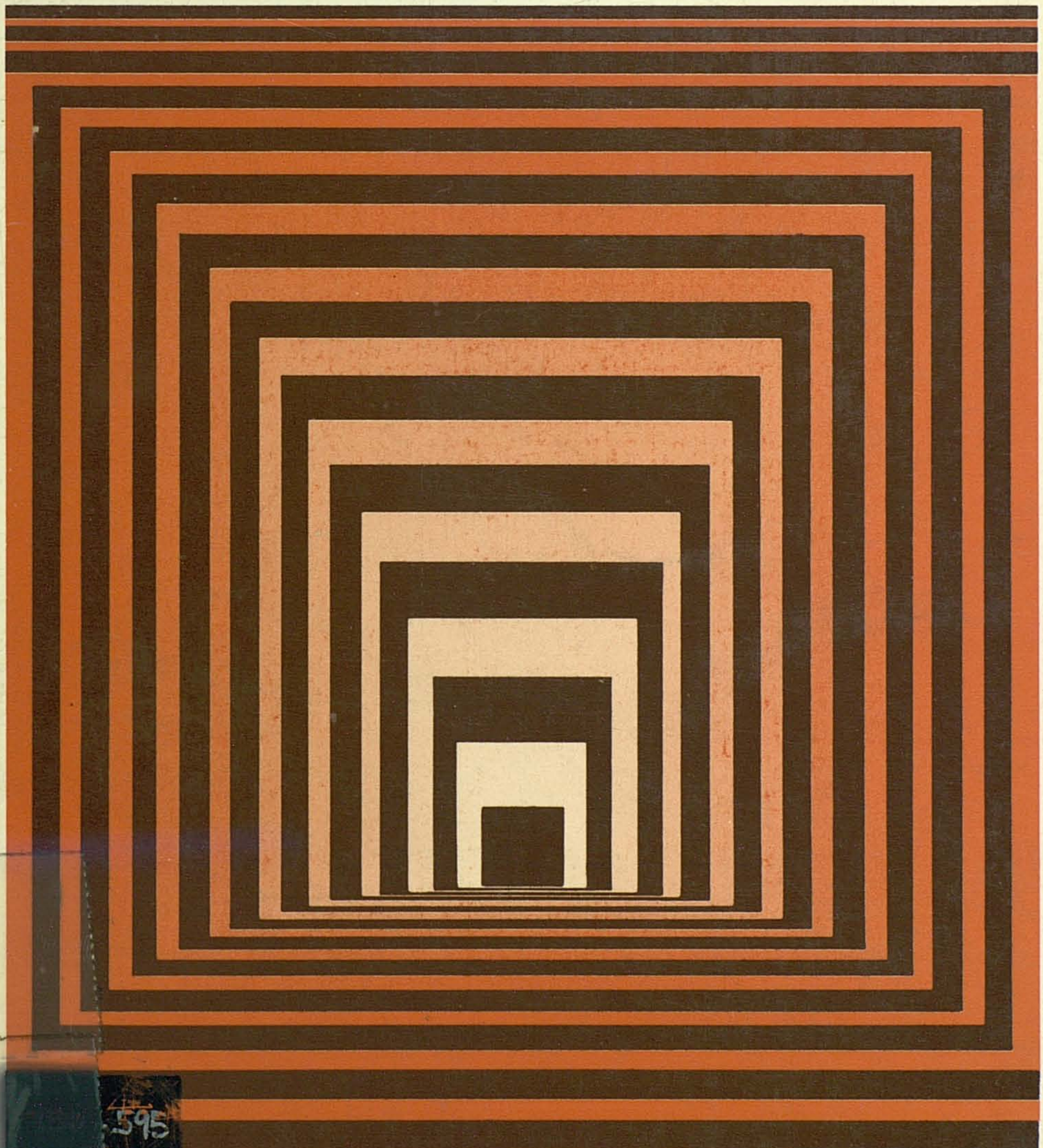
Mavis Puthucheary

The Politics of Administration
The Malaysian Experience



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THE POLITICS OF ADMINISTRATION

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THE POLITICS OF ADMINISTRATION

The Malaysian Experience

MAVIS PUTHUCHEARY

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For James

Foreword

THIS book is essentially a revised version of my doctoral dissertation *Administration, Politics and Development: a Case Study of West Malaysia,* University of Manchester, England, 1973. In the course of revision the original introductory chapters and a considerable number of footnotes were omitted as it was felt that they are of less interest to the general reader. I have been able, however, to incorporate some new material which had not appeared in 1973 when the dissertation was completed.

This work is not and was never meant to be an exhaustive study of Malaysian bureaucracy. It is rather an attempt to understand the working of the bureaucracy within the Malaysian political, social and economic environment. My main interest in preparing this work has been to bridge the gap between the public administrator, on the one hand, whose preoccupation with the internal structure and organization of the bureaucracy appears to leave him with little time for attention to external factors and their significance for his profession, and the historian and political scientist, on the other, whose tendency to emphasize historical and political perspectives leaves little room for consideration of the importance of functional, day-to-day aspects of bureaucratic reality.

I am greatly indebted to the many persons in Malaysia and England who shared their impressions with me and gave so generously of their time. The long list of people who have helped me prevents my naming them all individually. However I must single out for special mention Professor Dennis Austin of the University of Manchester, Professor Milton Barnett of Cornell University, and my husband, James, to whom I owe a special debt of gratitude. Their interest, their willingness to enter into discussion, to offer helpful suggestions, and to indicate points of disagreement, eased my burden considerably. Without their unfailing encouragement and patience this book might never have been completed. Wherever possible I have followed their suggestions and advice. Had it always been possible to do so, I would have attributed to them, to some extent at least, whatever inadequacies may be found in this book. As it is, however, the usual disclaimer must apply.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the University of Malaya and the Ford Foundation for the financial assistance I received while working on my dissertation. I am also grateful to the Department of National Unity for sponsoring the study and kindly agreeing to send out the questionnaires on my behalf. For allowing me generous access to certain materials I am indebted to the National Archives of Malaysia and the Royal Commonwealth Library. I would also like to put on record the special thanks due to Mrs. Khoo Siew Mun and Mr. Soong Mun Wai of the University of Malaya Library for their invaluable help. Finally, to Mrs. Nalini Cioffi and to all who assisted in the completion of this study the author wishes to express her sense of obligation and her sincerest gratitude.

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October 1976

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I Introduction

MALAYSIA is a plural society with a civil service which reflects at least to some extent the ethnic composition of its population. Its system of administration follows closely the pattern of the modern western bureaucratic administration which it inherited from the British during the colonial period. However, even though the forms of the western system are outwardly observed, there appears to be a widespread discrepancy between form and reality. The structure resembles the Westminster model but the style of administration and cultural values are very different. This study of the Malaysian civil service therefore attempts to analyse the civil servants as a social group in the larger Malaysian society. It will concern itself more with the civil service in the Malaysian environment rather than with the more technical and administrative details of government administration.

A plural society is defined as a society 'comprising two or more elements of social orders which live side by side, yet without mingling, in one political unit'.[1] A plural society is characterized by (1) cultural diversity, (2) politically organized cultural communities, and (3) the salience of ethnicity.[2] As pointed out by Milne, 'More than anything else, the racial composition of Malaysia is the key to understanding the whole picture. It dictates the pattern of the economy, has helped to shape the Constitution and has influenced the democratic process and the party system.'[3]

So also can it be said that the racial composition of the civil service is the key to understanding the pattern and style of administration in Malaysia. For the civil service is like a social microcosm of society as a whole. Within the bureaucracy there exists separate cultural groups with generally incomparable sets of values. There is evidence of deep-seated values which have not been modified or abandoned despite the adoption of modern bureaucratic structures. The saliency of ethnic values over bureaucratic values creates a style of administrative behaviour that is highly politicized despite the formal acceptance of a career system of administration based on a high degree of professionalism and freedom from political interference.

In Malaysia, as in many other plural societies, the overriding objective of the country is to achieve national unity. The achievement of national unity is seen primarily in terms of 'social integration and more equitable distribution of income and opportunities for national unity and progress'.[4] Development is seen not only in terms of economic growth but

in a greater redistribution of the wealth of the country. The national objective is aimed at eliminating poverty and the identification of race with economic functions through the creation of a Malay commercial and industrial community. The New Economic Policy aims not only at raising income levels and increasing employment opportunities for all Malaysians but also at improving the economic position of Malays.

Economic and political goals are thus closely intermeshed with each other. The government is not only committed to achieving socio-economic growth and national unity but also has the task of trying to bring about an improvement in the economic position of Malays so that a business and commercial Malay middle and upper class is created.

These objectives force the bureaucracy to operate within a highly political environment. The ethnic factor permeates all decisions, even those which in the past may have been regarded as purely administrative and routine decisions. The political dimensions to what in other countries would be routine decisions give the bureaucracy a highly political flavour.[5]

It is in this context that the special position of the administrative service, the Malayan Civil Service (MCS)[6] is examined. The élitist character of the MCS is derived primarily from its position in the power structure and its closeness to the political élite. Just as UMNO, the Malay wing of the Barisan Nasional, enjoys a position of strength within the coalition party, so the MCS, the Malay wing of the senior bureaucracy, enjoys a position of strength in the civil service. The special position of the MCS within the civil service and the quota system which ensures that it will be dominated by Malays has resulted in the identification of race with function and service[7] and the domination of one service over the other services. The separation of the civil service into two groups—the administrative and sub-professional services on the one hand dominated by Malays, and the professional and technical services on the other hand dominated by non-Malays—has created not only serious rifts within the civil service but has adversely affected the capability of the civil service to bring about socio-economic development and national unity.

The ensuing chapters analyse the civil service in its historical setting, trace the special relationship of the Malay civil servants with the Malay political leadership in the struggle for independence, and show the political involvement of the civil service from the period of colonial rule to the present day. An examination is also made of the civil servants as a social group: their socio-economic background, language of education, and regional background. In order to gauge the extent of bureaucratic norms and professionalism over more ascriptive factors such as ethnic loyalties, their attitudes towards such matters as authority, democracy, and political neutrality will be discussed. Finally an attempt is made to understand the civil service in terms of morale and job satisfaction and in terms of what civil servants themselves consider to be the most serious obstacles to achieving the tasks that they have to perform. The study will attempt to throw some light on the difficulties and problems en-

countered by civil servants in their tasks of trying to perform their role as agents of change. To a large extent the ability of the civil service to bring about socio-economic and political changes in the country will depend on its ability to bring about changes within itself. The changes needed involve not only the upgrading of management skills and technical knowledge but also the need to change values and attitudes.[8]

The Malaysian bureaucracy faces new and exciting challenges. Whether or not it will be able to overcome these challenges will depend on its ability to understand its environment and mobilize its resources to achieve the overall objective of national unity through economic growth and development.

[1] J. S. Furnival, *Netherlands India*, Cambridge, The University Press, 1939, p.446.

[2] Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth Shepsle, *Politics in Plural Societies: a Theory of Democratic Instability*, Columbus, Ohio, Charles Merrill Publishing Co., 1972, p.62.

[3] R. S. Milne, *Government and Politics in Malaysia*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967, p.3.

[4] *Second Malaysia Plan 1971-1975*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1971, p.1.

[5] Nelson Kasfir, 'Development Administration in Africa: the Balance between Politics and Administration', paper prepared for discussion at the Makerere University College, Uganda (mimeographed), p.8.

[6] The administrative service was called the Malayan Civil Service during the colonial period but has changed its name several times since. Its old name however will be used in this study.

[7] Ironically the very problem the New Economic Policy tries to eradicate!

[8] For a brief note on research methodology see Appendix I.

II The Setting

THE British established administrative hegemony over Malaya in three stages. The first stage was between 1786 and 1867 when Penang, Singapore and Malacca were established to form the outposts of the East India Company. Later they were transferred to the British Crown. Subsequently they were formed into the Colony of the Straits Settlements in 1867 and became the responsibility of the Colonial Office.[1]

The second stage was between 1874 and 1895 when Britain entered into treaties with the rulers of the Malay States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang whereby, in exchange for British recognition of their claim to be rulers of these states, each agreed to '. . . receive and provide a suitable residence for a British Officer to be called Resident who shall be accredited to his Court and whose advice must be asked and acted upon on all questions other than those touching Malay Religion and Custom . . .'.[2] The collection and control of revenue and the general administration of the country came under the direct control of the British Resident. In 1895, the rulers of these four states agreed to form a federation known as the Federated Malay States. By this treaty, the rulers agreed '. . . to constitute their countries a Federation to be known as the Protected Malay States, to be administered under the advice of the British government'.[3]

The third stage was reached in 1909 when by the Siamese Treaty of 1909, Siam agreed to relinquish her rights over the northern Malay states of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu. These states and the southern state of Johore came under British protection by separate treaties with the rulers between 1910 and 1923. The language of the treaties differed but the import was the same—that the Sultan would receive a British officer 'whose advice must be asked and acted upon on all questions other than those touching Malay Religion and Custom'. There were, however, two important factors which distinguished these states from the former states which obtained British protection. The first was that these Sultans were able to obtain special conditions which were not included in the earlier treaties.

In the case of Johore, for example, where since 1895 there had been established a written constitution which set up a State Council and Council of Ministers, it was agreed that if there were differences of opinion between the Sultan and the General Adviser,[4] the opinion of the State Council should be taken and should be communicated to the

Governor of the Straits Settlements together with the views of the General Adviser.[5] Provisions were also made for Malays to be trained to take part in the administration of the states. In Kedah, it was specified that the Malay language, and the Jawi script, shall be the official language in all departments except where it is provided otherwise by law.[6] The second important distinguishing factor was that these states did not join the federation with the other states but remained outside the federation and were governed as separate states until the end of the Second World War. In contrast with the states that were part of the federation and called the Federated Malay States (FMS), these states were collectively referred to as the Unfederated Malay States.

THE FEDERATED MALAY STATES (FMS)

There are several important works covering the early period of the FMS.[7] The Residential or indirect system as it was later called, created a new relationship between the British administration in the Malay states and the Malay rulers. Under the system, the British Resident was expected to rule through the Malay sultans. The system of indirect rule implied that the imperial power did not supersede a pre-existing political authority but established its dominance over it.[8] This point was made by Lord Lugard when he described the relationship between Britain and the emirs of Northern Nigeria:

> Every Sultan and Emir and the principal officers of State will be appointed by the High Commissioner throughout all this country. The High Commissioner will be guided by the usual laws of succession and the wishes of the people and chiefs, but will set them aside if he desires for good cause to do so. The Emirs and Chiefs who are appointed will rule over the people as of old times and take such taxes as are approved by the High Commissioner, but they will obey the laws of the Governor and will act in accordance with the advice of the Resident.[9]

But in the case of Malaya, from the first the British Resident had under his direction complete administrative authority in the Malay States including that of revenue collection. As British colonizing effort in Malaya was almost entirely that of establishing an administrative hegemony over the Malay States, there was little attempt to work with or strengthen the political authority of the Sultanate. And, as Swettenham claimed in 1870, there was 'no Native Civil Service . . . which could gradually be reformed and disciplined'.[10] The system of indirect rule became in reality a fiction which was recognized as such by the British administrators themselves.[11]

The British administrators who were sent to 'advise' the rulers found it difficult to limit themselves to this role. It was impossible, claimed Swettenham, to administer the country and at the same time merely advise the ruler:

> A British officer, acting under the instructions of a district Governor, is sent to 'advise' a Malay ruler and his chiefs. The officer is told he is responsible for

everything, but he is not to interfere in details. His advice must be followed but he must not attempt to enforce it, and so on. He must keep the peace, see that justice is administered, respect vested interests, abolish abuses, raise a revenue, foster British interests, do his best for the State, and obey the instructions he receives from Singapore; and with it all he is, at his peril, to remember that he is only the adviser to the Malay Ruler![12]

The difficulties of the first British Resident in Perak in particular, whose Sultan had refused to accept advice, made it clear to Sir William Jervois, Governor of the Straits Settlements from 1875 to 1877, that the position of the Resident of Perak must be strengthened. He therefore issued a proclamation under which the Resident and his deputy were appointed Queen's Commissioners. They were instructed to 'carry out the Government of Perak in the name of the Sultan'. They were to issue and enforce proclamations and orders and generally administer the Government of Perak, consulting the Malay Council, and informing the Sultan 'whenever possible'.[13]

This change of policy which amounted to virtual annexation[14] misfired. The objections from the Malay chiefs in Perak resulted in the murder of the Perak Resident, J.W.W. Birch. The Colonial Office had not sanctioned Jervois' instructions and insisted that the terms of the original treaty must stand. In 1876, new instructions were issued reminding the Residents that they must keep to their job of advising rather than ruling. In 1878, this was again repeated even more strongly:

> . . . the Residents have been placed in the Native States as advisers, not as rulers, and if they take upon themselves to disregard this principle they will most assuredly be held responsible if trouble springs out of their neglect of it.[15]

Despite the official retreat from Jervois' policy, in reality the British officers continued to rule. The strong punitive measures against those implicated in the Birch murder, including the exile of the Sultan, brought home clearly to the Sultans that the British would not hesitate to use force if necessary to maintain their control over the Malay States. Bernard Nunn, a Resident of Malacca, pointed out that:

> . . . the lesson [was] taught that British authority could not be flouted with impunity. But Sir Frank [Swettenham] draws the moral that twenty years of 'good advice' would not have accomplished for peace and order and good government what was done in six months by force of arms. . . . Though for some years more there were isolated incidents to disturb the peace, the country as a whole acquiesced in the arrangement which brought her directly under the aegis of British control.[16]

The British administrators, however, needed a native subordinate civil service to perform the minor administrative and police jobs and act as an intermediary between themselves and the rest of the people. The Malay traditional system of local government with its *penghulu* (headman) and *mukim* (parish) was preserved. A large number of lower-level chiefs were employed in local government. But according to Sadka,

It was general policy to give members of the chief families in the state appointments commensurate with their dignity, but this was not easy. The administrative functions of the Malay district chiefs—revenue collection, judicial administration and control of penghulus—were now the responsibilities of the European district officers; the district administration had removed the chiefs from the line of authority.[17]

As far as possible attempts were made to absorb the Malay chiefs and nobility into the administration. But they were not trained in modern administration. One resident complained that the Raja Muda (the heir apparent) in Perak had 'no idea of government except that the *ryots* (peasants) were created to produce revenues for the rajahs, and to be at their entire disposal'.[18] It was easier then to give the members of the nobility and chiefs political allowances and pensions to compensate them for the loss of income derived from revenue and the loss of services provided by the peasants under the *kerah* (*corvée*) system, than to find places for them in the higher echelons of the bureaucracy.[19] The establishment of State Councils first in Perak in 1877, in which the Sultan and selected chiefs sat as members, was a further attempt to 'pacify the sultan and chiefs for their feeling of loss of power'.[20]

The creation of the federation in 1895 further reduced the powers of the sultans and chiefs. There were now to be two authorities above the Resident, the Governor of the Straits Settlements who was also the High Commissioner of Malaya, below him the Resident-General in Kuala Lumpur. In place of autonomous state civil services, a unified service of federal officers who could be transferred freely between states was created. According to Sadka, 'These changes were of importance to Rulers, who might hitherto have had little power, but who had at least been able to identify certain services and officers as belonging to their own states, and derive some reassurance from long acquaintance with them.'[21]

The creation of the Federal Council in 1909 gave authority to the new council to frame legislation for the four states in the federation. Sir John Anderson, the Governor of the Straits Settlements, at the opening of the Federal Council, emphasized that the

> . . . faith and obligations of the Treaties under which they [the Sultans] agreed to accept British Advisers will always be scrupulously observed. They are confident that we will never forget that our powers derived wholly from their gift, and that we are here in a Malay country as the Advisers and Councillors of its Malay sovereigns.[22]

Despite these assurances, the establishment of the Federal Council was the beginning of a unified, centralized administration. Meetings of the Federal Council, which was presided over by the High Commissioner, were conducted in the English language. The members consisted of the Resident-General, the four rulers, the four residents and four nominated 'unofficials' representing certain planting and commercial interests. In the first council there were six British officials

including the High Commissioner, four Malay rulers, three British 'unofficials', and one Chinese 'unofficial'. This was in effect an administrative council to advise the High Commissioner. The anomalous position of the Sultans on the Federal Council has been described by Emerson as follows:

> . . . since the rulers have agreed to accept the advice of their Residents they cannot, in fact, turn about and veto legislation which the Residents have passed as Council members . . . while the rulers sat on the Council they rarely contributed publicly to its proceedings and there is no evidence that they played a more vital role behind the scenes. At present, their connection with the Council, aside from the formal signature of enactments, is purely ceremonial; on certain state occasions the Council is opened with military pomp and sultanic splendour, and the rulers file in to sit in dignified silence on a rasied dais behind the High Commissioner during the beginning of the proceedings. When they withdraw the Council gets down to business.[23]

In 1927, the Sultans were replaced on the Council by Malay 'unofficials'.[24]

By this time, the introduction of rubber into the country and the expansion of the tin industry had resulted in the influx of large numbers of Chinese and Indian immigrants into Malaya, particularly in the Federated Malay States and Straits Settlements. The magnitude of the immigrant population in the FMS is shown in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1

RACIAL COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION OF THE FEDERATED MALAY STATES

(in percentages)

Race	*1891*	*1901*	*1911*	*1921*	*1931*
Malays	55.5	46.2	40.6	38.6	34.7
Chinese	39.1	44.4	41.8	37.3	41.5
Indians	4.8	8.6	16.6	23.0	22.2
Others	0.6	0.8	1.0	1.1	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Census Reports for the various years.

