia, 1981:347) and today the number stands at 14,848 students (New Straits Times, April 12 1987). The universities too, in order to accelerate greater bumiputra enrolment in science and science related courses introduced pre-university foundation courses for those of them who had at least a secondary school leaving certificate. This programme provided bumiputra students with an additional entry route to the science and technology based faculties.

At the same time expenditure on university development was increased, from Ringgit 30 million during the First Malaysia Plan period to Ringgit 87.50 million during the Second Malaysia Plan period (Malaysia, 1971b:242), an almost three fold increase. Therefore, the country which

had only one fully-fledged university and one on the planning board on the eve of May 1969 suddenly saw a rapid expansion of the existing university and the establishment of several new universities with branch campuses and a number of middle-level tertiary institutions. The number of students rose from 8,505 in 1970 (Malaysia, 1971b:224) to a total of more than 37,838 in 1985 (Malaysia, 1986:490), an increase of well over 300%.

This unprecedented, politically motivated, policy departure did help the Government to change the ethnic mix of the student population in Malaysian university campuses. In particular, the Government's direct intervention in and administration of the admissions policy has enabled the bumiputra students to gain a dominant position in terms of ethnic numbers into the seven universities (see Table 1). It has also helped to correct the imbalance in course offerings between the non-bumiputra and bumiputra students (Mehmet and Yip, 1986:23-25). The policy of preferential treatment and controlled access to the universities was intended to replace a rather select group of both bumiputra and non-bumiputra students by a diversified group of entrants largely from the Malay medium schools located in the rural areas. This policy did change the student composition in the universities from a rather elitist and select group to a highly differentiated group of individuals who not only differed in intellectual ability and grounding in language and the relevant subject areas, but in their interest and motivation for higher education as well. In other words, education is sought-not for the acquisition of information and knowledge, the development of one's free and independent thinking resulting in the growth of an inquisitive and experimental bent of mind that will aid the development process, but for the acquisition of paper credentials and the material benefits stemming from them.

**TABLE 1**  
**THE ETHNIC MIX IN LOCAL UNIVERSITIES FOR ACADEMIC SESSION 1985/1986**  
**(IN PERCENTAGE TERMS)**

University	Bumiputra	Non-Bumiputra
University of Malaya	53.73	46.27
University of Science Malaysia	55.45	44.55
National University of Malaysia	72.52	27.48
Agriculture University of Malaysia	80.71	19.29
University of Technology of Malaysia	75.35	24.65
International Islamic University	92.84	7.16
Northern University of Malaysia	70.11	29.89

Source: Culled from Malaysia (1985), Fifth Malaysian Plan, 1986-90. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, pp. 490-491.

**(b) Equity of Access to Higher Education: Overseas**

In spite of the rapid expansion in their number and size, the country's universities still lacked the requisite infrastructural capacity and the indigenous teaching expertise and manpower to meet the demand for places in higher education. Neither were they able to develop quickly enough the capacity to meet this rapidly growing demand. This is demonstrated by the fact that in spite of a marked expansion in the intake of students, more than 50 % of the applicants in the years 1972 and 1973 were not able to gain admission into one of the local universities (see Table II). This phenomenon has continued until today (see Table III). In 1986, for every applicant accepted, five were rejected (see Table III). Therefore, large numbers of non-bumiputra students, an overwhelming number of whom are of Chinese ethnic origin, are unable to secure place in vocationally oriented courses in any of the local universities. They are, as a result, drawn to secure an English medium education overseas. A qualification from one of these prestigious overseas institutions commands high respect and status in the Malaysian high level labour-market as well

as in the outside world. Therefore, there are today, not surprisingly, a large number of non-bumiputra Malaysian students studying in overseas tertiary institutions through their own initiative and private financing (New Straits Times, July 11, 1986).

TABLE II  
APPLICANTS AND UNIVERSITY INTAKE 1970-73

YEAR	NUMBER OF APPLICANTS	NUMBER OF PLACES OFFERED
1970	5,324	3561
1971	6,392	4167
1972	8,251	4145
1973	9,860	4072

Source: Higher Education Division, Ministry of Education.

TABLE III  
APPLICANTS AND UNIVERSITY INTAKE 1981-86

YEAR	NUMBER OF APPLICANTS	NUMBER OF PLACES OFFERED
1981	16,698	5,847
1982	19,522	6,127
1983	28,858	6,890
1984	32,168	7,192
1985	38,000	7,388
1986	48,000	8,635

Source: New Straits times, July 11, 1986.

In order to meet the exigencies of the NEP, the government, too, because of a lack of training facilities locally and the necessary expertise, turned to overseas institutions. Through a massive programme of scholarships, grants, fellowships and low or zero interest loans, the government and its agencies sent large numbers of bumiputra students to a number of developed countries to study at various levels. By 1983 it was estimated that there were over 17,000 government or government agency

sponsored students mostly bumiputras studying at tertiary and non-tertiary institutions overseas. In 1984, it was estimated by the Ministry of Education that a peak total of 74,500 Malaysians were studying in various overseas institutions.

This large Government sponsored and privately financed Malaysian student population overseas cost the country an estimated Ringgit 1.5 billion in foreign exchange in 1986 (New Straits Times, July 8, 1986). Fortunately, until recently this was facilitated by the high commodity prices, including the country's increasing petrodollar earnings. Besides, foreign earnings helped to expand the Malaysian economy as well. These factors not only provided a fully convertible currency for overseas study for a large number of Malaysian students but also created the employment opportunities for the country's rapidly increasing graduate population from local and overseas tertiary institutions.

