



The
New Economic Policy
in Malaysia

Affirmative Action, Ethnic Inequalities
and Social Justice

Editors

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The New Economic Policy in Malaysia

FOR MORE THAN 40 years the New Economic Policy and its successor programmes have shaped Malaysia's socioeconomic development and the allocation of political power. The original policy sought to eradicate poverty and achieve economic parity among the country's various ethnic communities. However, it was based on an apparent paradox – the use of ethnic preference to promote national unity. The policy's core tenet was affirmative action on behalf of the Bumiputera community.

Drawing on a wealth of statistical and documentary evidence, this major new book provides a comprehensive and rigorous assessment of the NEP. The contributors show that there have been some positive outcomes, among them a considerable reduction of poverty, greater interethnic equity parity and the emergence of a resourceful Bumiputera middle class. But these partial successes have to be weighed against persistent complaints associated with increasing intraethnic Bumiputera income disparities; the emergence of a small, politically powerful and disproportionately wealthy Bumiputera elite; a serious brain drain; and weak human capital. As a result, divisive debates about group rights, ethnic identity and an elusive national unity dominate Malaysia's policy discourse. *The New Economic Policy in Malaysia* offers a timely and fresh perspective, suggesting that the long-term implementation of racially-targeted policies reinforces stereotypical ethnic identities and hinders the creation of a more inclusive society.

'In this landmark volume a team of superb academic analysts examines the development and consequences of the New Economic Policy, the affirmative action initiative which defines Malaysia. Government policy will need to be justified all over again as a result of this trenchant critique'

Anthony Milner *Basham Professor of Asian History, Australian National University*

'The New Economic Policy's underlying philosophy was correct, but for too long it was administered inefficiently by politicians more interested in money politics. This new book is a welcome contribution to a landmark event in Malaysian economic development'

Ozay Mehmet *Professor Emeritus of International Affairs, Carleton University, Canada*

'This important book suggests just how damaging race-based public policies can be for nation building and how they are to be distinguished from genuine affirmative action for the sake of disadvantaged groups'

Syed Farid Alatas *Associate Professor of Sociology and Head, Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore*

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and Research
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NUS PRESS
SINGAPORE



ISBN 978-967-5832-67-3