As early as 1901, the Malays had become a minority in the Federated Malay States and by 1931 they had become a minority in the whole of Malaya.[25] The Chinese population in the FMS increased from 163,422 in 1891 to 433,244 in 1911, nearly trebling its size, while during the same period the Indian population increased from 20,154 to 172,465 —an increase of more than eight times.

The indirect system of government was inadequate to carry out the task of administering the immigrant population as this group did not fall properly within the purview of 'native administration'. A more

direct administration was therefore established although the form of the indirect system was still maintained. As pointed out by Mills:

> [Indirect rule] was feasible as long as change took place slowly but it broke down when an economic and racial revolution began that transformed Malaya within about twenty years. Chinese and Indian immigrants poured into the territory in such numbers that eventually they outnumbered the Malays and altered the whole racial character of the peninsula. . . . By the 1900s Malaya had become inextricably involved in the economic life of the modern world. The state of the country was determined by the price of tin and rubber, and not by civil wars between rival claimants to a throne. The Malays had become an agricultural minority in the developed areas, and the peninsula was dominated by the British and Chinese.[26]

As the population became more plural in character, the Malays looked to the British for protection against the economic exploitation of the country by the immigrant races. The British had declared as their policy that the Malays were in a special position *vis-à-vis* the other ethnic groups in the country and that the British had special treaty obligations to protect and preserve the Malay Sultanates. Sir William Ormsby-Gore, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Colonies, repeated this in 1928 when he visited Malaya:

> Our position in every state rests on the solemn treaty obligations and, however great the changes may appear to have been since the dates when they were made, those changes have not in any way modified the fundamental status of these communities. These were, these are, and they must remain 'Malay States' and the primary object of our share in the administering of these countries must always be the progress of the indigenous Malay inhabitants at the invitation of whose forefathers we first assumed responsibilities.[27]

The education policy of the country, however, did not contribute to giving Malays opportunities to participate in the modern sector of the economy. There appeared to be a contradiction in the policy of assisting Malays to share in the economic benefits on the one hand and, on the other hand, attempting to 'insulate' them from the modern urban sector. In framing the education policy, for example, it was felt that Malays should study in Malay-medium schools at the primary level.[28] A few of them were expected to continue in English-medium secondary schools. But the majority would not receive an education beyond the primary level.

Thus the educational policy, perhaps not intentionally but in reality, put Malays at a disadvantage as compared with Chinese and Indians. To begin with, there were no Malay-medium secondary schools and it was difficult for Malays to switch from Malay-medium primary to English-medium secondary schools. Thus the number of Malays in English-medium secondary schools was small compared with the Chinese and Indians, as seen in Table 2.2.

The Director of Education however insisted that:

> It would be contrary to the considered policy of government to afford to a

TABLE 2.2
RACIAL COMPOSITION OF STUDENTS IN ENGLISH SCHOOLS IN THE FMS, 1935

Race	*Total*	*Percentage*	*% in Population*
Malays	2,540	15.5	35.8
Chinese	8,169	49.8	40.7
Indians	4,507	27.5	21.9
Others	1,179	7.2	1.6
Total	16,395	100.0	100.0

Source: *Malayan Yearbook, 1936,* Singapore, Government Printing Office, pp.36 and 136.

community, the great majority of whose members find congenial livelihood and independence in agricultural pursuits, more extended facilities for the learning of English which would be likely to have the effect of inducing them to abandon those pursuits.[29]

He insisted that the education policy was based on the proven experience that a child learns best in his mother tongue.[30]

Both in the Federal Council and in the Legislative Council in Singapore, Malay representatives attacked the education policy which put Malays at an economic disadvantage. One speaker, referring to English as the 'bread-earning language of Malaya', attacked the education policy as a 'policy that trains the Malay boy how not to get employment'. Referring to the comments from the Director of Education, he remarked:

> In the fewest possible words, the Malay boy is told 'You have been trained to remain at the bottom, and there you must always remain!' Why, I ask, waste so much money to attain this end when without any vernacular school, and without any special effort, the Malay boy could himself accomplish this feat?[31]

However, to overcome the shortage of English-educated Malays for jobs in government service, a special school was set up in 1905. The Malay College at Kuala Kangsar was especially established for '. . . the education of Malays of good family and for the training of Malay boys for admission to certain branches of government service'.[32] This school was established primarily for the Malay traditional élite although some commoners were admitted on merit. It was mainly geared to provide a secondary education for potential civil servants and was not geared to preparing students for higher education. As one writer put it:

> The Malay College at Kuala Kangsar was never envisaged as an institution fulfilling the function of an ordinary secondary school with a view of conveying

the boys to a university or other institutions of higher learning in preparation for a career in the administrative service. The few boys who found their way to the university were exceptions rather than the rule.[33]

The education at Malay College was however geared to providing a minimum level of education for those wishing to become civil servants, not at the level of the Malayan Civil Service which was still the preserve of the British officers[34] but at a lower level. A special service, the Malay Administrative Service (MAS), was created especially for Malays. Under this scheme,[35] students from Kuala Kangsar who were selected as 'probationers' undertook a special three-year course, also at Kuala Kangsar, which consisted of:

> . . . the ordinary secondary school curriculum leading to the Junior Cambridge Certificate with special training related to 'official correspondence, Treasury work and other prescribed subjects'. Upon satisfactory completion of this course, graduates were appointed as Malay Assistants, Class III, to a separate Malay Administrative Service (MAS). The MAS formed, as it were, a very junior branch of the MCS though it was envisaged that MAS officers might in time be admitted to the ranks of the Civil Service proper.[36]

Although the MAS was envisaged as a filter service to the MCS in fact very few Malays were promoted. To begin with, there were several stages which an officer had to pass within the MAS before he could be considered for promotion to the MCS. From class III, he would be promoted to class II and then to class I which would make him eligible for eventual promotion to the MCS. The whole process took a minimum of ten years. The average number of years spent in the MAS by Malay officers promoted to the MCS was fourteen years and their average age at the time of promotion was about thirty-four years. This made them about ten years older than their British colleagues of equivalent seniority.[37] The fact that Malay officers joined the MCS when they were already in their thirties made it impossible for them to hold senior posts because they would have reached the retirement age of fifty before they became eligible for these posts.[38]

Out of the 96 MCS posts in the FMS there were 10 staff appointments and class 1A appointments which could never be filled by Malays. Out of the 8 class 1B posts 4 were 'unreserved posts' meaning that they could be filled by either British or Malay officers, but

> . . . it is certain that for many years Malay officers of the Malayan Civil Service will be unable to fill more than, say, two of them, because a Malay officer however able, cannot under the present rules for admission to the Malayan Civil Service enter class 1B before he is 49 or 50 years of age; and it is equally certain that a number of the officers promoted to the Malayan Civil Service will either drop out before they attain the top of the time scale or be found unsuited for promotion beyond the scale.[39]

By 1941, ten years after the *Pyramid Report*, there was only one Malay officer who had reached the class 1B category.

Nor was much progress made in the recruitment of Malay officers into the MCS. In the 31 years from 1910 when the MAS was established, until 1941, only 31 Malays had entered the MCS. In 1941 there were only 21 Malay officers out of a total of 129 posts in the FMS.[40] It was no wonder then that one writer described the MAS as

> At the worst it was a blind alley, a decoy for legitimate Malay aspirations; at the best it acted as a large funnel into which ambitious Malays were thrust and where they were—very slowly—processed. Those who were impatient, 'uppish' or 'ungentlemenly' stayed in the funnel forever—or resigned. Those who, to their equal credit, passed the test, were allowed to percolate through into the MCS itself, but only in manageable numbers and in such a way that they would never present a serious challenge to the promotion ambitions of their British colleagues.[41]

The reason for the small number of Malays in the MCS was because it was felt that, unlike the situation in India and Ceylon, the Malay officers were recruited with lower qualifications than their British counterparts and therefore must be prepared to face a severe practical test before being considered for promotion into the MCS.[42]

It was emphasized that:

> We cannot state too strongly our opinion that to make entry into the Malayan Civil Service rank too easy or possible at too young an age will not only be a mistaken kindness to the Malay who will fail to rise to responsibilities for which neither education, experience nor tradition have fitted him, but by lowering the standard and tone of the administration will be disastrous to the Malayan Civil Service as a whole.[43]

It was assumed that after these 'severe practical tests' those who eventually made it into the MCS would be regarded on equal terms with their British colleagues—in salary at least—even though it was clear that their promotion opportunities were limited. But except for a short period in 1931-2 when the depression necessitated the removal of temporary allowances, British officers were paid these allowances for which Malay officers were not eligible. In 1933, it was agreed to make 'some permanent distinction between the salary scales of European and Malay officers'.[44]

The reasons given by the British for the differences in salary and promotion prospects between British and Malay officers were that the latter were not adequately trained for higher posts, yet surprisingly little was done to give Malays the necessary training to equip them for higher positions in the civil service. Except for the few Malay MCS officers who were sent to England to study law, and the even fewer who were sent to England on Queen's scholarships reserved for Malays,[45] there were hardly any Malays from the FMS who went for higher education abroad despite persistent demands by Malay representatives for higher education.[46]

THE UNFEDERATED MALAY STATES

The unfederated states had the advantage of coming under British control after the other states and to some extent were able to learn from the 'mistakes' of the others. Unlike Perak which came under British protection at a time when 'a state of anarchy'[47] existed, Johore and the northern states were relatively stable and well-organized. Johore in particular had a well-organized government made up of a Malay *Mentri Besar* (Chief Minister), State Secretary and senior civil servants. In the correspondence between the Sultan of Johore and the Governor of the Straits Settlements, it was agreed that the school already established for educating Malays to take part in the administration of the state should continue to be maintained and that 'preference should always be given to qualified Johore Malays when such are available for employment in the service of their own state'.[48] In the northern states, probably as a consequence of the modernizing influence of King Chulalongkorn, the Siamese had imitated the British in introducing advisers into these states. Thus by 1909 when Siam transferred 'all rights of suzerainty, protection, administration and control whatsoever which they possess'[49] over the northern states to Britain there was already in existence the beginnings of an adviser system in these states.

The rulers of these states were able to request and obtain special safeguards from the British regarding their Malay rights. In the case of Kedah, for example, it was agreed that:

> The administration of this State shall so far as is possible be carried out by Malay Officers, preference being given generally to Malays domiciled in Kedah and more especially to the natives of the Country. The State Council may select annually natives of the Country to be sent for higher education to Europe or Arabia or other similar countries with a view to their holding Government appointments. The Government shall in such cases pay their expenses.
>
> The Malays and Europeans in the Kedah service should be treated on terms of equality.[50]

It was also agreed that the Malay language and Jawi script would be the official language.

This was emphasized in the Annual Report of the Adviser to the Kedah Government in 1909-10:

> The State is more purely a Malay State than the States of the Federated Malay States. The Muhammadan, and not the Christian calendar is used. Friday is, as well as Sunday, a day upon which the public offices are closed. The language of the Legislature, the courts and the public offices is Malay. There are only ten European officers. . . . There are a few Tamil officers in the Medical and Postal Departments, but with the exception of these officers . . . all the government servants are Malays; and of the Malays perhaps not more than a dozen understand any language except their own.[51]

In the northern states, as the language of administration was Malay there was no problem of recruiting suitable Malays, mainly from the royal families, for posts in the state governments. In Johore, where the language of administration was either Malay or English, Malays were provided with English education. The Sultan of Johore was one of the strongest opponents of the education policy which did not provide an English education for Malays at the primary level. In 1934 he wrote to the Colonial Office stating: 'I am far from satisfied with the educational system which is at present in force in the State of Johore. . . . I am absolutely convinced that Malay boys are under a great handicap as compared with boys of other nationalities with regard to their English education.'[52]

In Johore, despite the education policy, a conscious attempt was made to give Malays a secondary school education in the English language and prepare the best of them for higher education in Singapore or overseas. By 1935, there were proportionately more Malay boys in English-medium schools in Johore than in any other state in the country. In that year Malays formed 48.0 per cent of the population of Johore and 71.9 per cent of the total number of boys in English schools. In absolute terms, there were 1,199 Malay boys in English-medium schools in Johore compared with 2,226 Malay boys in English-medium schools in the four federated states combined.[53]

In the employment of Malays in government service, these states, as mentioned earlier, had special provisions written into the treaties guaranteeing Malay employment in their state governments. The Richards Committee pointed out that there was already in existence a framework of native administration:

> Imperfect and inadequate though it might be, there was in Kedah and Johore and to a lesser degree in Kelantan some sort of administration and the Ruler had councillors in some capacity. Only in Trengganu did conditions approximate to those of Perak in the seventies. There had also been some change in political ideas in the British Colonial Service. The instructions given to the first British Resident in 1876 were no longer impossible of execution in 1909. The British officers appointed to the Unfederated States had no longer the task of making bricks entirely without straw. From the beginning, their title of Adviser instead of Resident indicated a very real difference in circumstance and in the angle of vision from which they contemplated that work.[54]

Special emphasis was given in the states to the training of Malays not only for the subordinate posts but also for higher administrative posts. In each of these states were created state civil services for Malays. The number of officers and their salaries are shown in Table 2.3.[55]

Thus whereas in 1946 there were less than 30 Malay officers promoted from the MAS to the MCS for all the states in the federation, there were 69 officers in the state civil services who were drawing salaries of $400 and above (the starting salary for MCS officers).[56] Johore alone had 23 officers drawing salaries equivalent to the MCS salaries. Unlike the

TABLE 2.3
OFFICERS IN THE STATE CIVIL SERVICES
(UNFEDERATED MALAY STATES), 1946

Salary Ranges (per month)	*Johore*	*Kedah*	*Perlis*	*Kelantan*	*Trengganu*	*Total*
$900 and above	3	1	–	–	1	5
$700 – 899	12	2	–	1	–	15
$500 – 699	10	7	–	1	3	21
$400 – 499	8	16	–	2	2	28
$300 – 399	8	14	5	3	5	35
$200 – 299	30	23	6	11	9	79
$100 – 199	19	14	3	6	–	42
Total	90	77	14	24	20	225

Source: Information derived from tables given in File (Confid.) MU/37/46 in the National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

Malay College in Kuala Kangsar, which was reserved for Malays, the Johore English College was opened to all Johoreans irrespective of ethnic origin. Similarly, the Sultan Ibrahim Scholarship for further education was opened to non-Malays as well as Malays. In Kedah, the Mentri Besar (called the Secretary to the Government in this state) had wide discretionary powers to decide who should be selected for higher education, where they should go and what slots they would fill in the state government when they returned.[57] Attempts were made to send members of well-connected Malay families in Kedah abroad for training in several fields so that they would eventually fill not only the administrative posts but professional and technical posts. Thus by the end of the war, there were more qualified Malays in the professional and technical fields in the Unfederated States than in the Federated States as seen in Table 2.4.

Thus the discrepancy between the professed intentions and the reality in the employment of Malays in the higher civil service in the Federated States was glaring when compared with the efforts made in the Unfederated States to employ Malays. A British ex-MCS officer has observed that:

> It stands as a criticism of the administration of the Federated Malay States that no such appointments [in the semi-professional and police departments] were made. Reference has already been made to the manner in which Kedah and Kelantan were already showing the way to open up the administration to Malays. Johore, for some years, had been sending its prospective officers of the civil service to Raffles College as a first step in the process of selecting the most promising for yet higher education abroad. It is true that the FMS sent their Queen's scholars to universities and educational institutions in Great Britain, but not with any purpose of educating them specifically for government

TABLE 2.4

NUMBER OF MALAYS IN MIDDLE AND SENIOR POSTS IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE, 1941

Post	*Federated Malay States*	*Unfederated Malay States*
Administration	67[a]	104[b]
Agriculture & Cooperatives	7	6
Audit	–	3
Customs	–	6
Education	2	5
Medical	4	5
Police & Military	5	8
Public Works	–	3
Sanitary Boards	1	–
Supreme Court	–	5
Treasury & Accountant-General	–	5
Veterinary	–	1
Others	1	4
Total	87	155

Sources: *FMS List of Locally Recruited Holders of Certain Appointments Carrying an Initial Salary of $250 p.m. and Upwards* and *Senior Asiatic Officers of the Former Unfederated Malay States* in Confid. File MU 115/46, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

[a]Contains class II and class I posts in the MAS and all posts in the MCS.
[b]Contains all posts above $300 per month.

service or direction of their studies to that end. One or two royal youths had been sent to acquire experience in the art of living in the higher walks of English society but the democratic and practical ideas of Kedah were peculiar to that state.[58]

W. Roff suggests that the inability of the Colonial government to prepare the Malays adequately for modern life was because of a 'fundamental dichotomy in British policy':

> For the officials on the spot, the primary end and purpose of British control was the creation of political stability and ordered government of a Western type, as a necessary precondition of and context for rapid economic and commercial development of the country's natural resources. Secondary to this, but providing a moral rationale for the whole, was an expressed concern for the welfare and advancement of the Malay people within the framework of traditional Malay society.[59]

Except for Johore, the rate of economic and commercial development in the Unfederated States was slower than in the FMS. There were also proportionately smaller numbers of Chinese and Indian immigrants in these states. As a result, it was possible to modernize in slow stages the traditional Malay élite to take over important jobs in the

state governments. Also, as the economic and commercial development fell more into the hands of British and Chinese planters and miners, it became more imperative to reserve the governmental posts for Malays and to preserve the traditional Malay institutions.

But the economic modernization of the country inevitably resulted in a change in the traditional Malay institutions. One writer commented that

> . . . the equilibrium of their [Malay] ancient society was irrevocably lost but the dynamic stability of a modern society could not be achieved. Demands which were created within the community could only be satisfied through participation in the modern economy but for this they were most ill-equipped. . . . The breakdown of self-contained village life, in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, did not throw the Malays into the new world. Instead, they lost a great part of their old functions which were not compensated by other forms of employment.[60]

As the Malays were left further and further behind in the economic race, it became obvious that it was only in the modern governmental sector that they would be able to hold their own against the encroachment of the other ethnic groups. This view was encouraged by the British officials in the Malay states. But in the Straits Settlements where Malays had become a small minority (25.6 per cent in 1931), British officials tended to view the other ethnic groups more favourably for government employment.

THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS

The Straits Settlements was a crown colony and was directly administered by a Governor with the assistance of a nominated Executive and Legislative Council. The Malays formed a minority of only 28.9 per cent of the population in 1921 and 25.6 per cent of the population in 1931.[61] In Singapore alone, the Malays were 11.8 per cent of the population in 1931.

With the absence of Malay authority in the Straits Settlements, the policy of assisting and safeguarding the special position of the Malays was not given serious consideration. Instead, the policy of establishing a modern commercial and entrepôt port in Singapore received the highest priority. To this end, the English language was encouraged and promoted in both government and missionary schools.

Singapore soon became a centre of higher learning. Raffles College and King Edward VII College of Medicine were established, both teaching in the English medium. In addition several students from the Straits Settlements received education abroad either at their own expense or on scholarships, and by 1920 there emerged a new and powerful group of English educated Chinese[62] who demanded their rights as British subjects.[63] In particular they claimed equal treatment with Malays in government employment. The position was that Malays with

only secondary education[64] were accepted into the MCS after a period of training in the MAS, while non-Malays, many of whom were holders of diplomas from Raffles College or had degrees from British universities, were denied opportunities to enter the MCS and other higher services.