## IMPLICATIONS

### (a) Access to Higher Education and the Question of National Unity

The Government's policy of active intervention and preferential treatment of bumiputras for places in tertiary institutions at home and abroad through scholarships, grants and liberal loans has in effect made competition for places among non-bumiputras, particularly among the Chinese, very intense. This in turn has resulted in higher entry requirements for non-bumiputras vis-a-vis bumiputras into the local universities. As early as January 1975 (only four years after the launching of the NEP), the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), the Chinese component and a junior partner of the ruling National Front Government, in a Memorandum on the National Education System in Malaysia which it

submitted to the UMNO-led Government, pointed out that through the implementation of the NEP "the imbalance has been reversed in favour of the Malays" (MCA, 1975: Appendix II). The Memorandum in its Appendix Two went on to point out that "there is a rapid rise and widening gap between the bumiputra" student numbers in the local universities and in the 1972/73 session, the ratio between Malay and Chinese students was 2:1. The memorandum also pointed out that if this rate of increase gap continued, in the near future the gap between bumiputra and non-bumiputra student numbers will worsen. The Government was called upon by the MCA to make every effort to narrow down this growing gap in student numbers between bumiputras and non-bumiputras.

In spite of this significant concern and call by the MCA to rectify this rapidly widening gap, the bumiputra percentage of student numbers in the local universities continued to increase substantially. In 1980 the bumiputras were just over 66%, while the Chinese and Indians were in the region of 27% and 6% respectively (Malaysia, 1986: 490-49). This percentage changed only insignificantly in favour of the non-bumiputra students in 1985 (Malaysia, 1986:49). On the other hand, as pointed out earlier, the ethnic composition of the country's population in 1980 was 55% bumiputra, 34% Chinese and 10% Indian. Since the introduction of the NEP in 1970, the disproportionate dominance of non-bumiputra students particularly in the science based courses in the local universities had waned. In a recent policy statement, the Minister of Education, Anwar Ibrahim, made it clear that despite increasing pressure from the non-Malay community, the government would not consider any measures that contradicted Malay aspirations (THES, 26.12.86).



In addition, in the distribution of awards more than 80% of all State and Federal government scholarships and bursaries were given to bumiputras (The Star, September 10, 1982). The figures in Table IV below indicate that more than 83 of the awards worth between Ringgit 3000 and 4000 each went to bumiputras, while non-bumiputras received only 17%.

TABLE IV  
DISTRIBUTION OF GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIPS TO 1983 GRADUATES BY  
ETHNIC GROUP

Government Scholarships	Malays	Chinese	Indian	Others
\$ 1 - \$1,000	27	6	2	0
\$1,001 - \$2,000	14	9	7	0
\$2,001 - \$3,000	205	47	15	0
\$3,001 - \$4,000	683	108	27	10

Source: Culled from Mehmet and Yip, 1986, p. 62.

As a result of the foregoing direct and active interventionist policies of the State, many non-bumiputra candidates who are qualified on academic grounds to enter the country's local universities were rejected on ethnic grounds and are therefore forced to seek an overseas higher education at considerable cost to their immediate family members and various sponsoring agencies and communal organizations. This double-edged policy that works in favour of the bumiputra community has brought about considerable discontent among the non-bumiputra population of the country. Their contention is that the policy of preferential treatment in education and training for bumiputras is a policy of discrimination against the non-bumiputras as well as a violation of the universally accepted and upheld principle of access to higher education through merit only.

As pointed out earlier, each year the number of applicants to the country's universities far exceeds the number of places available and this

is continuing to rise (see Tables II and III). The inability of the universities to admit a majority of qualified candidates who seek admission into them has resulted in a large number of Malaysian students having to go overseas. Those who can afford an overseas education invariably chose to study in one of the tertiary institutions of the West. However, those who cannot afford an overseas education enrol themselves in one of the many private local institutions, most of them of inferior quality, which offer lower level diploma courses or prepare for external diplomas, professional and degree qualifications (Singh, 1983:40). Some of the more affluent parents, both bumiputra and non-bumiputra, send their children at a very early age to one of the exclusive independent schools in Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America in the hope that this will get them easy entry into one of the more prestigious universities of these countries. Currently, Malaysia has about 40,000 tertiary students studying at home and perhaps an equal number studying overseas. The majority of those studying overseas are non-bumiputras, mainly Chinese, at tertiary institutions of the developed countries in the West (see Table V).

TABLE V  
THE NUMBER OF MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN DEGREE COURSES OVERSEAS

Ethnic Group	1980		1985	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Bumiputra	5,194	26.62	6,034	26.6
Chinese	11,533	59.11	13,406	59.1
Indian	2,676	13.72	3,108	13.7
Others	107	0.55	136	0.6

Source: Malaysia (1986), pp. 490-491.

The foregoing interventionist policies of the State have been one of the NEP's serious counter-productive measures in their effort to correct inequality through higher education. They have helped to fuel and exacerbate "inter-ethnic rivalry and conflict, especially among the middle class" (Jomo and Ishak, 1986:94). Whereas in the past the children of the urban non-Malay middle class could gain access relatively easily into the local universities, now they increasingly feel that this opportunity is being denied to them (Toh Kim Woon, 1984:256). The then Minister of Education, Musa Hitam, conceded in Parliament in December 1978 that the National Education Policy gives clear preferences to the growing aspirations of the Malays:

Whether it is relevant or not, one of the matters that cannot be denied, which had been put forward during our debate on the Merdeka University issue, is the problem of dissatisfaction, especially among non-bumiputras parents over the question of lessening opportunities for their children to enter universities especially local universities. No one, especially the parents, can be blamed for this feeling of disappointment. I accept the fact that since the launching of the New Economic Policy in 1970, the Government has provided greater and rapid opportunities to our bumiputra students to further their studies at University level. But in this process, many students of non-bumiputra origin were disappointed in not getting places, although they were highly qualified (quoted in Sinnadurai, 1986:50).