The claims of the Chinese and Indians were brought up before the British Parliament in 1911 and the Secretary of State for the Colonies justified the policy on the grounds that 'Malays and Chinese dislike and resent officers of alien origin being placed in authority over them unless those officers are of European descent'.[65] This policy was criticized by a Britisher who commented that:

> The rank and file of the Police Force is almost entirely composed of Indians and Malays. We are, therefore, asked to believe that the natives dislike and resent being tried before a magistrate who is not of pure European descent on both sides, but that they have no objection to being arrested and dragged to court by policemen who have not a drop of European blood in their veins. The racial, linguistic and religious differences, moreover, of the Malay Peninsula are not greater or more sharply defined than those which prevail in India, yet the Indian Government, both by practice and by precept, disavows such a policy of exclusion.[66]

The Royal Proclamation of 1858 guaranteed that 'Our subjects, of whatever Race or Creed, be freely and impartially admitted to Offices in Our Service, the Duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability and integrity, duly to discharge',[67] was quoted several times by those in favour of opening the higher echelons of the civil service to all British subjects. Tan Cheng Lock, one of the strongest opponents of the recruitment policy, made several pleas in the Straits Settlements Legislative Council. In one of his speeches, he warned that:

> The exclusion from the Malayan Civil Service of those who are not of purely European descent . . . has engendered some discontent in this country and will cause some agitation if we wait too long. If it is regarded to be in the nature of a problem, then I say that the sooner it is tackled the better.[68]

The colonial government dismissed these arguments on the grounds that as the MCS was a combined service for the whole of Malaya, it would not be possible for Chinese and Indians to be posted as MCS officers to the Malay States because 'the Sultans would protest that when they agreed to accept British advice they had never bargained for Chinese and Indian administrators'.[69] This was, however, more of an excuse for not wanting to make changes to the existing recruitment system than a justification. It was possible that just as the Malays in the MCS were confined only to posts in the FMS, so the Chinese and Indians in the MCS could in the same way be confined to posts in the Straits Settlements. Instead, in 1933, it was agreed to form another junior administrative service, this time for all British subjects in the Straits Settlements—the 'Straits Settlements Civil Service' (SSCS).[70] This service had three important distinguishing features compared

with the MAS. First, it was meant to be a very small service, never exceeding more than twenty in number.[71] Second, officers in this service were not eligible for promotion into the MCS. Third, the minimum qualifications for admission into the service was a diploma from Raffles College or a degree from an approved university. This qualification was much higher than that required for entry into the MAS.

The salary scale for this service was a long one as there were no opportunities for promotion to another appointment. During the period in which candidates were taking a special course at Raffles College, they were paid $150 p.m.; after that they were put on the salary scale of $190-209-$270-25A-295/Bar/320/25A-420/Bar/445/25A-520-30A-550/Bar/580-30A-700. Generally, an officer in the SSCS had to work seven years before reaching the initial salary of the MCS cadet. It took him twenty-two years to reach the maximum salary of $8,400 per annum, a figure which was reached by the MCS officer in his eleventh year of service.[72]

The colonial government therefore attempted to appease the Straits-born Chinese and Indians by giving them subordinate posts in the administrative hierarchy. But the principle was established that this group had some right to participate in the administration of the country. They were, however, confined to service within the Straits Settlements.

[1] For a full account of the early period of British rule in the Straits Settlements see L.A. Mills, 'British Malaya, 1824-67', *Journal of the Malayan Branch, Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. III, Part II (November 1925) and Walter Makepeace, Gilbert Brooke and Roland Braddell (eds.), *One Hundred Years of Singapore*, London, John Murray, 1924.

[2] Engagement entered into by the Chiefs of Perak and Sir Andrew Clarke, Governor of the Straits Settlements at Pulau Pangkor dated 20 January 1874. The text of the Treaty of Pangkor and the other treaties are contained in *Treaties and Engagements Affecting the Malay States and Borneo,* edited by William George Maxwell and William Sumner Gibson [London], Truscott and Son, Ltd., 1924.

[3] Ibid., p.70.

[4] In these states, the British officers accredited to the courts were termed 'General Adviser' in Johore and 'British Adviser' in the northern states.

[5] Maxwell and Gibson, op.cit., p.134.

[6] Ibid., p.105.

[7] See especially Frank Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 4th ed., London, Bodley Head, 1906; and his *The Real Malay*, London, Bodley Head, 1900; Emily Sadka, *The Protected Malay States, 1874-1895*, Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1968; Philip Loh Fook Seng, *The Malay States, 1877-1895*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1969; Eunice Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula, 1880-1910*, Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1969; and Chai Hon-Chan, *The Development of British Malaya, 1896-1909*, 2nd ed., Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1967.

[8] D.A. Low, 'Lion Rampant', *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, Leicester University Press, Vol. II, No. 3 (November 1964), p.237. For the standard definition of indirect rule, see Anton Bertram, *The Colonial Service*, London, Cambridge, 1950, pp.70-1.

[9] Margery Perham, *Lugard: the Years of Authority, 1898-1945*, London, 1960, pp.128-9.

[10] Quoted in W.R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1967, p.94.

[11] Sir Frederick Weld, Governor of the Straits Settlements from 1880 to 1887, himself referred to the position of the British Resident of 'advising' the native authority as 'one of those fictions in which we seem to delight'. Speech at the Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute IV, p.181 quoted in Sadka, 'The Colonial Office and the Protected Malay States' in John Bastin and R. Roolvink (eds.), *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, London, Oxford University Press, 1964, p.185.

[12] Swettenham, *The Real Malay*, p.7.

[13] Sadka, *The Protected Malay States, 1874-1895*, p.90.

[14] 'Jervois explained that his original plan had been to annex, but that "on weighing well the impressions conveyed to me by my interviews with the Chiefs, it did not appear to me expedient at present that this course should be adopted. . . ."' In other words, Jervois' tour of Perak had told him that annexation would probably be resisted; he hoped that control without sovereignty might be accepted. Ibid., p.91.

[15] Colonial Secretary, Singapore, to Residents, 17 May 1878 in CO 809/18, quoted in C.D. Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1961, p.251.

[16] Bernard Nunn, 'The Government' in Makepeace, Brooke and Braddell, op.cit., pp. 103-4.

[17] Sadka, *The Protected Malay States, 1874-1895*, p.113.

[18] Hugh Low to Sir William Jervois, 28 May 1878 in CO 809/18 quoted in Cowan, op. cit., p.252.

[19] In 1903, there were 2,876 chiefs and princelings on pensions and political allowances totalling M$939,722 per annum in the Federated Malay States alone. *Proceedings of the Durbar (Conference of Rulers), 1903*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1934, p.43. (Hereinafter cited as *1903 Durbar*.)

[20] Abdul Kahar Bador, 'Traditional and Modern Leadership in Malay Society', Ph.D. thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1967, p.79. Sadka shows that the state councils were in fact dominated by the Resident who 'nominated its members, drew up its agenda, guided its deliberation and influenced its decisions'. Sadka, *The Protected Malay States, 1874-1895*, p.114.

[21] Ibid., p.379. Although the Federation Agreement did not give the Resident-General any executive powers, the 'Scheme for the administration of the Federation of the Protected Native States' drafted by Swettenham, the first Resident-General, did give the Resident-General executive powers. For a full discussion of the first years of the federation, see P.L. Burns, 'The Constitutional History of Malaya with Special Reference to the Malay States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang, 1874-1914', Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1965.

[22] Inaugural speech at the opening of the Federal Council, *Proceedings of the Federal Council*, 11 December 1909.

[23] Rupert Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study of Direct and Indirect Rule* (reprint), Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1964, p.180.

[24] The Sultan of Perak was relieved saying, 'I myself have sat in this Council for long and weary hours as far as I can see without profit', *Federal Council Proceedings, 1927*, p. 136.

[25] See the 1957 *Report of Population Census of the Federation of Malaya* (Report No. 14), Kuala Lumpur, Department of Statistics, 1960. In 1931, Malays formed 49.2 per cent of the population in the Malay states, Penang and Malacca (excluding Singapore).

[26] L.A. Mills, *Malaya: a Political and Economic Appraisal*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1958, pp.4-5.

[27] *Report by W.G.A. Ormsby-Gore on His Visit to Malaya, Ceylon and Java, 1928* (Cmd. 3235) and Rupert Emerson, op.cit., p.326.

[28] Malay parents who wanted an English primary education for their children were required to pay school fees. It appears however that even those who were prepared to pay the fees were discouraged. See *Proceedings of the Federal Council of the FMS*, 1930, B56 and B105.

[29] *Straits Settlements Legislative Council Proceedings*, 28 October 1929.

[30] At the 1934 Durbar, Dr. Winstedt, a former Director of Education and later Adviser in Johore, defended the education policy for Malays as follows:

'I should like to point out that modern methods of education are not based on speculation or on the opinion of any one schoolmaster or the parent of a dull boy. They are based on experiments noted and recorded like experiments in laboratories as to the lines educational policy must follow and on what schedules of statistics in hundreds of schools show to be the best policy. All over the world educational authorities are convinced from the figures before them that children should be trained first in their own language. For that reason, I recommended that policy when I was Director of Education.'

[31] *Straits Settlements Legislative Council Proceedings*, 28 October 1929. Speech by Mohd. Eunos bin Abdullah. For a fuller discussion of British education policy towards the Malays see Tay Gaik Yeong, 'British Economic Policy Towards the Malays in the Federated Malay States, 1921-1934', M.A. thesis, Department of History, University of Malaya, 1969.

[32] Hayden Drennen, 'A Short History of the Malay College', The Malay College, Kuala Kangsar, Golden Jubilee Brochure, 1905-55. For a detailed account of the first years of the College, see Roff, op.cit., pp.100-13.

[33] Khasnor binte Johan, 'The Malay College, Kuala Kangsar, 1905-1941', M.A. thesis, Department of History, University of Malaya, 1969, p.129.

[34] Before 1904 the regulations for recruitment into the MCS required that candidates must be 'natural-born British subjects'. The new regulations of 1904 required them to be also 'of European descent'. And in 1911, to prevent the recruitment of Eurasians, the regulations were further changed to read 'of pure European descent on both sides'. The 1910 scheme of service for the MAS did not result in any changes in the regulations. Malay MCS officers were regarded as 'supernumeraries'. See A. MacCallum Scott, 'A New Colour Bar', *The Contemporary Review*, No. 560 (August 1912).

[35] First referred to as the 'Scheme for the Employment of Malays' (Higher Subordinate Class); later called the Malay Officers' Scheme.

[36] Roff, op.cit., p.105. In later years, the scheme was revised to provide for slightly higher educational qualifications. The scheme can be found in the FMS *Yearbooks*.

[37] Calculated from the personal records of Malay officers in the MCS before the Second World War.

[38] It seems that the scheme of service was especially designed to prevent Malays from filling senior posts. See *The Report of the Committee to Investigate the Distribution of FMS Posts Among British and Malay Officers* (the Pyramid Report) contained in Federal Secretariat (Confid) 174/31 located in the National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

[39] Ibid., pp.5-6.

[40] *Malayan Establishment Staff List*, Government Printer, Singapore, 1941.

[41] James de Vere Allen, 'Malayan Civil Service, 1874-1941: Colonial Bureaucracy/Malayan Elite', Paper presented at the International Conference on Asian History, 5-10 August 1968, Department of History, University of Malaya, p.49.

[42] *The Report of the Committee to Investigate the Position in the FMS in Regard to the Economic Use of Personnel in the MCS* (the Richards Report) contained in Federal Secretariat (Confid) 73/29 in National Archives, Kuala Lumpur (hereinafter referred to as the *Richards Committee Report*).

[43] Ibid., p.10.

[44] Confidential despatch from High Commissioner Clementi to Colonial Office dated 11 August 1933 in File CO 717/100, Public Records Office, London. For the differences in salary scales see *Malay Administrative Service Amendments* FS 512/34 dated 12 February 1934 and *Malayan Establishment Staff List*, 1941.

[45] Queen's scholarships were founded in 1885 'to allow promising boys an opportunity of completing their studies in England'. They were however tenable only in the Straits Settlements. In 1930 two Queen's scholarships were created in the FMS, one to be allotted to Malays only and the other for open competition. But between 1931 and 1934 no Malay of sufficient standing was found. By 1941, there were 92 Queen's scholars out of which 5 were Malays. Wu Lien Teh and Ng Yok Hing, *The Queen's Scholarships*

of Malaya, 1885-1948, Penang, 1949.

[46] *Proceedings of the Federal Council*, September 1926 and February 1928. When pressed for an answer to the request for higher education, the High Commissioner cautioned against it on the grounds that

'The difficulty is to get your Malay students properly looked after once he is in England . . . it is not right of the Government to send a Malay to England—unless the Government is prepared to ensure that he is going to live under conditions and amongst people suitable for him. Otherwise, rather than doing him any good, you may do him much harm.'

[47] Maxwell & Gibson, op.cit., p.28.

[48] Ibid., p.135.

[49] Ibid., p.88.

[50] Ibid., p.102.

[51] *Annual Report of the Adviser to the Kedah Government, 1909-1910*, FMS Government Printing Office, 1910, p.13.

[52] Letter to Cunliffe-Lister of the Colonial Office by Sultan Ibrahim of Johore dated 13 November 1934 and other correspondence regarding the education policy in Johore are to be found in File CO 717/102/33309 in the Public Records Office, London.

[53] *Annual Report of the Adviser to Johore 1936*, Appendix 12 in CO 715/4/3663 in the Public Record Office, London and *Malayan Year Book 1936*, Singapore, Government Printer, p.37.

[54] *The Richards Committee Report*, p.19.

[55] As the salary scales and grades of the various state civil services differed, it was impossible to make meaningful comparisons. The figures in the table refer to the number of officers who were drawing these salaries in 1946.

[56] The official correspondence indicates that there were discussions on the question of how to absorb the senior civil servants in the state civil services into the unified structure of the Malayan Union. See especially File Conf/MU/37/46 in National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

[57] Dato Mohd. Sherif bin Awang Osman was Secretary to Government for a very long period before the war and then Mentri Besar from 1948 to 1953. He became very powerful in the Kedah government because of the confidence and trust that the Sultan had in him. Interview with his brother, Dato Shuib bin Awang Osman, former State Secretary and then Chairman of the Kedah Civil Service, 1972. One writer described Dato Sherif as a man who 'ruled' brilliantly and autocratically. Harry Miller, *Prince and Premier*, London, George Harrap, 1959, p.88.

[58] S.W. Jones, *Public Administration in Malaya*, London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1953, pp.108-9.

[59] Roff, op.cit., p.12.

[60] Zaharah binti Haji Mahmud, 'Change in a Malay Sultanate: an Historical Geography of Kedah before 1939', M.A. thesis, Department of Geography, University of Malaya, 1966, p.287.

[61] Population Census Reports 1921 and 1931. The Chinese in Singapore increased from 86,766 out of a total of 139,208 in 1881 (62.3 per cent) to 219,577 out of a total of 302,321 (72.6 per cent) in 1911, 'The Chinese in Singapore' in Makepeace, Brooke and Braddell, op.cit., p.376.

[62] This group was referred to as the 'Queen's Chinese' to distinguish them from the Chinese-speaking Chinese.

[63] Song Ong Siang, *One Hundred Years History of the Chinese in Singapore*, London, 1923, pp.319-20 and Lee Yong Hock, 'A History of the Straits Chinese British Association, 1900-1959', Academic Exercise, Department of History, University of Singapore, 1960.

[64] In 1938, the scheme of service for the MAS was revised to require probationers to attend a special course in English and Law and other subjects at Raffles College for a period of three years, *FMS Salary Schemes of Locally-Recruited Officers*. In 1941,

every candidate was required to have obtained a Diploma at Raffles College. This scheme was not implemented due to the outbreak of the Second World War.

[65] Quoted in A. MacCallum Scott, 'A New Colour Bar', p.223.

[66] Loc. cit.

[67] Ibid., p.224.

[68] *Proceedings of the Straits Settlements Legislative Council*, 1924, p.B33.

[69] Ibid., 14 April 1924, pp.B34-5.

[70] See 'Rules Governing the Establishment of the Straits Settlements Civil Service', in *Proceedings of the Straits Settlements Legislative Council*, 1933, pp.C137-39, and Governor's speech on pp.B115-16.

[71] In 1941, there were 11 SSCS officers in Singapore, 6 in Penang and 3 in Malacca, ME 0103/38, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur. After the Second World War, this service was abolished and most SSCS officers were absorbed into the Singapore Civil Service.

[72] Chee Meow Seah, 'Bureaucratic Evolution and Political Change in an Emerging Nation: Case Study of Singapore', Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, 1971, p.14.

III The Fusion of Politics and Administration

THE COLONIAL ADMINISTRATORS

THE colonial civil service was a political bureaucracy. It was not limited to narrow law and order functions but made political decisions on a wide range of economic, social and political issues.[1] While nominally under the control of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the colonial civil servants were given powers to make decisions as 'the men on the spot'. This situation has been succinctly stated as follows: 'Except for occasions when clamour was of such magnitude as to lead to local disorders or to find expressions in the British Parliament, the "men on the spot" appeared to have had a free hand within the context of the colonial system . . . .'[2]

The British colonial empire was 'decentralized to a degree that no other empire in modern history approaches'.[3] The policy was to select what was considered to be the best men and then leave them the job of governing with minimum interference from London.[4] The only requirements were that the colonies should be financially self-sufficient and that there should not be any disturbances which would cause embarrassing questions to be asked in Westminster. Robert Heussler points out that:

> Colonial administrators have not been civil servants in the usual sense, that is, servants of elected or appointed governments whose higher officers hold the lion's share of whatever power there is to be exercised. They themselves *were* the Government. Spread thinly over the ground, relying on their wits, personalities and physical stamina, they have embodied in their own persons virtually all the stuff and substance of rule.[5]

The British administrators serving in Malaya were given the same wide powers of discretion as their colleagues serving in other colonies and protectorates. The Malayan Civil Service (MCS) was the key policy-making service. For the officers in this service,

> The colonial rule was a halcyon period. Malaya was virtually ruled by . . . a body of disinterested officers whose only inducement was to do the best they could in their several offices. There were none of the checks or impediments of democratic government; there was no need to 'play up' to the prejudices or ignorances of an electorate or to expediency . . . .[6]

It was clear that the senior posts in the MCS such as those of Residents, Advisers and Colonial Secretary were political appointments and therefore could only be filled by a representative of the colonial power. Thus when Raja Chulan who was appointed directly into the MCS in 1903 became eligible for promotion to the post of Adviser to the Sultan of Trengganu, he was not appointed on the grounds that 'the Sultan might say he could as well advise himself'.[7] Later in 1933, the Governor of the Straits Settlements pointed out that:

> His Majesty's Government is under treaty obligation to provide British Residents and British Advisers to the Malay States and these officers are supplied from the Malayan Civil Service. These men must, by treaty, be drawn from England, or rather I should say from the United Kingdom. These cannot possibly be Asiatics, not even Malays and therefore the conditions of recruiting the Malayan Civil Service must be such as will ensure that its officers come to us from the United Kingdom.[8]

Senior British MCS officers had a virtual monopoly of power. They sat in the Executive and Legislative Councils and at Conferences of Rulers (Durbars). The Residents' Conferences, at which important matters were discussed and decisions made, were held about once a month.[9] Initiation of all important legislation was in the hands of the British officials who formed a majority in the Federal Council.

Even in such matters as succession to sultanates in which Britain had no powers under the treaty, the British civil servants in Malaya interfered in the choice of successors to the rulers on the grounds that it was necessary to get a ruler who was able to cooperate and work with them. Thus in one case, the British Resident wrote to the Raja Muda of Selangor informing him that '. . . the fact that you hold the title of Raja Muda does not imply that you are the Heir to the throne of Selangor and that no decision has yet been made as to who shall succeed to the Throne on His Highness's demise.'[10]

In 1934, the matter of British interference in succession to sultanates came up in Perak. When questioned by the Colonial Office regarding British interference in this matter, the High Commissioner replied:

> Regarding the question of the extent to which the Protecting Power should take a positive part in the selection of persons to fill the 'steps to the Throne', my view is that the Protecting Power cannot dissociate itself from interest in a matter which affects the succession, but that the initiative as in this case should normally rest with the Sultans and Chiefs.[11]

In general, the British administrator in Malaya exercised the powers that were nominally vested in the politicians who headed the Colonial Office. Political and administrative functions were thus fused at the federal level.

THE MALAY ADMINISTRATORS, 1920–1939

The decision to absorb the Malay traditional élite into the colonial bureaucracy of the FMS was a political one. The opening of the MCS

to Malays, even though in very small numbers, was a recognition of the colonial government's policy towards them. But in terms of functions performed and in terms of posts filled within the MCS, the Malay officers were subordinate to British officers.

As the policy was to absorb the Malay traditional élite into the administration, it was not surprising that before the Second World War many of them were from royal families.[12] Many of them were members of state councils in their personal capacity as members of the royal family or territorial chiefs. Thus their position in the administrative hierarchy was reinforced by their position in the Malay social structure. They continued to fulfil their functions as princes and chieftains while at the same time being adopted into the 'modernized' élite of the colonial civil service.[13]

In the unfederated states, the members of the Malay traditional élite were closely linked with the legislative and administrative functions of their state. The state civil services were dominated by the traditional Malay élite[14] who were also members of the ruling class in these states.

When in 1926 it was decided that the Rulers should be replaced by Malay representatives in the Federal Council, it seemed inevitable that the Malay civil servants would be chosen to perform this function. But there was one important difference between their position in the Federal Council and the position of those British civil servants who were also members of the Federal Council. In the case of the Malay members, they were not *ex-officio* or official members but were 'unofficial members' representing 'Malay interests'. Their anomalous position of being both officials as well as 'unofficials' was justified by the High Commissioner on the grounds that: 'There were not, and there still are not, outside the constitutionally or administratively official ranks, Malay gentlemen of public standing and influence who possess the knowledge of English required of members of this Council.'[15]

In their capacity as 'official spokesmen of unofficial Malay opinion',[16] the Malay civil servants were vocal especially in their demands for a greater participation by Malays in the administration of their country. They became champions of the Malay cause and attacked whatever policy they felt was against the interests of Malays. As Malay fears of economic domination by the Chinese and Indians increased, the Malay traditional élite looked to the British for protection. Far from wanting to get rid of colonial rule, they welcomed the British to protect them from complete domination by the other races in Malaya. One Malay expressed this point of view as follows:

> [The Malays] are quite satisfied with the present arrangements as they know fully well that if they got rid of the British, they will be worse off under some other power who would be sure to overrun the country and trample down the Malays the moment they are left to themselves . . . . If you cannot become masters yourselves, at least you know that you are with good masters who not only protect you but respect your rights.[17]

By the middle of the 1920s, it became clear to some of the Malays that despite all the professed intentions of the British Colonial Government to assist the Malays, not very much was in fact being done. In Singapore, the appointment of a former Johore government officer as the first Malay representative in the Singapore Legislative Council in 1926[18] coincided with the creation of the Kesatuan Melayu Singapura (Singapore Malay Union—SMU). The formation of the SMU was a

> . . . political innovation among the Malays. SMU aimed at the achievement of the economic and social interests of the Malays. Its recorded objectives were to foster interest among the Malays in things connected with politics and administration; to encourage the Malays to advance in political, social, economic and educational fields; to represent the Malay view to the Government; and to foster interests [*sic*] in higher education among Malay students.[19]

The formation of the SMU marked the beginning of the creation of several voluntary organizations to protect Malay interests. It reflected a feeling that the British could not be relied on completely to look after Malay interests and that the Malays must organize themselves into active associations for this purpose. Following the example of the SMU, several Malay associations were formed in the Malay states. In 1937, the left-wing pro-Indonesian association called the Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM—Union of Malay Youths) was formed in Kuala Lumpur. Between 1937 and 1939, political associations called Persatuan Melayu (PM—Malay Associations) were founded in many states with the objective of furthering the interests of Malays in all branches of life and representing the views of Malays in the Federal and State Councils and assisting the Government to encourage Malays to improve their status.[20]

Except for the left-wing associations such as the KMM and the Communist Party, the Malay associations both in Singapore (SMU) and in the Malay States (PM) were supported and encouraged by the British colonial administrators. It was, therefore, not surprising to find that these associations, particularly in the Malay States, were led by Malay civil servants.[21]

The involvement of Malay civil servants in looking after Malay interests was a fundamental departure from the British civil service concept of a disinterested non-partisan civil service. It appears that right from the beginning, the Malay civil servants were regarded by the British as being more than just civil servants. As members of the Malay traditional élite, they were part of the Malay political structure and took part in political activities while performing their role as civil servants. They were accepted as representatives of the Malay community, articulating the aspirations of their community.

THE MALAY ADMINISTRATORS, 1940–1955

The political role of the Malay civil servants was dramatically brought into the open after the Japanese occupation of Malaya in 1945. The

Japanese victory in Malaya indicated to the Malays that their protectors, the British, were not as powerful as they had imagined. Even more important, Malays found that they had to fall back on their own resources for whatever protection and help they thought was necessary to ward off the encroachments of the other races. The Japanese Military Government abolished the dual form of government which separated the Straits Settlements from the Malay States and established one central government in Singapore.[22] After a period of hesitancy, the sultans were restored although with much less status and no power.[23] However, the Japanese used Malay officers to help them in the administration of the country. This gave greater opportunities to Malays to gain experience in administration.

In May 1942, the Japanese government in Singapore established two training schools, one in Singapore and the other in Malacca, to train local officers primarily in the Japanese language for work in the administration. These schools (Marakoa and Shonan Kurensho) were important in that for the first time, leading personalities of all ethnic communities were brought together. Whereas the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar was mainly for Malays in the Federated Malay States, these training schools brought government officers from all the Malay states and the Straits Settlements together. For example, it was at such a training course that Dato Asri of Kelantan met Tun Razak of Pahang and Mohd. Yaacob Hitam of Johore.[24]

Towards the end of the war, the Japanese attempted to 'induce the premature growth of a national independence movement'[25] in Malaya by encouraging the left-wing Kesatuan Ra'ayat Indonesia Semenanjong (KRIS—Union of Peninsular Indonesians) which aimed at achieving independence for Malaya within a greater Indonesia. Another organization in Kedah was formed called Saberkas (Unity), mainly of English-educated Malays, many of whom were civil servants, with the aim of achieving some degree of state autonomy for Kedah. This organization and another para-military organization called Wataniah (a Malay resistance army), were not anti-British organizations but were in fact active supporters of the return of the British to Malaya.

When the British returned to Malaya they were welcomed enthusiastically by all ethnic communities in the country. But these joyful feelings turned to dismay when a new political system was introduced by the British to replace the pre-war structure. It is not necessary to discuss in detail here why Britain chose to make such changes.[26] Suffice it to say the new proposals for constitutional changes which created a Malayan Union[27] of all the Malay states and Straits Settlements excluding Singapore reversed the previous policy of excluding the Chinese and Indians from participating in the political life of the country. A common citizenship was introduced in which all Chinese and Indians born in Malaya were given automatic citizenship. Under the new treaties, the Sultans surrendered all power and jurisdiction in their states to the British Crown. Their powers were limited to presiding over Malay Advisory

Councils 'whose main functions will relate to matters affecting the Mohammedan religion'.

Malay protests against the Malayan Union reached unprecedented levels. The protests were not against the return of the British but against the constitutional changes which removed even the semblance of Malay sovereignty. They were particularly unhappy about the equal treatment given to the Chinese and Indians. This they regarded as in effect a direct breach of the treaties which had been signed by the Sultans, as heads of sovereign states, and the British government. They could not understand why a common citizenship was offered when '. . . neither the Chinese nor the Indians bother about it. As the Chinese and the Indians are here as guests, their interests in this country are largely commercial and they will not complain so long as nothing is done to prejudice their present position.'[28]

The Malayan Union proposals seemed to satisfy no one, not even the non-Malays, who were generally unhappy with the exclusion of Singapore from the Union and the return to positions of authority by the British officials. The left-wing organizations also protested against the Malayan Union as they wanted an elected legislature as the first step towards self-government. But the awakening of the Malays to political consciousness and the resulting unity was astounding and gave rise to the wave of Malay nationalism which swept the country.

The Malay nationalist movement was led by English-educated Malays, many of them being civil servants. They were supported by a group of influential British ex-civil servants who acted as a powerful lobby in London.[29]

The first organized protest against the Malayan Union proposals came from Johore which had before the war strenuously resisted any attempt to join the Federated Malay States. This state, like the other states that were outside the federation, suddenly lost its sovereignty to the British Crown. Before this, the Sultan's powers were already limited as the Johore Constitution of 1895 provided that:

> The Sovereign may not in any manner surrender or make any agreement to surrender the country . . . to any European State or Power or to any other state or Nation . . . and this prohibition and restraint are likewise laid and decreed on all and everyone of the heirs and relatives of the sovereign. And if this prohibition and restraint be resisted . . . he shall be treated as guilty of betraying the trust reposed in him by God, in which case the people of the country shall be under no obligation to continue any longer their allegiance to him . . . .[30]

A number of senior Johore civil servants, therefore, grouped together under the leadership of Dato Abdul Rahman bin Md. Yassim to protest against the Sultan of Johore's signing of the treaty. They proclaimed that the Sultan had no powers under the Constitution to surrender the state of Johore to the British Crown or any other foreign power and the treaty was, therefore, null and void.[31] This group, which later organized themselves into an association called the Kesatuan Melayu Johore

(Johore Malay League), issued a Proclamation in February 1946 denouncing the Sultan for having signed the treaty and calling upon his subjects not to recognize him as their Sultan.

> . . . the act of the Sultan in ceding the State and Government to the British Government amounts to a breach of the trust laid upon him by God, and consequently it is no longer necessary for citizens to extend their loyalty to him. It is therefore clear that every citizen of Johore will have to take a stand against Ibrahim bin Al-Marhum Sultan Abu Bakar and refuse to be ruled by him. If any citizen does not do so, he shall be regarded as abetting a breach of the trust imposed by God and he shall be a traitor to his fellow-citizens of Johore.[32]

This incitement to rebellion against the Sultan is probably unique since those who were behind it were mainly civil servants. The British government would not tolerate the open defiance against British policy and the Sultan. The seven civil servants who signed the Proclamation were interdicted, that is, required to relinquish their posts pending disciplinary proceedings against them.

But by this time, the protests against the Malayan Union had become widespread and the Sultans themselves joined in the protests, claiming that they had signed the treaties under duress. The creation of the United Malay National Organization (UMNO) in March 1946, consisting of forty-eight Malay associations, was led by a Johore civil servant, Dato Onn bin Jaafar.[33] The first Executive Committee of UMNO consisted of eleven members out of which seven were civil servants.

UMNO's organized protest against the Malayan Union took several forms including boycott. Firstly, the rulers were requested not to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the first Governor of the Malayan Union, Sir Edward Gent. Secondly, all Malays were required to wear black armbands on that day as a sign of their protest. Thirdly, all Malays nominated as members of the Advisory Council which was set up to advise the Governor were asked to refuse their nominations. All those nominated were in fact civil servants.[34] None of them accepted the invitation and no action was taken against them by the colonial government.

It seems strange, to say the least, that the British government in Malaya took such a lenient attitude towards the direct participation of civil servants in politics when the Malay civil servants in Sarawak who protested against the ceding of Sarawak to the British Crown in 1946 were dealt with in a much sterner manner. In Sarawak, the civil servants were told that 'government expects and requires absolute loyalty from all its servants'[35] and therefore civil servants should resign if they are unable to give undivided loyalty to the British Crown. It was reported later that 'approximately 13 per cent of the government staff concerned resigned; all of them were Malays and 90 per cent were stationed in Kuching'.[36]

In the case of Malaya, however, when the Secretary-General of UMNO wrote to the colonial government asking for clarification regarding the

participation of civil servants in politics in August 1946, he was assured that civil servants would not be penalized for taking part in politics. The Chief Secretary informed him that 'we must all recognize that there are exceptional times in which strict application of this and certain other provisions of General Orders should not reasonably be rigidly applied'.[37]

Civil servants who were UMNO members were given permission to attend UMNO meetings on unrecorded leave.[38] The seven Johore civil servants who had been interdicted for their action against the Sultan were reinstated with full rights and their organization was absorbed into UMNO. Most of them, however, decided to leave government service so that they could devote their full time to politics.[39]

The reason for this lenient attitude towards civil servants participating in politics in Malaya was given many years later by an ex-MCS officer who was serving in Malaya in 1946. He claimed that the British realized that 'since every well-educated Malay of character and ability was a civil servant, this anomalous situation had to be accepted if the Malay community was to have effective political leadership'.[40]

This explanation is only part of the reason. Another explanation is to be found in the change of attitude of the British officials themselves towards the Malayan Union.[41] Perhaps an even more important reason for the change in attitude and policy was that the British could not afford to offend the Malay traditional élite which had rallied around and given support to UMNO. UMNO was by no means a radical left-wing party. It was pro-British and merely demanded a return to the pre-war system of British rule in Malaya. As Mohd. Noordin Sopiee has pointed out:

> . . . the decision to adopt the Federation policy was significantly related to the realization that Britain could not afford to let the leadership of the Malays fall out of the hands of the traditional and very much anglicized moderate leaders of UMNO (who were basically pro-British and wanted British rule to continue) and into the hands of the more 'alien' radical and extremist leaders of the Malay Nationalist Party who wanted immediate independence for Malaya and merger with Indonesia.[42]

Malay opposition to the Malayan Union resulted in the Federation of Malaya Agreement of 1948. In the negotiations and discussions concerning the proposed new political arrangements to replace the Malayan Union, only the British and Malays were involved. Consultation with the Chinese and Indian communities regarding constitutional proposals was not acceptable to Malay leaders who claimed that the negotiations were to be entirely between the British and the Malays.[43] The Working Committee to study the constitutional proposals[44] consisted of 4 British officials, 4 representatives of the Malay rulers and 2 representatives of UMNO. All 6 Malays representing the rulers and UMNO were civil servants.[45] Unlike the British officials who were *ex-officio* members, the Malay civil servants were political appointees.

Under the new Federation of Malaya set up in 1948, the legislative council was composed of 3 ex-officio and 11 official members (all British),

11 representatives of the 9 sultans and 2 settlements (9 Malays and 2 non-Malays) and 50 'unofficials' representing various commercial, labour and educational interests (24 Malays, 7 Europeans and 19 non-Malays). Malays composed the largest group, forming 43 out of the 75 members. The 9 representatives of the sultans were Mentris Besar of the states, 8 of whom were civil servants. Out of the 24 Malay 'unofficials', 16 were civil servants.[46] Malay civil servants therefore made up the single largest group in the legislative council. Although they were not all members of UMNO, they were clearly in support of UMNO[47] which was at that time the only Malay organization which the civil servants supported.

The political potential of UMNO as such appeared limited. They could not hope to persuade the British to hand over Malaya to an organization made up of Malays only. While representatives of the British government often stated that Malaya was being prepared for eventual self-government they also made it clear that political power would not be handed over to any single community. In response to the British position Dato Onn bin Jaafar, the leader of UMNO, tried to found a political party in which members of the various ethnic groups could participate. In this way he had hoped to smoothen the path to independence. His attempt to persuade UMNO to open its doors to non-Malays failed and led to his resignation from UMNO. In September 1951 he formed the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP).[48]

The split of UMNO created problems of loyalty for the civil servants. Some of them supported Dato Onn and the IMP, while others supported UMNO. The conflict of loyalties was seen clearly in the support of the Mentris Besar. Dato Onn appeared to have the support of the Mentris Besar of Johore, Perak, Kelantan, Selangor and Negri Sembilan while the others appeared to support UMNO. It was also evident that the 'unofficials' in the Legislative Council were divided in their loyalty to UMNO and IMP. There was also a third party—the Perak Malay League—which had support only in Perak, and was formed by the Mentri Besar of Perak who had been the first Secretary-General of UMNO.

Thus in the 1950s, the civil servants became directly involved not only in communal politics but in inter-party struggles. The appointment of a Mentri Besar was an example of the involvement of civil servants in party politics. The post of Mentri Besar was at that time a civil service post although it was politically a very important one in terms of power and influence. Political parties were, therefore, anxious that the persons selected for these posts be in sympathy with their own party or at least not directly in support of another party. In one case, the person selected for the post of Deputy Mentri Besar was openly identified with the IMP (he was in fact the Secretary of the Selangor branch of the party). UMNO was dissatisfied with the appointment and through the Sultan of Selangor forced the Establishment Office to appoint another civil servant to the post.[42]

When the 'Member' system was introduced in 1951 as a first step towards the introduction of a cabinet form of government,[50] the three Malays appointed as Members were all civil servants: Dato Mahmud bin Mat, an MCS officer, was appointed Member for Lands and Communications; Dato Onn bin Jaafar of the Johore Civil Service was appointed Member for Home Affairs; and Tunku Yaacob bin Sultan Abdul Hamid of the Kedah Civil Service was appointed Member for Agriculture and Forestry. Dato Mahmud and Tunku Yaacob were not openly identified with any political party[51] but Dato Onn was President of the IMP at the time of his appointment. He was therefore both a part of the government as well as in opposition to it. Unlike UMNO which, at that time, was prepared to continue the existing political system with some modifications in favour of the Malays, IMP's objective was '. . . to establish a Sovereign Independent State of Malaya aiming at the well-being and advancement of the People based on equality of opportunity and of Political, Social and Economic rights and obligations'.[52]

Dato Onn's anomalous position was brought to the attention of the High Commissioner by the British 'unofficial' members of the Legislative Council. This group, which represented business and commercial interests, was alarmed at the IMP's resolution to fight for the independence of Malaya within ten years. In their complaint to the High Commissioner, they asked:

> . . . whether he [i.e. High Commissioner] thought it correct for a Minister to receive a large salary from a Government he has pledged himself to overthrow . . . it seemed to us that Onn's position is unsavoury, to say the least of it. As a side issue we feel for instance he is expecting too much to count on complete loyalty from his secretary, who is an MCS officer, when that official knows his chief is working hard to kick him out of his job.[53]

The British government, however, did not change its indulgent attitude towards civil servants participating in politics until 1955, when, with the introduction of elections, it became necessary to make a distinction between the roles of politicians and civil servants and ban the latter from contesting the elections. The Committee appointed to examine the question of elections in the Legislative Council felt therefore that the time had come:

> . . . to establish firmly and irrefutably that the roles of the politician and the civil service are separate and distinct and should be kept entirely apart . . . it is essential to build up a civil service absolutely free from political influence and whose integrity in this respect is beyond question.[54]

The UMNO representatives in the Committee objected strongly to the banning of civil servants from contesting the elections. They claimed that 'there will be a dearth of suitable candidates for election, particularly among the Malays, unless some facilities are given to civil servants to withdraw temporarily from their office in order to become electoral candidates. . . .'[55]

The British concept of political neutrality of the civil service was reiterated by the Committee as necessary for the parliamentary form of government which was to be introduced in the country when Malaya attained its independence in 1957. But special provisions were made to allow civil servants to retire to contest the elections.[56] When the elections for the state and federal legislatures took place in 1954-5, several civil servants retired or resigned to contest the elections. As seen in Table 3.1 out of the 103 Malay candidates who contested the 1955 federal elections, 53 were ex-civil servants.

TABLE 3.1

MALAY EX-CIVIL SERVANTS WHO CONTESTED THE 1955 ELECTIONS, BY POLITICAL PARTY

Political Party	*Total (No.)*	*Ex-civil Servants (No.)*	*Percentage*
UMNO	35	28	80
Party Negara[a]	29	16	55
National Assembly of Perak	8	2	25
Pan-Malayan Islamic Party	11	2	18
Perak Malay League	3	1	33
Perak Progressive Party	1	0	0
Independents	16	4	25
Total	103	53	51

Source: *Report on the First Election of Members to the Legislative Council of the Federation of Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur, 1955, p.18. Information on civil service backgrounds was obtained from interviews.

[a]This Party was formed by Dato Onn in 1954 when he became disillusioned with the IMP.

About one-half of the Malay candidates had civil service backgrounds. UMNO fielded the largest number of ex-civil servants—80 per cent of its candidates were ex-civil servants. The result of the 1955 elections was a resounding victory for UMNO which had forged an alliance with a Chinese party, the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and an Indian party, the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC). The UMNO-MCA-MIC Alliance won 51 out of the 52 seats in the Legislative Council and obtained about 80 per cent of the total votes cast.[57]

The Alliance government which was formed in 1955 and which has been in power since then, has been dominated by Malay ex-civil servants. In the first cabinet formed by Tunku Abdul Rahman after Independence in 1957, there were seven Malays, two Chinese and one Indian. All except one of the Malay ministers had been civil servants. The bureaucracy had served as a major source of recruitment into the political élite.[58] This fact is fundamental to the understanding of administrative-political relations in post-independent Malaya.

[1] Nelson Kasfir, 'Development Administration in Africa—The Balance Between Politics and Administration', unpublished paper, Uganda, Makerere College, p.5.

[2] B.L. St. John Hamilton, *Problems of Administration in an Emergent Nation—a Case Study of Jamaica*, New York, Praeger, 1964, p.30.

[3] Robert Heussler, *Yesterday's Rulers: The Making of the British Colonial Service*, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1963, p.4.

[4] Ibid., p.213.

[5] Robert Heussler, 'Why Study the Colonial Service' in *Corona* (May 1961). A strong plea was made for local autonomy in Malaya in 1912:
'There is nothing which militates against effective colonial government so much as Downing Street interference. . . . The Imperial Government need be under no apprehension as to the ability of those on the spot to carve out the right course that should be pursued . . . the MCS is inferior to none in the qualities which make for successful administration.' Arnold Wright and Thomas H. Reid, *The Malay Peninsula*, London, Unwin, 1912, pp.201-2.

[6] Victor Purcell, *Memoirs of a Malayan Officer*, London, Cassell, 1960, p.298.

[7] Stubbs in minute to Colonial Office 105 of 16 March 1910 in CO 273/360, quoted in James de Vere Allen, 'Malayan Civil Service, 1874-1941: Colonial Bureaucracy/Malayan Elite', Paper presented at the International Conference on Asian History, 5-10 August 1968, Department of History, University of Malaya, p.49.