The significant electoral gains made by the largely urban and predominantly Chinese based Democratic Action Party (DAP) in the early 1986 Malaysian general elections are perhaps indicative of a growing polarization between the Malay and the Chinese communities. Contrary to the claims of the NEP for an enduring national harmony and unity, a more polarized and divided society is fast emerging as the very consequence of NEP which includes its highly controversial new higher education policy.

(b) **Intra-Bumiputra Distribution of Educational Opportunity**

As indicated earlier, under the development plans (including the NEP) the main emphasis is to raise the status of bumiputras in the low socio-economic groups, particularly in the rural sector. It was for this purpose that the MARA Junior Science Colleges were established. The aim was to prepare bumiputra students from low socio-economic and rural background for eventual enrolment in science-based disciplines at home and overseas. However, it is interesting to note that the bulk of the students (63 per cent) enrolled in these colleges were from the widening circle of middle and professional classes of bumiputra society; further, an urban bias in the selection of candidates was also revealed (Sulaiman, 1975). It was pointed out that,

Not only have these schools failed to provide more and better opportunities for the poor Malays, they have also performed disappointingly with respect to the provision of more and better educational opportunities for the rural Malays. Essentially, these elitist schools are but just another additional avenue for Malays drawn from high urban social classes to maintain their social status. What is more, students in these schools are heavily subsidized by the State even though they could well afford to pay. (Toh Kim Woon, 1984:260)

This class and urban bias is further reflected in a recent sample study which included the awarding of scholarships and bursaries by government and government supported agencies (Mehmet and Yip, 1986). The share of these awards for the poor bumiputras from families with a monthly income of less than Ringgit 300/- is 14% according to the study. On the other hand, the study points out, students from the upper strata of bumiputra society were awarded 23% of the awards. In terms of the population composition of bumiputras the poor bumiputras were 63%, while the upper class were only 5% (Mehmet and Yip, 1986:87). For every one chance that the poor bumiputra household has for being awarded a

scholarship the rich bumiputra household has 21 chances (Mehmet and Yip, 1986:88). This sample study indicates that the intra-Malay inequality of opportunity in higher education is significant. In other words, the policies and mechanisms of preferential treatment in higher education have now shifted in its intention to contribute to reproducing and maintaining the socio-economic status of the upper strata of the bumiputra community rather than helping the social mobility of the poor bumiputra. However, one should not go away with the view that given equal educational opportunity there will be a complete leveling of skills and training among all individuals within society. There is considerable amount of variation in educational performance between classes in society.

However, the same study points out that this seems to be true for other ethnic groups as well. For the poor Chinese households, the share of scholarships is only 3% in spite of the fact they make up 26% of the total Chinese population. On the other hand, the rich Chinese take up 34% of the scholarships although they form only 20% of the Chinese population (Mehmet and Yip, 1986:88). It is further pointed out that for every one chance a poor Chinese or Indian household has for being awarded a scholarship, the rich Chinese or Indian household has 13 and 10 chances respectively (Mehmet and Yip, 1986:88). In other words, scholarships are regressively distributed, favouring the richer households, and this is true for all ethnic groups (Mehmet and Yip, 1986:84). With the end of admission by merit, the beginning of an element of educational unfairness has crept in. Therefore, it is generally believed that the possibility of securing admission for one's daughter or son through the 'back door' cannot be ruled out, in the form of personal or political influence.

(c) Higher Education and Employment

The students who study in Malaysian tertiary institutions go through their education in Bahasa Malaysia. Though they are also trained within a Western oriented educational, scientific and methodological paradigm, a majority of them emerge as pale copies of their Western-trained counterparts, largely because of their language handicap. Therefore, there is a growing dichotomy in the socialization and educational process of the locally and overseas educated Malaysians. In other words, a "two culture" society is fast emerging. The overseas educated particularly those students who go to a prestigious western university enjoy greater prestige and better employment and higher income prospects, while the locally educated face a growing unemployment problem. The Malay dominated public sector is employing more and more of the Malays locally and overseas trained, while the private sector is employing the overseas trained Malays and non-Malays. Many of the non-Malay professionals are also self-employed as consultants, engineers, architects, doctors, lawyers, etc. This phenomenon is reinforcing the existing disparity in occupational opportunities, incomes and life-styles between the foreign trained and the local graduates. It is also widening the gap between rich and poor, urban and rural.

The current world-wide economic recession has brought about changing international investment patterns, a decline in foreign and locally owned manufacturing industries accompanied by very little further new investments by both foreign and local investors. All this has contributed to a slowdown in the economic growth of Malaysia. This is further aggravated by the rapid adoption of new technology which is simultaneously capital

intensive and labour saving in its application and is being applied in both public and private sectors.