[8] *Proceedings of the Straits Settlements Legislative Council*, 1933, p.B115.

[9] It was at the meeting of the Conference of Residents in 1904 that the idea of establishing the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar was first mooted, W.R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1967, p.100. See also *Abstract of Proceedings of Residents' Conferences, 1922-31* in the Archives of the Singapore National Library and *Index of Decisions of Residents' Conferences, 1897-1928* compiled by J.A. Harvey, Kuala Lumpur, 1928.

[10] Correspondence in CO 717/100 dated 24 April 1933, Public Records Office, London. The Colonial Office protested that, 'In a matter of such Political Importance as the succession to the Sultanate of Selangor, it might have been better if the High Commissioner had first referred home, since any intervention by the British authority in such an affair must be a matter of high policy', Minute 2, August 1933 in the same file.

[11] High Commissioner to Colonial Office, 14 February 1934 in CO 717/99, Public Records Office, London.

[12] Twenty-one out of the twenty-four Malays in the MCS in 1938 had royal or chiefly lineage. See also Azman bin Abdul Rashid, 'Towards a Modernization of Traditional Political Elites of the Nobility Class with Special Reference to Perak', graduation exercise, B. Econs., Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya, 1971.

[13] In the case of Hussain bin Mohd. Taib, Orang Kaya Indera Shahbandar (local chieftain), Pahang, who was an MCS officer, it was not possible for him to be moved out of the state of Pahang because it was a condition of 'my acceptance of the title . . . that my service should solely be in Pahang and promotion there only in accordance with what posts may be available in my state'. Letter from Hussain bin Mohd. Taib dated 19 August 1937 in File (Confid.) MEO 42/38, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

[14] See for example the study on the Kelantan Civil Service by Abdul Rashid bin Haji Ahmad entitled 'Bureaucrasi Negri Kelantan: Satu Kajian Perubahan dan Perkembangan', M.A. thesis, Department of Malay Studies, University of Malaya, 1969, Chapter 14.

[15] *Federal Council Proceedings*, 1933, p.B82.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Haji Abdul Majid b. Zainuddin, *The Malays in Malaya—By One of Them*, Singapore, Malayan Publishing House, 1928, pp.94-5.

[18] Mohd. Eunos bin Abdullah.

[19] Radin Soenarno, 'Malay Nationalism, 1896-1941', *Journal of Southeast Asian History* (1960-61), p.10.

[20] The broad outlines of their respective objectives were
(i) furtherance of the interests of the Malays in all branches of life;
(ii) to strive within the laws, for the welfare of the Malays;
(iii) to represent the views and aims of the Malays (in their respective Councils);
(iv) to encourage Malays to study for higher education;
(v) to assist Government in encouraging Malays to improve their status;
(vi) to guard Malay morals, manners and customs; and
(vii) to promote unity and loyalty to ideals.
See Radin Soenarno, op.cit., p.15.

[21] At first, Malays were reluctant to join these associations because of a feeling that it was against the Malay traditional ruling class and also the British government, which was already looking after Malay interests. But they were encouraged to join when they found that these associations were approved by the government and were led by Malays who were loyal to the government and to the state. See W.R. Roff, 'The Persatuan Melayu Selangor: An Early Malay Political Association', in *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol. IX, No. 1 (March 1968).

[22] Judith Rosenberg, 'Constitutional and Political Developments in Malaya, 1945-1948', M.A. thesis, Cornell University, 1954, p.38.

[23] It was only in January 1943, two years after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, that official recognition of the Sultans was given. It was not until the first half of 1944 that the monthly allowances for Sultans and their chiefs were restored to the pre-war level. Yoichi Itagaki, 'Some Aspects of the Japanese Policy for Malaya Under the Occupation, with Special Reference to Nationalism', in *Journal of Southeast Asian History* (1962), p.257.

[24] *Shonan Times*, 22 May 1942 and Yoji Akashi, 'The Japanisation Program in Malaya with particular reference to the Malays', Paper presented to the *Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association*, September 1971.

[25] Yoichi Itagaki, op.cit., p.264.

[26] An interesting discussion on this subject is given in James de Vere Allen, *The Malayan Union*, Monograph Series No. 10, South-East Asia Studies, Yale University and in Mohd. Noordin Sopiee, *From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation, Political Unification in the Malaysia Region 1945-1965*, Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1974.

[27] *Malayan Union and Singapore: a Statement of Policy on Future Constitution*, Supplement to the British Military Administration, Malaya, *Gazette*, 24 January 1946.

[28] *Hidup Melayu: a Brief Review of Activities of the Malay National Movement*, Ipoh, Department of Malayan Union Affairs, Malay League of Perak [1946?], p.5.

[29] The famous 'pro-consular' letter is contained as Appendix G to Allen's, *The Malayan Union*, op.cit., pp.180-1. See also Sir Richard Winstedt's 'Sharp Practice in Malaya', *British Malaya*, Vol. 20, No. 12 (April 1946) and E. La Mothe Stowell, 'Mischief-making in Malaya', *New English Review* (April 1948), pp.299-306.

[30] Article 15 of the Johore Constitution.

[31] Interview with Dr. Awang bin Hassan and Ahmad bin Suleiman, two of the seven who signed the Proclamation and Yaacob bin Hitam, the then Assistant Secretary of the Johore Malay League.

[32] The Proclamation issued by the Johore Malay League on 8 February 1946 contained as Appendix F to Allen, *The Malayan Union*, op.cit., pp.176-9.

[33] For details regarding the formation of UMNO and its early activities, see *Hidup Melayu* (Long Live the Malays), op.cit., *UMNO Sepuloh Tahun* (The First Ten Years of UMNO), Penang, 1952 and Mohd. Yunos Hamidi, *Sejarah Pergerakan Politik Melayu Semenanjong* (History of Peninsular Malay Political Movements), Kuala Lumpur, 1961.

[34] They were Mohd. Hashim bin Datok Di-wangsa, Trengganu Civil Service; Nik Ahmad Kamil bin Nik Mohd., Kelantan Civil Service; Dato Onn bin Jaafar, Johore Civil Service; Tengku Mohamed ibni Al-Marhum-al Sultan Ahmad, MCS; Tunku Ismail bin Tunku Yahya, Kedah Civil Service; Tunku Muhamad bin Tengku Besar Burhanuddin, MCS; Zainal Abidin bin Osman, MCS. File MU Conf. 44/46, 'The Installation Ceremony of the Governor-General', National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

[35] Secretariat Circular No. 9 of 1946 dated 10 December 1946, signed by the Chief Secretary, Sarawak.

[36] Reported by the Governor of Sarawak, Sir Charles Clarke, at the opening of the Council Negri in Kuching on 8 December 1947. See *Daily Mail*, 10 December 1947.

[37] The letter from the Secretary-General of UMNO (Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang) and the reply from the Chief Secretary (A. Newboult) are contained in M. Noordin Sopiee, 'The Battle for the Malayan Union: a Sourcebook' (xeroxed), Kuala Lumpur, 1968, and in File UMNO/SG/35/46 in the National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

[38] In June 1946, the Deputy Chief Secretary sent a circular out to all heads of departments informing them that 'no restrictions should be placed on civil servants and that GO111 banning civil servants from calling public meetings to consider any action of government should not be enforced for the time being', MU Conf. 74/1946 in National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

[39] Only two of them, Ahmad bin Sulaiman and his sister, Safiah bte. Sulaiman, chose to return to their teaching jobs in government service.

[40] J.M. Gullick, *Malaya*, 2nd ed., London, Ernest Benn, 1964, p.90. W.C.S. Corry who was Adviser in Johore in 1946 also expressed the same views to the author (interview in London, March 1969).

[41] Two of the original framers of the Malayan Union proposals, Gent and Hone, played a large part in convincing the Colonial Office that the Malayan Union was, after all, a mistake. Mohd. Noordin Sopiee, *From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation*, p.43.

[42] Ibid., p.56.

[43] Yusof bin Ngah, 'Malayan Nationalism, 1945-1957', M.A. thesis, University of Otago, New Zealand, 1967, p.66. The non-Malays were, however, given an opportunity to give their views after the Report of the Working Committee was published and presented to the British Parliament.

[44] *Summary of the Report of the Working Committee appointed by a Conference of His Excellency the Governor of the Malayan Union, Their Highnesses the Rulers of the Malay States and the Representatives of the United Malays National Organization*, Kuala Lumpur, December 1946.

[45] Two were from the MCS, two from the Johore Civil Service and one each from the Kedah and Kelantan Civil Services.

[46] The list of Malay members of the first legislative council set up under the 1948 Federation Agreement is contained in File UMNO/SG/50/49, in the National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

[47] In July 1949, the Secretary-General of UMNO wrote to all Malay members of the Legislative Council, drawing their attention to clause (3)(f) of the UMNO Constitution which makes all Malay members of the Legislative Council automatically members of the Delegates Conference of UMNO, provided they were ordinary members of UMNO. See circular letter from Secretary-General of UMNO (Zainal Abidin bin Haji Abas), No. 24 of 1949 dated 26 July 1949 in File UMNO/SG 50/49.

[48] For an account of Dato Onn's leadership of UMNO and the reasons for the split see Ishak bin Tadin, 'Dato Onn and Malay Nationalism, 1946-1951' in *Journal of Southeast Asian History* (1960/61), pp.56-88 and R.K. Vasil, *Politics in a Plural Society*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1971, pp.37-50.

[19] Interview with Raja Ayoub bin Raja Bot. This officer decided to retire under the Malayanization Scheme when UMNO won the 1955 elections.

[50] The introduction of the Member System is outlined in White Paper No. 49 of 1950 laid before the Legislative Council, Malaya (Federation) *Legislative Council Minutes and Council Papers of the Federal Legislative Council* (Third Session) Feb. 1950-Jan. 1951.

[51] Dato Mahmud claimed he never joined a political party (interview with him in November 1970) while Tunku Yaacob was a supporter of UMNO. Later in 1952, Dr. Ismail bin Abdul Rahman, an UMNO leader, was appointed Member for Lands, Mines and Communications. He was the first Malay to be appointed who was not a civil servant.

[52] Vasil, op.cit., p.50.

[53] Letter from H.H. Facer to F.D. Ascoli, convenor of the Malaya Committee in London dated 26 June 1951 contained in the files of the British Association of Malaya Historical Collection at the Royal Commonwealth Society Library, London.

[54] *Report of the Committee to examine the Question of Elections to the Federal Legislative Council* (The Watherston Committee), Kuala Lumpur, 1954, p.11.

[55] Ibid., p.10.

[56] The Pensions (Temporary Provisions) Ordinance of 1955 allowed civil servants to retire with full pension if they had attained the age of forty years, and had completed ten years' public service or if they had completed fifteen years' service. Both Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Razak, the first and second Prime Ministers of Malaysia, retired from public service in accordance with these provisions.

[57] The Pan-Malayan Islamic Party won the remaining seat. Forty-three candidates lost their deposits which are forfeited by candidates who fail to obtain more than one-eighth of the valid votes. *Report of the First Election of Members to the Legislative Council of the Federation of Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur, 1955, pp.30-1.

[58] R.O. Tilman, 'Policy Formulation, Policy Execution, and the Political Elite Structure of Contemporary Malaya' in *Malaysia*, edited by Wang Gungwu, London, Praeger, 1965, p.350.

IV Politics and Administration since Independence

By the time the first national elections were held in 1955, Malaya[1] had established the beginnings of a parliamentary democracy. The Constitution of the country provided for a civil service that was impartially selected on the basis of merit and was politically neutral. Civil servants who wished to continue to take an active part in politics could only do so by resigning or retiring from the civil service, and many of them did in fact become politicians. Thus there was a distinction made between politicians and civil servants who were expected to play different roles in the system.

This distinction was based on the ends-means dichotomy. Political executives were expected to be primarily concerned with the ends while civil servants were to be concerned primarily with the means for achieving those ends. Stated in another way, political executives were concerned with the formulation of policy while civil servants were concerned with the implementation of policy. It is true that this separation of politics and administration tended to become blurred at the highest levels of administration where civil servants were actively involved in policy-making. But there was a difference in the nature of the policies made by political executives and those made by civil servants. The political executive was in the unique position of making the final decision whether to accept or reject the policy recommendations of his civil servants and then to take the full responsibility for that policy. Thus the distinction between politics and administration is a relative one, a difference in emphasis and degree rather than a difference in kind.[2]

The political environment in which the higher civil servant operates makes it imperative that he be politically knowledgeable. Indeed, he cannot afford to ignore the political consequences of his actions.[3] As higher civil servants are to some extent involved in policy-making they inevitably have to consider political as well as other aspects that are relevant to the matter under consideration.

There are however differences in the kind of political considerations that civil servants should take into account. While considering the broad, overall political consequences of a proposed action they should not be concerned with the narrow aspects of party politics. They should serve loyally whichever political party forms the government by constitutional means while remaining aloof from inter-party or intra-party

struggles. In order to be able to gain the confidence of successive governments it is imperative that it does not identify itself closely with any political party.

However, several developing countries have found it necessary for their civil services to be more than passive implementers of policies. Civil servants are expected to be directly involved in making policies and in bringing about rapid changes in their society. As such they are not only inevitably involved in the policy-making process but are expected to be even more involved in it than before. The bureaucratic influence in policy-making is therefore expected to be even greater than in the past. How does this involvement affect civil servant-politician relations and the concept of political neutrality? This is the subject of discussion in this chapter.

CIVIL SERVANT-POLITICIAN RELATIONS

Recent writers on public administration have attacked the traditional dichotomy of politics and administration as a myth.[4] As pointed out by Sayre,

> The fact is that in all countries the bureaucracy is one of the most important factors in the making of governmental decisions; in some systems the bureaucrats are the leading actors, and in most systems their power as decision-makers would seem to be increasing. Our concern, then, is not with the formal, and now transparent myth, but with the question of the roles that bureaucrats do in fact have in the decision-making process.[5]

The involvement of civil servants in policy-making appears to be greater in developing countries than in other countries. Countries recently emerging from colonial rule often inherited civil services that have had a monopoly of policy-making power and only very slowly, and sometimes not without a struggle, have they been able to transfer this power to the political executive.[6] In some instances the political executive has been weak and inchoate in contrast to a highly organized and competent civil service so that by default or by delegation the civil service has retained a large part of its policy-making powers.

In Malaya the close family ties between political and civil service élites and the confidence that the political executive has in the civil service has resulted in a high degree of civil service influence in policy-making. Unlike the situation in India, the civil service in Malaya did not come into direct conflict with the nationalist movement over the struggle for Independence. Indeed, as shown in the last chapter, it was the civil service which spearheaded the Malay nationalist movement and which provided the first batch of political leaders. Thus, while in India the bureaucracy has often been criticized for its authoritarianism, lack of commitment and 'ivory tower' living,[7] the bureaucracy in Malaya has been praised for its dedication, hard work and loyalty.

Part of the reason for the close rapport between civil servants and the

political executive in Malaya was that unlike India, the civil service of Malaya was, right up to the time of Independence, very largely dominated by British officials. As shown in Chapter II the few Malay civil servants who entered the MCS were concentrated in subordinate posts where they were involved in routine district administration work rather than in making policies.[8] There was no power struggle between the emerging political leadership and the established civil service. In fact the civil service fought with the emerging political leadership against the colonial power, thus avoiding the pitfall of being identified with the colonial power. When Malaya achieved independence, power was transferred from the colonial bureaucracy to the indigenous political executive while the civil service was able to strengthen its own position as a result of rapid Malayanization.

The influence of the civil service in the decision-making process in Malaysia has been recognized by other writers. Milne, commenting on the influence of the Malayan bureaucracy, stated:

> The 'western' view of democracy is that the politicians who constitute the government have been chosen by the people and that the civil servants who have not been so chosen were really in a subordinate position. However, in some developing countries which claim to be generally democratic in the western sense this relationship may not hold. It may not always be obvious exactly who is a politician and who is a civil servant, and, insofar as it is discernible, it may not always be the 'politician' who is in control.[9]

And Scott, writing on the civil service, was of the opinion that:

> The resources of the bureaucracy are impressive whether measured by its expertise, its status, or its share of decision-making power. By and large, it has lost little of the resources or authority it exercised under the colonial regime. Competing elites have yet to dilute greatly its power. That is to say, its position as an educated, experienced ruling elite has not been seriously undermined in post-independence Malaysia. If civil servants see themselves as a paternal ruling group, they do not greatly desert reality.[10]

But although politician-civil servant relations have generally been cordial at the national level this has not been the case at the lower levels of government. At the state and district levels there has not been the same rapport and understanding between politicians and civil servants.

One of the reasons for the conflict between politicians and civil servants at lower levels of government may be due to the fact that at those levels the civil servant has to deal with politicians who are of a different calibre than the national leaders. Except for the Mentri Besar or Chief Minister the state assemblymen and backbenchers in Parliament are likely to be less well educated and have little understanding of the process of government. Those who are able and hard-working soon gravitate to Kuala Lumpur where there are opportunities to acquire more responsible political posts, leaving the older and less dynamic ones behind. Many of them tend to take a narrow party line and expect the civil service to use whatever influence it has to assist them in their quest for personal gain and political

power. Civil servants, on the other hand, do not take proper cognizance of the fact that while national leaders do not entirely depend on constituency support as they are well-known national figures, local politicians have to build their support on what immediate gains they can get for their constituencies. Civil servants do not appreciate the problems of local politicians and tend to prefer to deal directly with the national leaders with whom they have better rapport. Civil service perceptions and attitudes towards politicians in general are reflected in Table 4.1 which shows their responses to certain statements in a sample questionnaire sent out to about 1,500 civil servants.

TABLE 4.1
ATTITUDES OF CIVIL SERVANTS TOWARDS POLITICIANS
(in percentages)

Statement	*Strongly Agree*	*Agree*	*Dis-agree*	*Strongly Disagree*	*No Opinion*
Most politicians get what they want even though it is against existing policies and rules	23.1	51.7	15.2	0.8	9.2
In the long run the public interest would be effectively served if politicians left administrators alone to decide what programmes to carry out and how to carry them out	30.1	37.8	25.9	2.1	4.1
Generally speaking, politicians have a responsibility to their party and their supporters, while administrators have a higher responsibility to protect all elements of the society above political considerations	41.9	48.4	5.0	1.0	3.7

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

Malaysian civil servants tend to have adverse perceptions of politicians[11] whom they regard as corrupt, ignorant and parochial-minded. They seem to have a profound contempt for politicians as a class and for most of the ones they observe.[12] Studies of the Indian bureaucracy show a similar situation. Civil servants believe that politicians meddle and interfere with administrative matters and that without their meddling civil servants

would be able to achieve the epitome of rationality, justice and impartiality.[13]

Civil servants especially at district and state levels tend to experience greater political interference and harassment from politicians. Conflicts between politicians and federal civil servants are usually resolved by civil servants referring the matter up to national level. Where politicians belong to a political party which is a component of the ruling coalition, they are usually controlled through internal party discipline. Open conflicts between members of the ruling party and civil servants are thus avoided and disagreements are resolved quietly and discreetly. This does not mean that all decisions are made in favour of the politicians. In fact more often than not the national political executive tends to support the actions of the civil servants, thus strengthening their position *vis-à-vis* the local politicians.

Federal civil servants working at local levels have access to the national political executive through several channels. They visit Kuala Lumpur frequently on official business and to attend meetings, conferences and seminars. District officers channel their grievances through state development officers and state secretaries. The state development officers are federal officers who have direct access to senior civil servants in the Ministry of National and Rural Development. This Ministry was once headed by a powerful Minister who became Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Abdul Razak, and it was he who established a direct link with district officers through his rural development programme.[14] He visited the districts regularly and often used the occasion to try to solve problems of administration, especially problems arising from conflicts between civil servants and politicians.

In cases where civil servants are not federal officers but belong to the state civil services,[15] however, local politicians tend to exercise a greater degree of control over them. State civil servants do not have any redress to a higher authority and therefore tend to succumb to political pressures. It is in these states that one sees a highly politicized civil service.

POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT OF THE MALAYSIAN BUREAUCRACY

In the early part of this chapter reference was made to the need for civil servants to be politically sensitive to the environment in which they work. In a democracy, however, a distinction has to be drawn between this type of political involvement and political involvement in terms of outright bureaucratic usurpation of political power or indirect bureaucratic influence in political decisions, particularly in actions involving the support or rejection of any political party. The doctrine of political neutrality of the civil service is one of the basic tenets of the democratic system. It ensures public confidence in the freedom of the civil service from political bias, it gives ministers confidence in obtaining loyal service from civil servants irrespective of what political party is in

power, and results in high staff morale based on confidence that promotions and other rewards do not depend upon political origins or partisan activity but on merit alone.[16] It is therefore interesting to see whether the Malaysian bureaucracy has been able to maintain a politically neutral stand and if not to what extent has it become a politicized bureaucracy.

First of all, it is necessary to state the ingredients of a politicized bureaucracy. As mentioned earlier, this is a relative term, and thus we are concerned with the degree to which whatever ingredients we attribute to a politicized bureaucracy exist in a particular situation. A politicized bureaucracy has been defined as

> . . . one which is involved or influences or is influenced to any degree, consciously or unconsciously, by overt or by implicit actions in the stream of the politics of the day whether of the party in power or of the party/parties in opposition. Such an involvement may mean the bureaucratic promotion of special interests of the political party at the expense of national objectives. In a more extended form it may also be regarded as a type of bureaucracy which uses political parties in furtherance of their collective or individual objectives or which is used by political parties in the achievement of party objectives. It is thus an entirely different phenomenon than the one that might be acceptable to those who somehow still retain their faith in the existence of an 'impartial' and 'neutral' functioning of bureaucracy.[17]

Jain suggested four variables that may be used to measure the involvement of a bureaucracy in politics:

(a) the degree of influence that the bureaucracy exercises in the decision-making process and the nature of the relationship between the political and the permanent wings of the executive and the extent of their interaction;

(b) the degree of the involvement of bureaucracy in politics and party activities;

(c) the extent of political and party interference in the work of the bureaucracy; and

(d) the popular image of the public service.

What follows is an analysis of these variables in the context of the Malaysian bureaucracy.

BUREAUCRATIC INFLUENCE IN DECISION-MAKING

As mentioned earlier, bureaucratic influence in the decision-making process is considerable. The bureaucracy shares considerable power with the political leadership and together they form the élite of the country. This does not mean, however, that the bureaucracy has usurped political power from the political leaders. At the national level the political leaders are very much in control, and the Alliance Party has established itself firmly as the ruling party.

Unlike other coalition governments which have tended to be relatively weak and inchoate,[18] the Alliance government has gained in political strength since it came into power in 1955. Not only has it successfully won all the subsequent elections but, perhaps even more important, has

absorbed some of its opposition. The enlarged coalition is a 'grand alliance' of the older parties plus several opposition parties to form the Barisan Nasional.[19] Thus the bureaucracy, although enjoying considerable power, is still under the control of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. In this respect Malaysia is not an administrative state as Esman describes it.[20]

Yet, as pointed out by Tilman, neither can the bureaucracy be considered 'perfectly neutral in the sense of being a lifeless instrument, silently carrying out the directives of the elected representatives of the Malayan people'.[21] The bureaucracy is closely linked with the present political leadership through family and other ties. Tilman points out that:

> Statistics suggest that most of the political, bureaucratic, royal and perhaps military elite have come through approximately the same process of political socialization; they all speak the same political language (in form as well as in meaning); they have all accepted the same political game; they are all willing to abide by roughly the same rules of the game. There are of course dissenters, but these are presently outside, not inside, the government. Recruitment procedures at the present time assure the continuance of a bureaucracy drawn from this socialization process, and political realities seem to indicate that the general character of the political, military, and royal elite is not likely to change in the foreseeable future. Thus it is only within this general elite consensus that one can speak of the neutrality of Malayan bureaucracy.[22]

Higher civil servants and political leaders at the federal level have close rapport and trust in each other. This has given the bureaucracy its greatest strength. Its power is a 'derived' power[23]—that is, derived from the confidence and support given to it by the political leaders.

BUREAUCRATIC INVOLVEMENT IN PARTY ACTIVITIES

Higher civil servants are prohibited from taking an active part in political activities. The General Orders which civil servants are required to follow prevent them from making public speeches, writing letters to the press, publishing books or articles, giving views on political matters or taking part in political campaigns during elections.[24] However, following the recommendations of the British Report on the Political Activities of Civil Servants, 1949, civil servants were grouped into two—Group A comprising mostly civil servants in the Management and Professional class who may not take part in politics and Group B comprising mainly lower level civil servants performing routine technical and clerical duties who may be given permission to actively participate in politics.[25]

Thus the regulations are quite clear. Higher civil servants should refrain from active participation in politics. It is however extremely difficult for higher civil servants who are involved in policy-making to stay away from party politics. Political views and ideologies are closely linked with the views and ideologies of various political parties existing in the country. In countries where there exists a wide range of political views and ideologies and where changes in the party in power may result

in a change in the political system itself, it is extremely difficult for civil servants to be involved in politics without becoming embroiled in party politics. It is possible for civil servants to stay away from the intrigues of party politics only in situations where there is political stability and a general agreement by all political parties on fundamental political values and the kind of political system that is best for the country. In such a situation it may be possible for civil servants to undertake policy-making in line with this basic political framework which is generally acceptable to the majority of people in the country, while leaving the various political parties alone to fight over the marginal differences.

This situation exists in Britain and therefore allows for a politically neutral civil service. There was some doubt when the Labour Party took over office in 1945 whether the civil servants would be loyal to a socialist government, but, as Attlee himself acknowledged, 'all doubts disappeared with experience'.[26] Since then, differences between the Labour Party and the Conservative Party have been differences in degree rather than in kind.[27]

This situation, however, does not exist in developing countries. Political parties disagree on such basic matters as the kind of political system that is best for the country. It has therefore been difficult if not impossible for the civil service to maintain a neutral stand. One writer, when comparing the neutrality of the civil service in Britain and India, made the following comment:

> British genius was given all credit for combining the virtues of neutral permanent civil service with the democratic philosophy of competition and alternation of political parties. It was forgotten that neutral, value-free bureaucracy was possible in a society where consensus existed on values; but in transitional societies, where situations of dissent and conflict existed, it was too much to expect anyone to be neutral . . . can bureaucracy serve all sorts of parties, whose one point of spectrum is the CPI (M) and the other Swatantra? Can bureaucracy be neutral while serving secular parties and non-secular parties? Further, what is possible in one society, may not be universally possible. Hence examples of British practices in this sphere are irrelevant because the social situation in Britain is absolutely different from that in India.[28]

The different social situations existing in the developing countries and the politically involved style of administration make it almost impossible for the bureaucracy to maintain a neutral stand. Even matters which may seem to be routine or purely administrative in nature tend to have political implications that make them critical issues. As Colin Leys put it, 'every act of government is a political issue, from the greatest to the smallest'.[29] Perhaps it was because of the difficulties of trying to establish a neutral bureaucracy in Tanzania that Julius Nyerere was prompted to reject the doctrine as being a luxury his country could not afford.[30]

In Malaysia there is also a politically involved style of administration. The plural nature of its society and the fears of domination of one ethnic group over another tend to add political dimensions to what in other countries would be considered as straightforward routine decisions.

But unlike Tanzania, Malaysian leaders have continued to uphold the doctrine of political neutrality. This is because while giving lip-service to the doctrine, the government has been able to obtain a civil service that is loyal and fully committed to its policies. It has thus been able to create a highly politicized bureaucracy while at the same time extolling the virtues of a neutral one.

POLITICAL INTERFERENCE IN THE BUREAUCRACY

At the national level political interference in the bureaucracy is minimal. Certainly there is little evidence of political interference in the recruitment process. The Public Services Commission has maintained its independence from political pressures.[31] With regard to promotions, there is some evidence that certain senior posts require the prior permission of the political executive.[32] But this 'political acceptability' clause applies to very few appointments. Promotions appear to be generally decided on the basis of seniority and on merit.[33] However, subjective criteria are used for measuring merit, such as the superior officer's confidential report and the 'kind words' that are said about individual civil servants by political leaders. It is interesting to note that despite a general satisfaction with the system of promotions, nearly 60 per cent of the respondents in the sample agreed (including 12 per cent strongly) with the statement, 'It is not enough to be efficient: you must also have political backing to get what you deserve'.

On the whole, however, there has been little political interference in the internal civil service system. Through the creation of numerous ministries and semi-government bodies the ruling party has been able to reward its supporters without tampering with the civil service system. In addition, there has been no attempt to infiltrate the civil service with political cadres. The quota system used in the recruitment of persons into the MCS ensures that the MCS will always be dominated by Malays which is at present what the pro-Malay government wants. The special assistance given to Malays to assist them to gain a university education has, at least up to now, secured a Malay bureaucracy that is loyal to the government, and it has thus reduced the need for political interference in order to obtain a loyal civil service.

Civil service loyalty to the political party in power is of paramount importance in determining political-civil service relations. Civil servants themselves realize the need to show their loyalty. More than 67 per cent of the respondents agreed with the statement, 'The politician requires loyalty from the government servant even more than he needs his skills'. But whereas the politician requires complete and undivided loyalty, the neutral civil servant is expected to distinguish between the government of the day and the party in power and maintain a reserve towards the latter. The Malaysian civil service, however, has tended to ignore this distinction and has identified itself closely with the ruling party, secure in the realization that there is little chance of another party taking over power in the foreseeable future.

THE IMAGE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Malaysia's bureaucracy has often been praised by foreign visitors and local leaders for its high level of integrity and competence. Compared with the surrounding countries the civil service is relatively free from political influence and corruption.

Less is said however about its ability to remain neutral. Perhaps it is not even expected that it be neutral as the political situation is such that it is unlikely that there will be changes in political power in the foreseeable future. The ability of the ruling coalition party to absorb its opposition[34] has resulted in its becoming more of a national movement than a political party. There may be shifts in power within the coalition but it is likely that the coalition will continue to rule for some time. The neutrality of the civil service is thus not a burning issue in Malaysia.

As regards bureaucratic impartiality, this too is not openly challenged, for the simple reason that civil servants are not expected to be completely impartial. The policies and programmes of the government are distinctly partial towards Malays and this has been accepted by the majority of people who voted in favour of the Barisan Nasional. Thus the civil servants, in implementing these policies, are not expected to be strictly impartial but to consider the special position of the Malays as is also provided in the Constitution of Malaysia. Thus emphasis is placed more on the ability of the civil service to achieve the targets of the government's pro-Malay policies[35] than on its ability to implement the laws impartially and fairly.

The requirements of the country therefore call for a civil service that is competent and committed to the policy objectives of the government. If it is possible to achieve these objectives while preserving the framework of a democracy and a politically neutral civil service, well and good. But it is clear that should there be signs that this is not possible, the democratic framework will be pushed aside in favour of a more authoritarian system and a more politicized bureaucracy.

Like other countries that changed their status from a colonial territory to an independent country with a democratic form of government, democracy and democratic values in Malaysia are expressed as an ideal rather than fully understood and experienced. What is perhaps even more fully understood and experienced by some is the danger of inter-ethnic violence. The inter-ethnic riots which occurred in Kuala Lumpur after the national elections of 1969 is a grim reminder to everyone of the terrible consequences of inter-ethnic conflict. As such it is likely that if the democratic system is able to contain inter-ethnic conflict and achieve national unity and political stability, it will be allowed to exist. But should the democratic system prove inadequate to preserve national unity and stability, there will be little hesitation in introducing a more authoritarian form of government.[36]

The belief in a more authoritarian form of government as a means of achieving political stability is reflected in Scott's study of the Malaysian bureaucracy.[37] In his study he showed that democratic values 'evaporate

TABLE 4.2
RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS ON DEMOCRACY
(in percentages)

Statement	*Agreed*	*Disagreed*	*No Opinion*	*No Response*
Democracy is a western concept and cannot work in non-western cultures	16.3	78.7	3.9	1.1
The trouble with democracy is that we spend too much time and money arguing and too little time for the work that must be done	63.5	30.3	5.6	0.6
A strong leader would make this country better than all the laws and talk	55.9	38.2	5.4	0.5
In dealing with dangerous enemies of the nation, we cannot afford to depend on the courts, laws and other slow and unreliable methods	58.1	34.3	6.6	1.0

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

quickly when adherence to them might threaten even more important values'.[38] This attitude is also reflected in this study. Responses of civil servants to certain statements on democracy are shown in Table 4.2.

On the whole civil servants accept the democratic system and are prepared to uphold it provided there is no threat to peace and order. But if there is a threat to internal security it becomes essential to resort to a strong leader who can act firmly and swiftly in a crisis.

So, too, it appears that both civil servants and politicians have accepted the doctrine of political neutrality because, so far at least, it has been possible for political executives to obtain loyal and dedicated civil servants who seem to be prepared to give full support to the party in power. The test will come when another political party takes over the government. Will the civil service be trusted by the new government? And will the civil service be able to give the same loyalty and commitment to the new government as it has given to the old? These are some of the questions for which there are no definite answers. There has not been

any change in government since Independence and there is not likely to be any change in the near future. Thus, for the time being at least, the neutrality of the Malaysian civil service will remain an open question.

[1] Malaya changed its name to Malaysia in 1963 when it expanded its federation to include the Borneo states of Sarawak and Sabah. In this study, 'Malaysia' refers to West Malaysia, that is, that part of Malaysia which originally was called the Federation of Malaya.

[2] The classic distinction between politics and administration is to be found in Woodrow Wilson, 'The Study of Administration', *Political Science Quarterly*, 1887, Vol. 2, pp.197-222.

[3] K. C. Wheare, *The Civil Service in the Constitution*, London, Athlone Press, 1954, pp.26-8.

[4] See especially the works of Wallace S. Sayre, Francis Rourke and Fred Riggs.

[5] Wallace S. Sayre, 'Bureaucracies: Some Contrasts in Systems' in *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1964), p.224.

[6] One writer pointed out that it is important to bear in mind the fusion of political and administrative functions during the colonial period when considering the tendency of contemporary African systems to have highly political administrations. 'For this trend should be viewed less as a departure from the metropolitan model than as a return to a familiar system', Fred Burke, 'Public Administration in Africa: the Legacy of the Inherited Colonial Institutions', *Journal of Comparative Administration*, Vol. 1 (November 1969), p.346.

[7] One of the most outspoken critics of the Indian bureaucracy was Jawaharlal Nehru. Soon after becoming the Prime Minister he criticized the civil servants as being 'fossilised in their mental outlook. They were wedded to bygone and obsolete methods and refused to move with the times.' *The Indian Annual Register*, July-Dec. 1946, Vol. II, Calcutta, pp.289-90. More recently, his daughter, Indira Gandhi, criticized the Indian bureaucracy as being 'orthodox and conservative' and 'unable to meet the requirements of social and economic changes along socialist lines'. Speech at the meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party on 16 November, 1969, The *Hindustan Times*, 17 November 1969, p.5.

[8] Before the Second World War only 10 per cent of the MCS was filled by Malay officers. During the transitional phase—1946 to 1956—serious attempts were made to recruit more Malays into the MCS through promotions from the MAS. In 1951 non-Malays were also recruited on a restricted basis. At the time of Independence 63 per cent of the MCS was still filled by British officers. See R. O. Tilman, *Bureaucratic Transition in Malaya*, Durham, N. Carolina, Duke University Press, 1964, p.73.

[9] R. S. Milne, *Government and Politics in Malaysia*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1967, p.157.

[10] James C. Scott, *Political Ideology in Malaysia*, Yale University Press, 1968, pp.229-30.

[11] The word 'politician' tends to have a derogatory meaning but was chosen in preference to words like 'political leader' or 'political executive' which is generally used to refer to politicians who are ministers or who hold executive appointments.

[12] M. J. Esman, *Administration and Development in Malaysia*, Cornell University Press, 1972, p.125.

[13] Kuldeep Mathur, *Bureaucratic Response to Development*, New Delhi, National Publishing House, 1972, pp.41-2.

[14] For a full account of Tun Abdul Razak's early period as Minister of National & Rural Development see G. Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development in Malaysia*, University of California Press, 1967.

[15] Not all the states in Peninsular Malaysia have state civil services. Those states which were formerly part of the Federated Malay States (Selangor, Pahang, Perak and Negri Sembilan) do not have their own state civil services and are fully serviced from federal MCS officers. The other states use both MCS officers and state-appointed officers.

[16] S. Lall, 'Civil Service Neutrality', *The Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. IV,

No. 1, January-March, 1958, pp.4-5. See also *Report of the Committee on the Political Activities of Civil Servants*, Cmd 7718, HMSO, London, 1949.

[17] R. B. Jain' 'Politicization of Bureaucracy: a Framework for Comparative Measurement', *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XX, No. 4, October-December, 1974, pp.796-7.

[18] Compare, for example, the lack of effective leadership in Ceylon after independence and its effect on the bureaucracy in Wisma Warnapala, *Civil Service Administration in Ceylon*, Department of Cultural Affairs, Sri Lanka, 1974.

[19] The biggest victory of the ruling party was in its success in absorbing the largest Malay opposition party, the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party, in 1973. This party however broke away from the Barisan Nasional in 1977.

[20] Esman, op.cit., p.62.

[21] R. O. Tilman, 'Bureaucratic Development in Malaya', in R. Braibanti & others, *Asian Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from the British Imperial Tradition*, Duke University Press, Durham NC, 1966, p.603.

[22] Loc.cit.

[23] 'Bureaucracy has, therefore, no autonomous power of its own; it has a monopoly of power only in the sense in which this monopoly is derived from the power of the ruling class.' Reinhard Bendix, 'Bureaucracy and the Problem of Power', in Robert K. Merton & others *Reader in Bureaucracy*, New York, The Free Press, 1952, p.127.

[24] Public Officers (Conduct & Discipline) (General Orders, Chap. 'D') Regulations, 1969, Section 20.

[25] Service Circular No. 11 of 1971 'Participation of Government Officers in Politics' and Service Circular No. 30 of 1974 'Active Participation of Government Officers in Politics'.

[26] C. R. Attlee, 'Civil Servants, Ministers, Parliament and the Public', *Political Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 4, October-December 1974, p.308.

[27] Lall, op.cit., p.2.

[28] C. P. Bhambhri, 'Some Aspects of Indian Bureaucracy', Paper presented at the International Seminar on Imperialism, Independence and Social Transformation in the Contemporary World, 24-29 March 1972, New Delhi, pp.14-15.

[29] Colin Leys, *Politicians and Policies: an Essay on Politics in Acholi, Uganda, 1962-65*, Nairobi, 1967, p.46.

[30] Quoted in the *London Observer*, 'How much power for a leader', 3 June 1962.

[31] It is true that the Special Branch files are checked before appointments are made but this is done to ensure that active opponents of the system are excluded rather than to ensure that members of a particular political party get in.

[32] For example, the Chief Minister's or Mentri Besar's assent is required before the State Secretary is appointed.

[33] Promotions and related matters are discussed in Chapter VIII.

[34] Since 1969 it has absorbed the following opposition parties in Peninsular Malaysia—Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia, People's Progressive Party and Pan-Malayan Islamic Party.

[35] The ability of the civil service to achieve the targets of the New Economic Policy is discussed in Chapter IX.

[36] The government suspended the Constitution when the riots occurred in 1969 but the country returned to a democratic form in 1971. The government however warned the people that it would not hesitate to take strong action against those who arouse racial animosity. By amending the Constitution it became unlawful for members of the public to discuss certain issues considered to be 'racially sensitive'.

[37] James C. Scott, *Political Ideology in Malaysia*, Yale University Press, 1968.

[38] Ibid., pp.182-3.

V Ethnic Representation in the Malaysian Bureaucracy

ETHNIC representation in the civil service has been a major political issue since colonial times. The colonial government recruited British officers for the higher echelons of the civil service but needed a large number of local personnel to fill the subordinate posts in the bureaucracy. The English-educated Chinese and Indians benefited most in terms of employment opportunities both in the public and private sectors. The economic advantage of an English education is described in the following quotation:

> One of the strongest appeals for an English education was the fact that it opened the way to a better life and a higher standard of living. There were three main avenues of employment open to the English educated—government, private commercial, and own employment. The field was limited in government service to the general clerical service, by far the largest unit, junior technical jobs to run the public utilities, teaching and medicine. It was well understood that the upper echelons of government service was closed to the local population. In private commerce, the most prestigious position to which a few men attained was that of bank compradore; otherwise you had reached the height of your career if you were a chief cashier, chief salesman, or chief clerk. Underlying all this was the prestige attached to white collar jobs.[1]

The Malay community however was not in a position to take advantage of the English school system. Malays were concentrated primarily in the rural areas where government policy was to provide them with a primary education only and that in the Malay medium. However, because of the special relationship between the colonial government and the Malay traditional leadership resulting in the introduction of the system of indirect rule, it was felt that some Malays should receive special training to fit them for minor administrative posts. To this end, the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar was established and the Malay Administrative Service created. Although attempts were made during the economic recession of the 1920s to economize in the administration of the country by recruiting Malay officers to staff the subordinate administrative posts, the higher echelons of the civil service remained essentially British in composition until the 1950s when the 'Malayanization Scheme' was introduced to replace expatriate officers with locally recruited officers.[2] By 1962 the ethnic composition of the

TABLE 5.1

ETHNIC REPRESENTATION IN THE SENIOR BUREAUCRACY, 1950-1962

Ethnic Group	*1950*		*1957*		*1962*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Expatriates	1,763	92.4	1,687	61.1	409	14.1
Malays	86	4.5	390	14.1	850	29.3
Chinese	22	1.2	366	13.2	987	34.0
Indians and others	37	1.9	318	11.6	656	22.6
Total	1,908	100.0	2,761	100.0	2,902	100.0

Source: 1950 figures obtained from information in the Civil Service Staff List, 1950. 1957 and 1962 figures from Tilman, *Bureaucratic Transition in Malaya*, p.70.

senior civil service became essentially Malaysian in composition, as seen in Table 5.1.