In addition, current educational policies designed to address policy issues of unemployment are far from adequate to its amelioration. These factors accompanied by substantially lower levels of economic growth since 1984 are rapidly giving rise to a situation of fewer and fewer employment opportunities for educated workers relative to their supply. This is indicated by the fact that public sector has put a freeze on unessential jobs and the private sector is retrenching and in some instances closing down operations (The Sunday Star, December 28, 1986). Therefore, a lack of demand for graduates in both public and private sectors is moving towards a point of "jobless growth" and higher education in Malaysia is no longer considered to be in some quarters a positive contributor to economic growth but merely a "credential inflation" at considerable cost to the country (Dore, 1976). This is in spite of the fact that education in all the country's development plans has been emphasized as one of the main engines of Malaysia's material well-being and social justice. In a recent address to Malaysian students and members of UMNO in Washington DC, the Minister of Education, Anwar Ibrahim, revealed that the country can expect to have 35,000 unemployed graduates by July 1987 (The Star, December 25, 1986). Students who were on public scholarships or business are being freed from their contractual obligations to serve the public sector, so that they can seek employment anywhere. In addition government is encouraging by providing incentives for those graduates who want to be self-employed. It is predicted that by 1990, the country will have an unemployment population of 684,000- or 10 percent of the working population (The Sunday Star, December 28, 1986). In spite of growing graduate unemployment both

students and parents believe that higher education is desirable as it provides with certain 'marketable skills' (Weber, 1968). Otherwise the students will be deprived of this passport to jobs. Thus, there is an ever increasing demand for higher education and the "diploma disease" has reached epidemic proportions (Dore, 1976). The country to-day faces the problem of demand for education far in excess not only the available places in universities but of the demand for trained manpower as estimated in the country's development plans (Lim Lin Lean, 1978:32). This is leading to the emergence of a rapidly expanding "overeducated" population which could eventually pose a major socio-economic problem as well as a serious political threat to the Malay ruling class.

(d) Economic Issues

Malaysia, as indicated earlier, through her huge exports of primary commodities and crude petroleum earned more than the necessary foreign exchange to pay for the education of her increasing outflow of students numbering 65,000 in 1986 (Selvaratnam, 1987). However, in the current world economic recession, the depressed commodity and oil prices have seriously affected Malaysia's foreign exchange earnings and balance payment position. One of the factors that has also contributed to the unhealthy balance of payment position is the increased costs of overseas education, particularly in the West. The foreign exchange cost to the country for students studying overseas, whether supported by public funds or from private sources, escalated to Ringgit 1.5 billion in 1986. This was 20% higher than two years earlier, but an average annual rise about 30% was registered over the last ten years (Commonwealth Secretariat Standing Committee on Student Mobility, 1985). Naturally this substantial annual



increase in cost accompanied by a huge outflow in foreign exchange is of serious concern to the government as the country is facing a growing erosion of its balance of payments position. The Ministry of Education has taken steps to reduce the cost of overseas education by calling on the country's universities to increase their intake of students into the 1987 academic year by 25%. This policy is envisaged to reduce the number of students going overseas to study as well as to help conserve the country's foreign exchange (New Straits Times, October 29, 1986). The ultimate aim of the country's policy is to change the ratio of students studying abroad from its current 50% to 20%. In other words, 80% or more Malaysian students will study at least up to the first degree level at local universities in due course.

Apart from the government's concern about the increasing foreign exchange constraints, most of the parents, relatives and other sponsors of the private students are finding it more and more difficult to meet the escalating cost of overseas education, particularly in the West. The New Strait Times of 30 January 1983 wrote:

Most parents find it extremely difficult to send their children overseas for an education. Many have sold or mortgaged their house or property to give their children a good education. Some even have to cut down on basic necessities. The cost of an overseas education now is beyond the means of most parents.

All current pointers indicate that further rises in fees, travel and cost of living for overseas students in the developed world are likely. Therefore, the higher education overseas scenario is going to be tilted more and more in favour of the bumiputras and non-bumiputras who have the capacity to pay for it as well as those bumiputras who are influential enough to secure government financial support. Also, the sacrifice by parents for overseas education for their children is becoming more of a

gamble. As indicated earlier, this is largely because recession has hit the developed countries hard and slowed down their economies considerably, and in turn affected Malaysia as well.

## CONCLUSION

This macro-level policy analysis shows that there has been a discernable shift in the bumiputra student population in tertiary institutions at home and overseas since the early 1970s. However, except for fragmentary data, no comprehensive and conclusive empirical evidence exist to show the effects of the preferential treatment and the NEP and its strategies with regard to correcting ethnic imbalance through the highly centralized State higher education and its agencies in Malaysia except in the civil service, where bumiputras account for 62 per cent of all jobs (New Straits Times, November 12, 1986). There are no comprehensive figures to show us how many bumiputra professionals from the different sections of the bumiputra community are now practising in Malaysia because of the preferential treatment and the NEP. Therefore, the foregoing analysis on education's potential contribution to greater ethnic equality of opportunity allows more room for rhetoric than for conclusive statistical data. However, all the fragmentary data that have been published thus far go to support the popularly held view that the system of bumiputra preferences has been generally very effective in increasing the bumiputra class of engineers, accountants, architects, lawyers, doctors, administrators and educators among the bumiputras. There has thus been an erosion of the identification of vocation with ethnicity. However, these policies have also led to greater intra-ethnic inequalities, particularly among the middle and professional class of bumiputras and the rural Malays.

One of the factors that have contributed to this marked inequality is access to education and financial support for it between rich and poor bumiputras. Only a small section of the bumiputra community has benefited. It worked against the ideal of higher education for the best brains and exacerbated racial polarization and enhanced the further division of Malaysian society both in terms of inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic social cohesion.