In its efforts to bring about rapid Malayanization of the public service the government did not give much thought to the distribution of the various local communities in the senior bureaucracy. The administrative and semi-professional posts were easily filled by Malay officers promoted from the Malay Administrative Service, State Civil Services or the clerical services. Where there were insufficient numbers of qualified Malay personnel for the professional and technical services, Chinese and Indians were recruited. Thus there was an ethnic separation according to function in the higher civil service.

The administrative branch of the civil service continued to be closed to Chinese and Indians until 1952. By this time, it was clear that non-Malay professional and technical personnel were replacing expatriate officers in greater numbers. It was felt however that the MCS could not remain the preserve of Malays only, especially as the country was advancing towards independence and many non-Malays had accepted Malaya as their country and had become citizens. The outbreak of the communist insurgency also made it necessary for the government to distinguish between those Chinese whose loyalty to Malaysia was unquestioned and those whose loyalty was in doubt. General Templer, the British High Commissioner at this time, therefore introduced a quota system in the recruitment of non-Malays into the MCS so as to ensure that the MCS would continue to be predominantly Malay but with some non-Malay representation. The quota system was justified on the grounds that

> . . . the special position of the Malays should be retained in the Civil Service and improved in the whole economic field. To this end certain safeguards are necessary. This is at once evident from the fact that in the First Division of

the other branches of the public service, excluding Police, which other branches have, as I have said, long been open to Asians of all races, there are today 235 non-Malay Asians as compared with only 91 Malays. I therefore propose that, as one of the safeguards, the number of non-Malay Federal citizens who are admitted into the Malayan Civil Service shall be limited to one for every four Malays admitted into that service in the future.[3]

The quota system restricting the entry of non-Malays into the MCS guaranteed that at least 80 per cent of the service would be filled by Malays. As Malayanization took place, British dominance in the MCS was rapidly replaced by Malay dominance as seen in Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2

ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE MCS, 1950-1970

Ethnic Group	*1950*	*1957*	*1963*	*1970*
Malays	31	124	250	603
Non-Malays	–	13	31	93
British	114	221	9	–
Total	145	358	290	696
% of Malays to the total	21.4	34.6	86.2	86.6

Source: Figures calculated from the Federation of Malaya Staff Lists.

The special privileges given to Malays in employment in the public service has been the subject of heated political debate. One of UMNO's earliest tasks was to ensure that this privilege continued and was fully implemented. For example, General Orders clearly stated that: 'It is the policy of Government to give qualified Malays preference over other applicants for employment. Should there be no satisfactory Malay candidate, selection should be made from Malaya-born candidates of other races.'[4]

This matter was taken up by UMNO in 1948 when the Secretary-General wrote to the colonial government requesting clarification regarding the interpretation of this clause. According to him the policy of selecting personnel entirely on merit was unfair as this gave the urban non-Malay an advantage over the Malay. Therefore selection should be based on the minimum qualification for entry and not on the maximum qualification possessed by the candidates. In his letter he stressed that:

> . . . the correct interpretation is that where a qualified Malay can be found to fill a certain post, he has a better claim to it than anyone else however high that other's qualification may be. In other words, if a post requires to be filled by an applicant possessing a certain standard of qualification and a Malay pos-

sessing that standard of qualification is found, he is to be given preference over others even though these others possess higher qualifications than himself.[5]

Even with the quota system which ensures Malay predominance in selected services,[6] there is Malay under-representation in the higher civil service. This is seen in Table 5.3.

TABLE 5.3

ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE HIGHER CIVIL SERVICE (DIVISION I POSTS), 1970

Ethnic Group	*Ethnic Composition of Population*[a]		*Ethnic Composition of Higher Civil Service*[b]		*Differential*
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	
Malays	4,685,838	53.2	1,863	39.3	−13.9
Chinese	3,122,350	35.4	1,636	34.5	− 0.9
Indians	932,629	10.6	961	20.3	+ 9.7
Others	69,531	0.8	284	5.9	+ 5.1
Total	8,810,348	100.0	4,744	100.0	

Source: (a) Population figures taken from 1970 *Population and Housing Census of Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, p.31.
(b) Civil Service figures compiled from 1970 Staff Lists.

The difficulties of recruiting adequately qualified Malays for posts in the professional and technical services have resulted in a lop-sided higher civil service with a concentration of Malays in the administrative and semi-professional services and a concentration of non-Malays in the professional and technical services. This is shown in Table 5.4.

TABLE 5.4

ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF SELECTED SERVICES IN THE FEDERAL HIGHER CIVIL SERVICE, 1968
(in percentages)

Ethnic Group	*MCS*	*Public Works*	*Medical*	*Education*
Malays	86.7	16.4	10.1	32.2
Chinese	6.4	63.8	40.7	40.3
Indians	6.4	18.7	44.6	24.0
Others	0.5	1.1	4.6	3.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: M. Esman, *Administration and Development in Malaysia*, Cornell University Press, 1974, pp.76-7.

Despite the government's efforts to recruit more Malays into the professional and technical services, the shortage of Malay qualified personnel has resulted in more non-Malays than Malays being employed. To offset this, the government is employing more Malays in the middle and lower echelons of the civil service where it is possible to obtain Malays in sufficient numbers. For example, during the period 1969-72, out of a total of 26,266 new recruits into the federal public service, 20,878 were Malays and 5,388 were non-Malays. But in the managerial and professional level, 58 per cent of those recruited were non-Malays. This is shown in Table 5.5.

TABLE 5.5
ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF NEW RECRUITS INTO THE FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE, 1969-1972

Grade	*Malays*		*Non-Malays*		*Total*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Managerial & Professional	1,228	41.7	1,718	58.3	2,946	100
Executive	1,602	62.2	973	37.8	2,575	100
Technical & Clerical	18,048	87.0	2,697	13.0	20,745	100
Total	20,878	79.5	5,388	20.5	26,266	

Source: Figures extracted from Prime Minister's speech in Dewan Rakyat, 25 April 1973.

Taking the federal civil service as a whole there is an over-representation of Malays. This is shown in Table 5.6.

TABLE 5.6
ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE, 1969 AND 1972

Ethnic Group	*1969*		*1972*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Malays	36,618	60.8	45,617	65.7
Chinese	12,181	20.2	12,504	18.0
Indians	10,499	17.4	10,409	15.0
Others	986	1.6	932	1.3
Total	60,284	100.0	69,462	100.0

Source: Figures calculated from staff lists of the Federal Civil Service.

The number of Malays in the federal public service has increased by about 24.6 per cent during the period 1969 to 1972. During this period the number of Chinese increased by 2.7 per cent while the number of Indians and others decreased. If the state civil services are also included, it is expected that the Malay proportion will become even higher as, except for Penang and Malacca, the state civil services are predominantly Malay in composition as seen in Table 5.7.

TABLE 5.7

ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE FEDERAL AND STATE PUBLIC SERVICES (DIVISIONS I, II AND III), 1969

Ethnic Group	*Ethnic Composition Federal Services*		*Ethnic Composition State Services*		*Ethnic Composition of Federal and State Services*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Malays	36,618	60.7	12,328	79.1	48,946	64.5
Chinese	12,181	20.2	1,744	11.2	13,925	18.4
Indians	10,499	17.4	1,394	8.9	11,893	15.7
Others	986	1.6	125	0.8	1,111	1.5
Total	60,284	100.0	15,591	100.0	75,875	100.0

Source: Figures calculated from staff lists of the Federal Civil Service and State Civil Service.

The predominance of Malays in the bureaucracy has been the source of much friction between Malay and non-Malay political leaders and has even been officially cited as one of the major causes of the 1969 race riots in Kuala Lumpur.[7] The Democratic Action Party attacked the quota system bitterly and accused the government of carrying out a *Malayisation* policy rather than a *Malayanisation* policy.[8] The government in turn accused the DAP and other opposition parties of blatantly inciting racial feelings by making allegations that Malays were given privileges in government jobs to the exclusion of non-Malays. The government claimed that these allegations were not only untrue but a deliberate distortion of the facts. Thus,

> The Malays who already felt excluded in the country's economic life now began to feel a threat to their place in the public services. No mention was ever made by non-Malay politicians of the almost closed-door attitude to the Malays by non-Malays in large sections of the private sector in this country.[9]

It is interesting to see that government documents on the subject of ethnic representation in the civil service tend to concentrate on the higher civil service alone which shows that only 38.5 per cent of Division I posts are held by Malay officers. Particular emphasis is usually placed

on the professional and technical services where there are fewer Malays in employment.[10] On the other hand, non-Malay politicians tend to look at the racial composition of the civil service as a whole or at the MCS in particular which shows a larger proportion of Malays than is reflected in the racial composition of the country. For example in 1973, Dr. Tan Chee Khoon, a member of the Opposition, made a special plea for a place under the Malaysian sun for all Malaysians 'and that includes the non-bumiputras as well'. Claiming that recruitment into the government service for the years 1969–1972 is 'overwhelmingly bumiputra', he warned that

> If the present trend continues—and there are no indications to the contrary—the non-bumiputra's share of the Federal Services will continue to decline rapidly, so that in probably less than a decade the Federal Services will, to all intents and purposes, be staffed by bumiputras, thus increasing, not diminishing the identification of certain types of employment with race. This in itself is one of the tenets of the New Economic Policy, i.e. the identification of trade by race.[11]

Dr. Tan therefore appealed to the government to provide opportunities for non-Malays to enter the Federal civil service at the lower rungs to reflect the racial composition of the country while at the same time to take steps to redress the imbalance that exists at the top:

> The test of sincerity in these matters is to demonstrate a balanced symmetrical and progressive elimination of inequities and imbalances. As the number of the skilled professional Malays are recruited into the higher Divisions of the Civil Service increase, *pari passu* the numbers of non-Malays in the lower rungs must be increased.[12]

The introduction of a quota system to ensure that a particular group in the society gets adequate representation in the civil service is not unique to Malaysia. In India, for example, a quota system has been adopted to ensure that the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are recruited into the various Central Services. The number of posts reserved for them 'may not exceed $12\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the vacancies for the Scheduled Castes and 5% for the Scheduled Tribes'.[13] What is unique to Malaysia, however, is that the quota system assists not a minority group in the society but the largest single group in the country which also happens to be the most economically backward. What is perhaps more important is that the quota system ensures, not just adequate representation of this group, but the dominance of this group in the services in which the quota system is applicable. The 4:1 ratio in the MCS, for example, ensures that four Malays will be recruited for every one non-Malay, thus ensuring that at least 80 per cent of the service will be filled by Malays, far above their proportion in the total population.

While it is certainly true that the quota system 'seems to have been responsible for preventing the ethnic composition of the civil service from getting too far out of line with the population composition',[14]

it has achieved this at the expense of a distorted ethnic composition in some services.

Of all the services in which a quota system operates the service which has attracted most political attention is the MCS. The special role of the MCS as the bureaucratic élite of the country has already been discussed. As bureaucratic power is not equally shared among all the higher civil servants but concentrated in the MCS, the representativeness of the MCS has been a major political issue.

Non-Malay resentment of the quota system is based on the fact that it gives privileges to some citizens and denies these privileges to others. It is therefore considered by some to be unconstitutional and against the principles of the United Nations Charter on Human Rights which recognizes equal treatment for all citizens irrespective of race, colour or religion. Those against the quota system claim that the system allows for selection on the basis of ascriptive factors rather than on a more objective selection based on qualifications and experience, thus depriving the country of the services of its ablest citizens and lowering standards of administrative efficiency. As regards the first criticism, the Malay answer is that the quota system is a necessary short-term measure to achieve adequate Malay representation, while at the same time efforts are being made to increase the numbers of Malays in institutions of higher learning, particularly in the science fields, so that there would eventually be an adequate supply of Malays in the professional and technical services. When Malay under-representation in these services is corrected it will then be possible to increase the numbers of non-Malays in the MCS. As regards the second criticism that the quota system results in a lowering of standards, the Malay answer is that while it is generally true that the educational standards of Malay officers in the higher civil service are lower than those of the non-Malays, this is not because of the quota system. The main reason for this is to be found in the legacy of the colonial administration which concentrated on providing general education for Malays so that they tend to fill positions

TABLE 5.8

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF HIGHER CIVIL SERVANTS BY ETHNIC ORIGIN, 1973

(in percentages)

Educational Level	*Malays*	*Non-Malays*
University degree	36.8	51.1
Diploma/certificate	22.0	28.3
Secondary education	41.2	20.7
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

in administrative and semi-professional departments such as Customs, Postal and Immigration Departments where university degrees have not been regarded as essential in the past.

The educational level of higher civil servants by ethnic origin is shown in Table 5.8.

The educational level of MCS officers by ethnic origin shows a similar pattern. As shown in Table 5.9 only 7 per cent of the non-Malay officers have qualifications that are lower than an honours degree as compared with 36 per cent of the Malay officers.

TABLE 5.9

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF MCS OFFICERS BY ETHNIC ORIGIN, 1971
(in percentages)

Highest Educational Level	*Malays*	*Non-Malays*
Honours degree and above (Ph.D, M.A., etc.)	63.7	92.8
General degree or equivalent	13.2	4.8
Diploma/Certificate, Secondary School level	23.1	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Compiled from *Senarai Pegawai-pegawai Perkhidmatan Dalam dan Luar Negeri Malaysia, 1971* (List of Officers in the Malaysian Home and Foreign Service, 1971). The figures here relate only to the Home Service (the MCS proper).

The differences in qualifications between Malay and non-Malay officers in the MCS are, however, not likely to remain. As shown in Table 5.10, the major source of recruitment has changed from the

TABLE 5.10

MALAYS IN THE MCS, BY SOURCE OF RECRUITMENT, 1950-1970

Source of Recruitment	*1950*	*1957*	*1963*	*1970*
Indirect Recruitment				
Through the MAS*	29	82	136	193
Through state civil services and other subordinate services	–	29	42	71
Direct Recruitment				
University graduates	2	13	72	339
Total Malays in the MCS	31	124	250	603
% of University graduates	6.5	10.5	28.8	56.2

Source: Compiled from information in the Staff Lists for the relevant years.
*Includes a small number who obtained degrees after joining the MAS.

MAS to the universities. In the last few years recruitment into the MCS has been entirely from honours degree holders.[15]

A more detailed breakdown of honours degree holders is given in Table 5.11. While it is true that there are proportionately more non-Malay officers with better honours degrees than Malays, the majority in both groups have similar qualifications.

TABLE 5.11

DETAILS OF CLASS OF HONOURS OF MCS OFFICERS, 1971
(in percentages)

Class of Honours	*Malays*	*Non-Malays*	*Total*
First class	–	3.8	0.6
Second class (upper)	10.7	25.6	13.2
Second class (lower)	71.0	60.3	69.2
Third class	6.8	3.8	6.3
Class of honours unknown[a]	11.5	6.5	10.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Compiled from University of Malaya/Singapore *Calendars* for the various years.

[a] Mainly those with foreign degrees.

Furthermore, there are more Malays than non-Malays with post-graduate degrees such as Masters degrees and Ph.D.s. There appears to be little evidence to substantiate Tilman's claim that '. . . the very nature of the quota system in the MCS has meant that, other things being equal, the average non-Malay in the MCS will be four times better qualified to fill his post than the average Malay'.[16]

The rationale for the quota system is that the Malay community has not had the same educational opportunities in the past as the other communities and has not been able to enter the higher civil service in the numbers necessary to reflect their proportion in the population. Even with the quota system the Malay proportion in the higher civil service is only 39 per cent as compared with their proportion of 53 per cent in the population. There seems to be little difficulty in obtaining an adequate number of qualified Malays for the administrative and semi-professional services. Problems arise when trying to recruit Malays for the professional and technical services as there is a very short supply of qualified Malays in these fields. It is therefore assumed that the quota system is used to ensure some Malay representation in the higher civil service as a whole until the numbers of qualified Malays in the professional and technical fields increase. When there is adequate representation of Malays in the professional and technical services, Malay representation in the higher civil service will be achieved without the necessity of a quota system.

This argument, however, does not take adequate cognizance of the quota system within the broader political framework of the country. The special position and rights of the Malay community are safeguarded in the Constitution of the country and the civil service quota system is part of the special privileges given to Malays. As such it is unlikely that the quota system will be abolished even if there are sufficient Malays in the higher civil service to adequately reflect their composition in the population. In fact it has become illegal to even discuss the sensitive issues concerning special Malay rights. In supporting the bill Tun Ismail said

> The restraint on freedom of speech in the older democracies is imposed by the people themselves. They grew with their democracies and thus are able to restrain themselves when exercising freedom of speech. Here, Western democracy is an exotic plant and after 13 years of its growth, it has encountered a setback which, if not put right immediately, will ultimately lead to its death. What is this setback? It is the questioning of the sensitive issues which have been solemnly agreed upon by all races who are now citizens of Malaysia . . . since these issues cannot be discussed sensibly without their being exploited for communal political purposes, it is better that they be taken out of politics and public discussion.[17]

Arguments in favour of a representative bureaucracy tend to ignore the special circumstances existing in a particular country. It is assumed that there is a representative democracy in operation and therefore it is necessary that the bureaucracy, consisting of a reasonable cross-section of the body politic in terms of occupation, class, geography and the like be formed so that it is 'in general tune with the ethos and attitudes of the society of which it is a part'.[18] In Malaysia representative democracy is practised within a system of special rights for a particular ethnic group. The government since Independence has carried out a definite policy to assist the Malay community which, although politically strong, is economically the most disadvantaged group. These efforts have been intensified since 1970. The Second Malaysia Plan 1971-75 incorporates a two-pronged New Economic Policy for development:

> The first prong is to reduce and eventually eradicate poverty by raising income levels and increasing employment opportunities for all Malaysians, irrespective of race. The second prong aims at accelerating the process of restructuring Malaysian society to correct economic imbalance, so as to reduce and eventually eliminate the identification of race with economic function. This process involves the modernisation of rural life, a rapid and balanced growth of urban activities and the creation of a Malay commercial and industrial community in all categories and at all levels of operation, so that Malays and other indigenous people will become full partners in all aspects of the economic life of the nation.[19]

The task of achieving this objective falls on the civil service. The MCS in particular has the task of monitoring and controlling the work of the Ministries and departments as well as the several public enterprises created to carry out the projects aimed at achieving the New Economic Policy. At present the largely Malay MCS works closely

with and has the full confidence of the political leaders of the country. There is no fear that the policies of the government would not be carried out because of sabotage by the civil service. It does not follow that sabotage will be a necessary consequence should the number of non-Malay civil servants in the MCS increase.[20] But other things being equal, it would be unrealistic to expect a largely Malay political leadership not to prefer a preponderantly Malay civil service on whose loyalty they can depend and whose commitments, values and priorities strongly reflect their own. For a fundamental assumption of the concept of bureaucracy is that civil servants carry with them the values and attitudes of their groups.[21]

The concept of a representative bureaucracy is based on the assumption that (1) all groups in society have more or less equal political power and rights in accordance with their proportion in the population, and (2) civil servants do in fact carry their class attitudes and prejudices into their official lives. As shown earlier, the first assumption does not hold in the case of Malaysia. It is therefore likely that Malays will continue to dominate the civil service even when there are sufficient numbers of Malays in the professional and technical services to achieve the proper balance.