It has, therefore, failed to achieve its publicly declared aims of improved economic upliftment to the society as a whole and enduring ethnic, class and social harmony. This is largely because, firstly, the non-bumiputras have viewed and continue to view the higher education system as a meritocratic one while the bumiputras tend to see it as a crucial instrument in their hands to serve their aspirations for socio-economic mobility without having to compete with the more enterprising non-bumiputras, particularly the Chinese. Secondly, the benefits of the NEP's education policy have not reached the bulk of the poorer sections of the bumiputra community to any significant degree.

Although to some extent overseas study has had and continues to have adverse educational, economic, political and cultural consequences both to the students and the country, the Government of Malaysia for political and related reasons has been rather cautious in its introduction of any new policy to regulate the outflow of students and counter some of these adverse consequences. This is largely because firstly, the country still has a far from adequate supply of places in its own institutions of higher learning to cater for the rising demand for tertiary education. Secondly, the government has come to realize that in a multi-ethnic society like Malaysia any restrictive measures to stem the outflow of students overseas

can be misconstrued and exacerbate further the already high level of communal political sentiments. This is unhealthy for the country, particularly when it pursues a less open and less fair means of ethnically biased admissions and employment criteria.

From this study one can infer that there is need for the Government of Malaysia to publish comprehensive figures about the students sponsored by it in the country's universities and in overseas tertiary institutions. In particular a breakdown by ethnic groups will do much to take the discussion of the subject out of the realm of conjecture, prejudice and fear. In addition, the Government may review its higher education policy in the light of the actual results — in particular to ensure that (a) students from rural areas get their fair share of places in higher education both at home and abroad and that (b) the cause of ethnic harmony is served rather than harmed by the higher education policy. Another area which needs careful review is the overall cost of educating young Malaysians overseas. It is much cheaper to create new places, even new universities, at home than to send them overseas. The proposed plan to increase the intake of students by an addition 25% at home universities would also act as a lever against the emergence of a "two culture" society and move the country towards a self-reliant model in higher education and training.

## NOTES

1. Malaysia occupies a central position in Southeast Asia and was formed in 1963 as a political entity. The Malaysia agreement was signed on 9 July, 1963 between the United Kingdom, the Federation of Malaya (today known as Peninsular Malaysia), North Borneo (now known as Sabah), Sarawak and Singapore. The Malaysian Federation came into being on 16 September, 1963. Singapore left the federation on 9th August 1965. Malaysia consists of two portions. The part of the country known as Peninsular Malaysia is separated from Sabah and Sarawak in Borneo by the South China Sea, a distance of 400 miles. The constitutional agreement allowed the administration of education in Sabah and Sarawak to remain under the jurisdiction of these States, though education was financed through the Federal Government. Therefore, not surprisingly, the policy developments in education between Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah and Sarawak have differed somewhat, though in recent years there is a move towards a greater integration with the national education policy. In this paper Peninsular Malaysia and Malaya are used synonymously.
2. Bumiputra means 'son of the soil'. In the Malaysian context the term bumiputra is officially used to cover not only the Malays of Peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak and Sabah but all indigenous groups (mainly Iban and Kadazan of Sarawak and Sabah). However, in this article the term 'Malay' is used interchangeably with the term bumiputra.
3. Bahasa Malaysia means the 'language of Malaysia'. It is Malay, the language of the Malays and the lingua franca of the country since pre-British times.
4. MARA stands for Majlis Amanah Ra'ayat (The Council of Trust for Indigenous People) set up to promote the economic welfare of the bumiputra groups.

## REFERENCES

- Abdul Majid bin Abdul Rahman (1986/87).  
Malaysia's New Economic Policy and Education: Its Sociological Implications, Academic Exercise BA Social Science Honours, Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore.
- Aziz, Ungku A (1972).  
"The Social Responsibility of the University in Asian Countries,"  
Proceedings of a Seminar, International Association of Universities.  
Paris: IAU.
- Bee-Lan Chan Wang (1977).  
"Distribution of Students among Fields of Study" Comparative Education Review, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 110 - 123.
- Carpenter, P.G. and Western, J.S. (1982).  
"Aspirations for Higher Education," The Australian Journal of Education, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 266-278.
- Commonwealth Standing Committee in Student Mobility (1985).  
Malaysian Student Mobility Overseas: Policies, Practices and Problems : A Case Study. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Commonwealth Secretariat (1986).  
Commonwealth Student Mobility : Commitment and Resources. Fifth Report of the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Student Mobility Today.
- De Silva, C.R. (1974).  
"Weightage in University Admission: Standardisation and District Quotas in Sri Lanka 1970-1975," Modern Ceylon Studies Vol. 5, No. 2, pp 151-167.
- Dore, Ronald (1976).  
The Diploma Disease: Educational Qualification and Development.  
London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Edwards, John (1977).  
Positive Discrimination, Social Justice, and Social Policy: Moral Scrutiny of a Policy Practice. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Federation of Malaya (1960).  
Second Five-year Plan, 1964-65. Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer.
- Hoerr, O.D. (1973).  
"Education, Income and Equality in Malaysia" Economic Development and Cultural Change, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 247-275.
- Husen, Torstern (1984).  
"The School in an Achievement-Oriented Society: Crisis and Remedies" (Mimeo).

- Jomo, K.S. and Ishak Shari (1986).  
Development Policies and Income Inequality in Peninsular Malaysia,  
 Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Advanced Study, University of Malaya.
- Karthigesu, R. (1986).  
 "Distribution of Opportunities in Tertiary Education in Malaysia: A  
 Review of the Fifth Malaysia Plan" A paper presented at the Himpunan  
 Sains Social III, held at University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, December  
 1986.
- Klitgaard Robbert (1986).  
Elitism and Meritocracy in Developing Countries: Selection Policies  
 for Higher Education. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Lim Lin Lean (1979).  
 "Problems of Increasing Demand for Higher Education; The Malaysian  
 View point" in Donald A. Leuschel (ed). Problems of Increasing  
 Demand for Higher Education: Papers and Reports. The Twelfth General  
 Conference and Seminar of the Association of Southeast Asian  
 Institutions of Higher Learning held in Bangkok, 1979.
- Lim, Mah Hui (1985).  
 "Affirmative Action, Ethnicity and Integration: The Case of Malaysia"  
Ethnic and Racial Studies Vol. 8, No. 2 April 1985 pp. 250-76.
- Loh Fook Seng, Philip (1975).  
Seeds of Separation: Educational Policy in Malaya 1874-1970. Kuala  
 Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- Mahathir Mohamad (1985).  
The Malay Dilemma. Singapore: Asia Pacific Press.
- Malaysia (1971a).  
Report of the Committee Appointed by the National Operations Council  
 to Study Campus Life of Students of the University of Malaya. Kuala  
 Lumpur: Government Printers.
- Malaysia (1971b).  
Second Malaysia Plan 1971-75. Kuala Lumpur: National Printing  
 Department.
- Malaysia (1972).  
Parliamentary Debates on the Constitution Amendments Bill 1971. Kuala  
 Lumpur: The Government Printer.
- Malaysia (1981).  
Fourth Malaysia Plan 1981-85. Kuala Lumpur: National Printing  
 Department.
- Malaysia (1986).  
Fifth Malaysia Plan 1986-1990. Kuala Lumpur: National Printing  
 Department.

- Malaysian Chinese Association (1975).  
Memorandum on The Review of The National Education System in Malaysia.  
 Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Chinese Association, Education, Education Bureau.
- Marimuthu, T. (1971).  
 "Education, Social Mobility and the Plantation Environment", Journal Pendidikan (Journal of Educational research) Vol. 2, pp. 86-94.
- Meerman, Jacob (1979).  
Public Expenditure in Malaysia: Who Benefits and Why? New York: Oxford University Press for the World Bank.
- Mehmet, Ozay and Yip Yat Hoong (1986).  
Human Capital Formation in Malaysian Universities: A Socio-Economic Profile of the 1983 Graduates. Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Advanced Study, University of Malaya.
- Mehmet, Ozay (1986).  
Development in Malaysia. London: Croom Helm.
- Ministry of Education Malaysia (1986).  
Educational Statistics of Malaysia, 1938 to 1967. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Ministry of Finance, Malaysia (1986).  
Economic Report 1986/87. Kuala Lumpur: National Printing Department.
- Mukherjee, Hena and Jasbir Sarjit (1985).  
 "Education and Social Policy: The Malaysian Case," in Prospects, Vol XV, No. 2, pp. 289-30.
- Ragayah Hj. Mat Zain and Ishak Shari (1978).  
 "Some Aspects of Income Inequality in Peninsular Malaysia, 1957-1970" in H. T. Oshima, and T. Mizoguchi (eds.), Income Distribution by Sectors and Over Time in East and Southeast Asian Countries Manila: Council of Asian Manpower Studies, pp. 228-258.
- Rao, V.V. Bhanaji (1976).  
National Accounts of West Malaysia 1947-1971. Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd.
- Selvaratnam, Viswanathan (1983).  
 "Intercommunal Relations and Problems of Social-Economic Development: The Malaysian Dilemma" in Godfrey Gunatilleke, Neelan Tiruchelvam, and Radika Coomarasamy, (eds) Ethnical Dilemmas of Development in Asia. Lexington, Mass: Lexington, Books, pp. 97-127.
- Selvaratnam, Viswanathan (1985).  
 "The Higher Education System in Malaysia: Metropolitan, Cross-National, Peripheral or National?" Higher Education, Vol. 14, pp. 477-496.



- Selvaratnam, Viswanathan (1986).  
Dependency, Change and Continuity in a Western University Model: The Malaysian Case in Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science, Vol. 14, No. 2. pp. 29-51.
- Selvaratnam, Viswanathan (1987)  
Educating Students of the South in the South: The Malaysian Perspective (Mimeo).
- Singh, Jasbir Sarjit (1983).  
Equity for National Integration EDC Occasional Paper No. 3. London: University of London Institute of Education.
- Sinnadurai, Visu (1986).  
"Rights in Respect of Education under the Malaysian Constitution" in F.A. Trindade & H.P. Lee (eds.), The Constitution of Malaysia: Further Prospectives and Developments. Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Sulaiman, Siti Zahara (1975).  
"Mara Junior Science College: Student Selection and Its Implication for Educational Development in Malaysia", Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University.
- Thurow, Lester C. (1977).  
"Education and Economic Equality" in Jerome Karabel, and A.H. Halsey. (eds.), Power and Ideology in Education. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Toh Kim Woon (1984).  
"Education as a vehicle for Reducing Economic Inequality" in S. Husin Ali (ed.), Ethnicity, Class and Development: Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sains Sosial Malaysia.
- Tyler, William (1977).  
The Sociology of Educational Inequality. London: Methuen.
- University of Malaysia (1969).  
Calendar 1968-1969. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya.
- Weber, Max (1968).  
Economy and Society. Towata, Bedminister Press.
- Young, Kevin, William C.F. Bussink, and Parvez Hassan, (1980).  
Malaysia: Growth and Equity in a Multi-racial Society. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Newspapers and Periodicals.
- New Straits times (Kuala Lumpur), Various Issues.
- The Star (Kuala Lumpur), Various Issues.
- The Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) (Various Issues).

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE  
Department of Sociology

WORKING PAPERS

The Department of Sociology of the National University of Singapore publishes, presently under the editorship of L.F. Mak, Eddie C.Y. Kuo and K.C. Ho, reports of ongoing research by staff members, postgraduate students and visitors to the Department. Views expressed are the author's, so is the copyright.

1. Riaz Hassan and Geoffrey Benjamin, "Ethnic Outmarriage Rates in Singapore: The Influence of Traditional Socio-Cultural Organisation," 1972, 26p.
- \*2. Hans-Dieter Evers, "Urban Involution: The Social Structure of Southeast Asian Towns," 1972, 19p.
- \*3. Erik Cohen, "Social Ecology -- A Multidimensional Approach," 1973, 97p.
4. Noeleen Heyzer and Wee Gek Sim, "Trade Union Leaders in Singapore," 1972, 92p.
5. Peter S.J. Chen, "The Political Course of Singapore," (in English and Chinese), 1972, 23p.
6. Chan Heng Chee and Hans-Dieter Evers, "National Identity and Nation Building in S.E. Asia," 1972, 29p.
- \*7. Peter Weldon, "Indonesian and Chinese Status Differences in Urban Java," 1972, 41p.
- \*8. Geoffrey Benjamin, "Austroasiatic Subgroupings and Prehistory in the Malay Peninsula," 1972, 63p.
- \*9. Aline K. Wong, "Job Satisfaction among Higher Non-Expatriate Civil Servants in Hong Kong," 1972, 64p.
10. Peter S.J. Chen, "Modernisation in Singapore: Changing Values and the Individual," 1972, 16p.
- \*11. Geoffrey Benjamin, "An Outline of Temiar Grammar," 1972, 41p.
- \*12. Peter S.J. Chen, "Social Stratification in Singapore," 1973, 99p.
- \*13. John S. Western, Peter D. Weldon and Tan Tsu Haung, "Housing and Satisfaction with Environment in Singapore," 1973, 30p.
- \*14. Mochtar Naim, "Penghulu di Minangkabau (Penghulu as Traditional Elite in Minangkabau)," 1973, 41p.

15. Michael A.H. Walter, "A Comparative Examination of Systems of Kinship and Marriage in Fiji," 1973, 41p.
- \*16. Hans Dieter-Evers and Daniel Regan, "Specialisation and Involvement: The Modernising Role of Doctors in Malaysia and Indonesia," 1973, 33p.
17. Myrna L. Blake, "Kampong Eurasians in Singapore," 1973, 45p.
- \*18. Mak Lau Fong, "The Forgotten and the Rejected Community -- A Sociological Study of Chinese Secret Societies in Singapore and West Malaysia," 1973, 150p.
- \*19. Erik Cohen, "Southeast Asian Urban Sociology -- A Review and a Selected Bibliography," 1973, 53p.
- \*20. Thelma Kay, "Group Cohesion and Productivity among Dockworkers -- A Study of Stevedores in Singapore," 1973, 28p.
21. Eddie Kuo, "Industrialisation and the Family Type: An Overview," 1974, 45p.
22. Hans-Dieter Evers, "Changing Patterns of Minangkabau Urban Landownership," 1974, 45p.
- \*23. Peter S.J. Chen, "Social and Psychological Aspects of Fertility: Findings from Family Planning Research in Singapore," 1974, 27p.
24. Hans-Dieter Evers, "The Role of Professionals in Social and Political Change," 1974, 28p.
- \*25. Geoffrey Benjamin, "Prehistory and Ethnology in Southeast Asia: Some New Ideas," 1974, 32p.
26. Mochtar Naim, "Voluntary Migration in Indonesia," 1974, 41p.
27. Lawrence Babb, "Walking on Flowers in Singapore -- A Hindu Festival Cycle," 1974, 46p.
28. Geoffrey Benjamin, "Indigenous Religious Systems of the Malay Peninsula," 1974, 27p.
29. Aline K. Wong, "Women as a Minority Group in Singapore," 1974, 46p.
30. Michael A.H.B. Walter, "Co-operation in East Fiji: A New Traditionalism?" 1974, 30p.
31. Aline K. Wong, "The Continuous Family Revolution in China -- Ideology and Changing Family Patterns," 1974, 28p.
- \*32. Eddie C.Y. Kuo and Riaz Hassan, "Some Social Concomitants of Interethnic Marriage in Singapore," 1974, 28p.
- \*33. Riaz Hassan, "Symptoms and Syndromes of the Developmental Process in Singapore," 1974, 11p.

34. Hans-Dieter Evers and Riaz Hassan, "Studies on Social Stratification in Southeast Asia," 1974, 141p.
35. Pang Eng Fong and Thelma Kay, "Change and Continuity in Singapore's Industrial Relations System," 1974, 27p.
36. Eddie C.Y. Kuo, "Field Theory as a Conceptual Framework for Divorce Study," 1974, 25p.
37. Riaz Hassan, "International Tourism and Intercultural Communication: The Case of Japanese Tourists in Singapore," 1974, 23p.
38. Riaz Hassan, "Towards a Dialectic Anthropology -- A Comment on Professor M. Freedman's Paper, Social and Cultural Anthropology," 1974, 7p.
39. Hans-Dieter Evers, "Urbanisation and Urban Conflict in Southeast Asia," 1974, 16p.
40. Michael A.H.B. Walter, "The Gardening Game," 1975, 15p.
41. Frederic C. Deyo, "Organisation and Its Socio-Cultural Setting: A Case Study of Structural Compensation in an Atomistic Society," 1975, 31p.
42. Mak Lau Fong, "Chinese Secret Societies in Ipoh Town, 1945-1969," 1975, 17p.
43. Vivienne Wee, "A Preliminary Account of 'Buddhism' in Singapore," 1975, 56p.
44. Geoffrey Benjamin, "The Cultural Logic of Singapore's 'Multiracialism'," 1975, 34p.
45. Eckehard Kulke, "Social Class and Primordial Loyalty in Rural India -- An Approach to the Study of Indian Untouchables," 1975, 31p.
46. Peter S.J. Chen, "Elites and National Development in Singapore," 1975, 15p.
- \*47. Riaz Hassan, "Social and Psychological Implications of High Population Density," 1975, 30p.
48. Rory Fonseca, "Planning and Land-use in Singapore," 1975, 26p.
- +49. Lawrence A. Babb, "Thaipusam in Singapore: Religious Individualism in a Hierarchical Culture," 1976, 19p.
50. Rory Fonseca, "Growth, Transition and the Urban Environment; A Reference Frame for Singapore," 1976, 19p.
- +51. Peter S.J. Chen, "Asian Values in Modernising Society: A Sociological Perspective," 1976, 17p.
- +52. Eddie C.Y. Kuo, "A Sociolinguistic Profile of Singapore," 1976, 20p.

- +53. Michael A.H.B. Walter, "On Transitional Society," 1976, 20p.
- +54. Frederic C. Deyo, "Marital Status, Job Orientation and Work Commitment among Semi-Skilled Female Workers in Singapore," 1976, 20p.
- +55. Frederic C. Deyo, "Decision-Making and Supervisory Authority in Cross-Cultural Perspective: An Exploratory Study of Chinese and Western Management Practices in Singapore," 1976, 24p.
- +56. John R. Clammer, "Sociological Approaches to the Study of Language and Literacy in Southeast Asia," 1976, 28p.
- +57. Peter S.J. Chen, "Ecological Distribution of Social Pathology in Singapore," 1977, 28p.
- +58. Aline K. Wong, "The Value of Children and the Household Economy -- A Review of Current VOC Studies in the Developing World," 1977, 24p.
- +59. Chiew Seen Kong, "Educational and Occupational Attainment of Singapore's Chinese Women and Men," 1977, 24p.
- +60. Peter S.J. Chen, "Population Policy and Social Science Research on Population in Singapore," 1977, 28p.
- +61. Michael A.H.B. Walter and Riaz Hassan, "An Island Community in Singapore: A Characterisation of a Marginal Society," 1977, 44p.
- +62. Stella R. Quah, "The Unplanned Dimensions of Health Care in Singapore: Traditional Healers and Self-Medication," 1977, 22p.
- +63. John R. Clammer, "Islam and Capitalism in Southeast Asia," 1978, 22p.
- +64. Robert G. Cooper, "Second World First: The Study of Films and the Use of Film in Social Studies," 1978, 20p.
- +65. Peter S.J. Chen, "Ethnicity and Fertility: The Case of Singapore," 1978, 25p.
- +66. Rolf E. Vente, "Urban Planning and High-Density Living. Some Reflections on their Interrelationship," 1979, 13p.
- +67. William S.W. Lim, "A Case for Low-Rise High-Density Living in Singapore," 1979, 13p.
- @68. Mak Lau Fong, "Subcommunal Participation and Leadership Cohesiveness of the Chinese in 19th Century Singapore, 1984, 23p.
- @69. Eddie C.Y. Kuo and Huey Tsyh Chen, "Towards an Information Society: Changing Occupational Structure in Singapore," 1985, 29p.
- 70. Ko Yiu Chung, "Industrial Workers and Class Formation: A Study of Chinese Industrial Workers in North China, 1900-1937," 1986, 29p.
- 71. Geoffrey Benjamin, "Between Isthmus and Islands: Reflections on Malayan Palaeo-Sociology," 1986, 40p.

72. Habibul H. Khondker, "Is There a Dependency Paradigm?," 1986, 52p.
73. Mak Lau Fong, "The Locality and Non-Locality Organising Principles: A Technical Report on the Taxonomy of Chinese Voluntary Associations in the 19th Century Straits Settlements," 1986, 29p.
74. Chua Beng Huat, "Reading Foucault as a Conservative," 1986, 36p.
75. Vivienne Wee, "Material Dependence and Symbolic Independence: Constructions of Melayu Ethnicity in Island Riau, Indonesia," 1986, 41p.
76. Habibul Haque Khondker, "Famine Response: The 1984-85 Ethiopian Famine," 1986, 33p.
77. Allen J. Chun, "Conceptions of Kinship and Kingship in Classical Chou China," 1986, 45p.

---

\* Out of print

+ Chopmen Enterprises  
#428-429 Katong Shopping Centre  
Singapore 1543

@ Select Books  
19 Tanglin Road  
#03-15  
Tanglin Shopping Centre  
Singapore 1024