In the case of the second assumption the concept of representative bureaucracy tends to create stereotypes. Where ethnic factors are important, a Malay or a Chinese civil servant is supposed to have certain values and attitudes regarding certain issues irrespective of his socio-economic background, his education or his socialization as a member of the bureaucracy. When class factors are important a person from a particular class is supposed to behave in a particular way irrespective of his social background, training or anything else. Thus it is assumed that a civil servant from a lower socio-economic background will champion the cause of the class he belonged to before joining the civil service. This is an assumption that is by no means self-evident. As pointed out by Subramaniam:

> We are familiar with aristocrats and rich heirs who have passionate sympathy for the working class. On the other hand, the proportion of deviants among the members of the lower classes who work their way up is held by many observers to be high. . . . It has been suggested that the men who climb out of the lower classes, the upward-mobiles, under present conditions anyway, shed their class sympathies either at the beginning of the climb itself or halfway through. The proven existence of deviants from class norms and the probability of their high proportion among recruits from the lower classes, shakes to the foundations the basic argument for representative bureaucracy.[22]

The concept of a representative bureaucracy in a plural society has special dangers. It emphasizes racial identity rather than bureaucratic identity and creates divisions within the civil service. It makes assumptions about the values, attitudes and views of civil servants from different ethnic backgrounds which in fact may not be true. For example, Esman

has shown that of all the groups in society the bureaucracy is the 'most cosmopolitan and least parochial'.[23] An indication that civil servants do not make choices based only on narrow ethnic interests is seen in the response to the question whether they thought ethnic considerations should influence recruitment into the civil service.[24] Acting purely on ethnic bias one would assume that Malay civil servants would answer 'yes' while non-Malays would answer 'no'. This however was not found to be entirely the case. While it is true that many of the Malay civil servants did answer 'yes', so did a large number of non-Malays. When asked to give reasons for their answer, the majority of civil servants, both Malay and non-Malay, felt that ethnic considerations would give the economically disadvantaged Malays a better chance of entering the civil service, thus achieving a more balanced representation.[25]

But although it may be necessary to impose a quota system in order that Malays be adequately represented in the civil service, this should be regarded as a short-term measure. The long-term solution to the problem is to provide such opportunities as are necessary to raise the socio-economic status and educational level of Malays so that they will be able to compete on equal terms with other ethnic groups. In this way a more balanced representation in the civil service will be achieved and it will be a balance achieved on the basis of merit alone. The civil service will then mirror the views of the nation as a whole rather than be forced to become identified with narrow class or ethnic interests. In Britain, the expansion of educational opportunities has managed at least to some extent to increase the proportion of the lower socio-economic groups in the higher civil service without a lowering of standards. Although the higher civil service still has a larger proportion of civil servants from upper socio-economic backgrounds than is reflected in society as a whole,[26] the civil service has earned respect as a profession whose policy of recruitment is based on merit. What is perhaps more important is that it was able to show that despite their upper middle class backgrounds the civil servants are able to carry out efficiently a socialist programme aimed at benefiting the lower socio-economic groups.

A system of recruitment that takes into consideration ascriptive factors undermines the rationality and logic on which a sound recruitment system is based. Once ascriptive factors enter the recruitment process there is no end to the different considerations that can be taken into account in making a selection. The absurdity of the situation when representativeness is carried to the extreme was brought home in an amusing article by Etzioni. He described the situation when a university recruits its staff with a view to achieving a racially-balanced faculty. A Ph.D. candidate is turned down in preference for a chicano ('Blacks and women' had been appointed in previous years). Thus in order not to be called racist, faculty members appointed staff on the basis of how people fit into the colour chart which tells them 'how many black, brown, red, yellow (and white) professors a distinguished university needs.' He ended with the following observation:

We face in effect two choices. We could launch a crash program to produce biological and social tests to secure racial identifications and provide each campus with a colour master plan, asking future applicants to send in an authenticated family tree (snapshots are unreliable)—or, we could stop checking people's genes, genitalia and gender as we retain scholars and educators.

Of course social justice must be advanced, but it will not be served long by applying *ad absurdum* racism in reverse. What we need are more, broader, and stronger programs to help the less prepared to meet the same academic criteria now applied to those who had a more fortunate background.[27]

[1] Diana Ooi, 'The English-speaking Chinese of Penang', M.A. thesis, University of Malaya, 1966, p.37.

[2] Details of the Malayanization Scheme are given in R. Tilman, *Bureaucratic Transition in Malaya*, Duke University Press, 1964, Chapter 3.

[3] *Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Federation of Malaya*, 19 November 1952, p.473.

[4] *General Orders*, Section 12 (viii), Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer.

[5] Letter from Zainal Abidin bin Hj. Abas, Secretary-General of UMNO, to the Deputy Chief Secretary, Malayan Union, dated 12 January 1948. Contained in UMNO/SG 79/47 in the National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

[6] Besides the MCS which has a quota of 4:1, the other services which have a quota system are the judicial and legal services, the police service and the customs service which have a quota of 3:1.

[7] *The May 13 Tragedy: a Report by the National Operations Council*, Kuala Lumpur, 1969.

[8] Goh Hock Guan, 'Malayanisation—Not Malayisation'. Speech to the Australian Graduates Association in Penang on 28 September 1968, included in *Who Lives if Malaysia Dies?* Petaling Jaya, Democratic Action Party, 1969.

[9] *The May 13 Tragedy*, op.cit., pp.23-4.

[10] See figures provided in the Prime Minister's speeches at *Dewan Rakyat* on 17th May 1972 and on 25th April 1973.

[11] Dr. Tan Chee Khoon's speech in *Dewan Rakyat*, 18 April 1973. Official Report, pp.104-5. The term 'Bumiputra' or 'Sons of the Soil' is used to refer to Malays and other indigenous groups such as Dayaks and Ibans.

[12] Ibid., p.106.

[13] V. Subramaniam, *Social Background of India's Administrators*, New Delhi, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1972, p.102.

[14] David S. Gibbons and Zakaria Haji Ahmad, 'Politics and Selection for the Higher Civil Service in New States: the Malaysian Example', *Journal of Comparative Administration*, November 1971, p.339.

[15] In April 1974 the government announced that the MAS was to be dissolved and a new service, the General Administrative Service, was to take its place. This new service is not expected to provide a channel into the MCS. *Straits Times*, 1 April 1974.

[16] Tilman, op.cit., p.81.

[17] Quoted in the *Straits Times*, 4 March 1971.

[18] Paul P. van Riper, *History of the United States Civil Service*, Illinois, How, Peterson and Co., 1958, p.552. The principle of representative bureaucracy was first advocated by J. Donald Kingsley in his book, *Representative Bureaucracy*, Yellow Springs, Ohio, The Antioch Press, 1944.

[19] *Second Malaysia Plan 1971-75*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1971, p.1.

[20] In fact non-Malay civil servants indicated full support for the New Economic Policy. When asked 'Speaking generally about development, what one new government policy, introduced by the government in the last year or so do you regard as most significant to development?' the majority of non-Malays answered, 'The New Economic Policy'.

[21] V. Subramaniam, 'Representative Bureaucracy: a Reassessment', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 67, No. 4, December 1967, p.1013.

[22] Ibid., p.1014.

[23] M.J. Esman, *Administration and Development in Malaysia*, Ithaca, Cornell University, 1971, p.277. This matter is discussed more fully in Chapter VII.

[24] The question, taken from the questionnaire in M. Berger, *Bureaucracy and Society in Modern Egypt*, Princeton University Press, 1957, reads as follows: 'As you know, the government in employing people usually considers their educational qualifications and experience. In addition, do you think the Government should consider other factors in making appointments such as social position, family connections, wealth, place of birth, racial origin or religion?'

[25] Perhaps the response from non-Malays from outside the civil service would be quite different. Those who held these views had already 'made it' into the civil service.

[26] In his study of the higher civil service in Britain, Richard Chapman found that about 87 per cent of the higher civil servants belonged to the upper middle and middle class. Richard Chapman, *The Higher Civil Service in Britain*, London, Constable, 1970, p. 124.

[27] Amitai Etzioni, 'On Academic Blood Tests', in *Science*, Vol. 172, No. 3988 (11 June 1971).

VI The Socio-Economic Background of Civil Servants

URBAN-RURAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

MALAYSIA is primarily an agricultural country with 71.3 per cent of its population living in the rural areas.[1] Generally speaking, a larger proportion of its Malay population lives in the rural areas while a larger proportion of the non-Malay population lives in the urban areas. This is seen in Table 6.1.

TABLE 6.1

URBAN-RURAL DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN WEST MALAYSIA, 1970
(in percentages)

Urban-Rural Distribution	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians*	*Others*	*Total*
Urban	14.9	47.4	34.6	40.9	28.7
Small town	6.8	23.4	10.1	11.9	13.1
Rural	78.3	29.2	55.3	47.2	58.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Extracted from 1970 Population and Housing Census, 'Community Groups', p.30.

The urban-rural distribution of civil servants is given in Table 6.2.

Only 23.2 per cent of the civil servants in the sample come from urban areas. This under-representation of the urban areas is very unusual. Better educational facilities and higher income levels in the urban areas usually result in the urban population being over-represented in the civil service.[2] There are two reasons for the low urban representation in the civil service in Malaysia. First, the civil service as a whole is largely Malay in composition. Malays form about 64.5 per cent of the federal public service and state services.[3] The sample (selected for the purpose of this study), reflected a similar ethnic pattern—67 per cent of the sample was composed of Malay officers. Second, the high proportion

TABLE 6.2

URBAN-RURAL BACKGROUND OF CIVIL SERVANTS
(in percentages)

Urban-Rural Distribution	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians*	*Others*	*Total*
Urban	15.2	41.7	31.6	61.1	23.2
Small town	31.4	42.3	43.4	27.8	34.3
Rural	53.4	16.0	25.0	11.1	42.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

of Malay officers from small towns and rural areas in the civil service was due largely to the efforts made by the government to provide special educational assistance to Malays in rural areas.

In the higher civil service, however, where there are more non-Malays than Malays, a higher proportion of civil servants come from the urban areas. This is seen in Table 6.3.

TABLE 6.3

URBAN-RURAL BACKGROUND OF HIGHER CIVIL SERVANTS
COMPARED WITH THE TOTAL POPULATION
(in percentages)

Urban-Rural Distribution	*Total Population*	*Higher Civil Servants*	*Differential*
Urban	28.7	34.8	+ 6.1
Small town	13.1	37.1	+24.0
Rural	58.2	28.2	−30.0
Total	100.0	100.1	

Source: Syed Haroon bin Mohd. Aljunied, 'Social Background and Representation in the Higher Civil Service in Malaysia and Singapore', M.A. Thesis (unpublished), University of Malaya, 1974, p.175.

The majority of higher civil servants come from urban areas and small towns. In fact those from the small towns are over-represented in the higher civil service and in the civil service as a whole. This was the group that was able to take immediate advantage of the general improvement of educational facilities and of the special assistance offered to Malays. A large proportion of the civil servants were sons of civil servants themselves as seen in Table 6.4.

Thus nearly one-half of the Malay civil servants were themselves

TABLE 6.4

CIVIL SERVANTS WHOSE FATHERS WERE IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE
(in percentages)

Fathers' Occupation	*Malays*	*Non-Malays*	*Total*
Civil service	49.3	26.9	42.7
Non civil service	50.7	73.1	57.3

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

sons of civil servants. However, many of the fathers, although they were civil servants, had not held senior positions in the service. They were employed mainly as clerks, technicians, vernacular school teachers, or had occupied junior positions in the police and army. Seventy-five per cent of the sample under consideration in Table 6.4 had fathers who had held junior positions in the service, as shown in Table 6.5.

TABLE 6.5

DETAILS OF FATHERS' CIVIL SERVICE RANK
(in percentages)

Type of Job	*Malays*	*Non-Malays*	*Total*
Clerical/technical	44.0	63.5	48.7
Teaching (Divisions III-IV)	23.5	7.9	19.8
Army/police junior rank	7.0	4.8	6.5
Total junior rank	74.5	76.2	75.0
Teaching (Divisions I-II)	7.5	11.1	8.4
Administrative/Professional	13.5	9.5	12.5
Army/police senior rank	4.5	3.2	4.1
Total senior rank	25.5	23.8	25.0

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

It can be seen that there has been upward mobility among all ethnic groups in the Malaysian civil service. This is unlike the situation in Thailand where mobility in the Thai civil service has in fact declined.[4]

The extent of this mobility is indicated in Tables 6.6 and 6.7 which compare occupational levels of fathers of civil servants with the population as a whole. (See p.70.)

Although the trend has been towards upward mobility for all ethnic groups, the rates of mobility vary considerably between occupations and between ethnic groups. This trend appears to be generally true of the country as a whole. Hirschman found that it was more difficult

TABLE 6.6
OCCUPATIONAL LEVELS OF FATHERS OF CIVIL SERVANTS
(in percentages)

Occupational Level	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians & Others*	*Total*
Agricultural	35.2	15.2	9.5	28.0
Blue collar	10.6	8.0	13.1	10.4
Sales/clerical	22.1	24.8	39.3	25.0
White collar	32.1	52.0	38.1	36.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

TABLE 6.7
OCCUPATIONAL LEVELS OF POPULATION, 1967
(in percentages)

Occupational Level	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians & Others*	*Total*
Agricultural	59.9	23.6	34.9	49.7
Blue collar	26.5	42.1	42.2	30.2
Sales/clerical	4.4	19.7	9.4	9.4
White collar	9.2	14.6	13.5	10.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Derived from figures provided in Socio-Economic Sample Survey of Households, 1967-1968, Department of Statistics, Kuala Lumpur, p.100.

for the son of a farmer to move up the occupational scale than for the son of a clerk. Thus 72 per cent of the sons of farmers inherited their fathers' occupation compared with only 29 per cent of the sons of clerks.[5] Furthermore, within the same occupation there was some variation in the degree of mobility between ethnic groups. For example, 78 per cent of the sons of Malay farmers became farmers themselves compared with 69 per cent of the sons of Indian farmers and 42 per cent of the sons of Chinese farmers.[6]

In the civil service, however, one sees a higher proportion of sons of farmers among Malay civil servants than among non-Malay civil servants: 35.2 per cent of Malay civil servants come from agricultural backgrounds as compared with 15.2 per cent of Chinese civil servants and 9.5 per cent of Indian civil servants from similar backgrounds. This was made possible by the government's provision of special assistance for Malays in the lower socio-economic groups to obtain an educational

level higher than that of their fathers. The educational level of their fathers is shown in Table 6.8.

TABLE 6.8

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF FATHERS OF CIVIL SERVANTS
(in percentages)

Fathers' Level of Education	*Ethnic Group*			
	Malays	*Chinese*	*Indians & Others*	*Total*
No formal education	13.0	11.6	5.8	12.3
Primary education	57.2	35.4	26.4	48.7
Secondary education	19.4	47.0	55.0	29.5
Teacher training colleges, etc.	8.4	1.7	6.9	7.2
University education	1.2	4.1	5.8	2.3
No information given	0.8	0.2	0.1	–
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

For the Malays especially there has been considerable upward mobility achieved largely through government assistance. It is what one writer has called, 'sponsored mobility':

> It is clear that for the Malays, the dreams for self-advancement are dreams which take many years to materialize—for some these dreams are suddenly ended because they are not successful in securing admission into the university. For the rest, their dreams will not become a reality unless the government gives them assistance. Thus, it is important to remember that for the Malays, upward mobility is a 'sponsored mobility'—a mobility which is assisted.[7]

The greater mobility of Malays is reflected in secondary schools and at the University of Malaya where a greater proportion of Malays than non-Malays come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, as shown in Table 6.9.

In his study, Bock showed that almost 60 per cent of the Malay pupils in secondary schools were from low to medium-low socio-economic backgrounds. The percentage of Chinese and Indian students from similar social groups was much smaller. In other words, Malays from lower socio-economic backgrounds had a much better chance of reaching secondary school than their non-Malay peers.[8]

For the non-Malays there has also been some mobility but the rate has been much higher for the middle level groups than for the lowest sector. The majority of non-Malay civil servants are the children of clerks, small businessmen or technicians whose fathers may not have had an English education but who themselves went to English-medium

TABLE 6.9

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF FATHERS OF FIRST AND FINAL YEAR MALE STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA, 1970
(in percentages)

Socio-Economic Status	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians*
Low	39.9	8.6	6.8
Low-medium	14.7	12.1	20.4
High-medium	8.8	21.7	17.5
High	36.6	57.6	55.3

Source: J.C. Bock, 'Education and Nation-building in Malaysia: a Case Study of Institutional Effect in Thirty-four Secondary Schools', Ph.D. Thesis, Stanford University, 1970, p.203.

schools. Being in the cities and small towns where access to English-medium schools was fairly easy, it was possible for them to continue their education to fit them for jobs in the middle and upper levels of the civil service. However, the non-Malays in the agricultural sector are under-represented in the civil service to a greater degree than the Malays because it is almost impossible for people in this group to move up the occupational scale without government assistance.

Thus the bureaucracy has been the vehicle for some 'social levelling' as anticipated by Weber.[9] In Malaysia the higher civil service can be considered to be more representative of Malaysian society than in many other developing countries. In fact it has been shown that in many developing countries there is a tendency for the higher civil service to be monopolized by the small middle class element in the society. This has been the situation, for example, in India and Thailand. In India, the very keen competition for entry into the Indian Administrative Service has resulted in this service being composed largely of civil servants from upper middle class backgrounds. About 82 per cent of the civil servants in the Indian Administrative Service come from middle class, professional backgrounds.[10] In Thailand the ability of the upper middle class to obtain post-graduate degrees from overseas universities has given this group an advantage over the other groups, resulting in a similar imbalance.[11]

It is, however, likely that there will be some 'drying up' of social mobility in the future, especially for non-Malays. The policy of giving preference to Malays in terms of opportunities both for higher education and entry into the civil service, will have an adverse effect on non-Malays, particularly those from lower and middle level backgrounds.[12] This group had benefited in the past from a system which, while providing special assistance to Malays, did not unduly restrict the opportunities of non-Malays for advancement. The impact on the more wealthy

non-Malays will not be as great for they can avail themselves of the opportunities for higher education in overseas universities. It is likely, therefore, that while the majority of future Malay recruits to the civil service will continue to come from lower and middle level backgrounds, the majority of future non-Malay recruits will come from the upper classes where better home environments and opportunities for university education will give them a distinct advantage over those from the lower and middle classes. If this happens ethnic differences in the higher civil service are likely to be exacerbated by class differences.

LANGUAGE FACTORS

Not only have there been different rates of mobility for the different ethnic groups but there have also been different rates of mobility depending on the language in which each group received its education. Until recently those who received their education in the English language had a definite advantage in entering the civil service as shown in Table 6.10.

TABLE 6.10

LANGUAGE MEDIA OF CIVIL SERVANTS COMPARED WITH TOTAL POPULATION
(in percentages)

Language Medium in Secondary School	*Civil Servants*[a]	*Total Population*[b] *(1967)*
English*	94.0*	67.4
Other language	6.0	32.6

Source: (a) Information obtained from questionnaire.
(b) *Educational Statistics of Malaysia 1938-67*, Ministry of Education, 1967.

*Includes those who received their secondary education first in a vernacular school but switched to an English-medium school at the upper secondary level.

As secondary school education in the Malay language was available only after the Second World War, it was necessary for those in Malay primary schools to switch to English schools if they wanted to continue their education. This meant that for the majority of Malays education did not proceed beyond the primary school level. The colonial government did try to assist Malays to enter secondary English schools through establishing special English classes for Malays at post-primary level. After the Second World War another scheme was devised to make it possible for more Malays in Malay-medium schools to be transferred to English schools, resulting in a proportionately larger number of Malays than non-Malays from vernacular primary schools entering the civil service. This is seen in Table 6.11.

TABLE 6.11

PRIMARY SCHOOL LANGUAGE MEDIA OF CIVIL SERVANTS
(in percentages)

Language Medium	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians & Others*	*Total*
English only	10.4	47.5	63.1	23.4
Vernacular and English	23.0	15.9	13.8	20.5
Vernacular only	66.6	36.6	23.1	56.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

Without special assistance from the government the majority of Chinese and Indian students who entered vernacular primary schools were unable to switch to English schools and thus either continued their education in the vernacular language or stopped schooling altogether. In particular the bulk of the Indian estate population was unable to progress to secondary education as Tamil was the only medium of instruction and only at primary level.[13] The occupational mobility of this group was therefore the lowest. Only 23 per cent of the Indian civil servants received their primary education solely in vernacular schools compared with 67 per cent of the Malay and 37 per cent of the Chinese civil servants.

However, the majority of civil servants received their secondary education in English. This is shown in Table 6.12.

TABLE 6.12

SECONDARY SCHOOL LANGUAGE MEDIA OF CIVIL SERVANTS
(in percentages)

Language Medium	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians & Others*	*Total*
English only	68.9	73.3	94.4	72.9
Vernacular and English	24.6	19.0	5.6	21.1
Vernacular only	6.5	7.7	–	6.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

Only 6 per cent of the civil servants received their secondary education in a language other than English. Despite the provision in the Constitution which stated categorically that 'the national language shall be the Malay

language . . . ,'[14] the implementation of Malay as the national and sole official language of the country has been so slow so that English continued to be the language of administration and business. As one writer put it:

> . . . the use of English did not appreciably diminish. Government forms were at least bilingual, members of Parliament, even Malays, chose frequently to debate in English, and the courts continued to use English. With few exceptions the laws were written in English, and most notably, many parents, Malays included, have continued to seek English education for their children. The language of sophisticated business is English and all but the Arts and Economic Faculties of the University teach entirely in English. Despite repeated Government assurances that from September 1967 onwards Malay would be the 'sole official language' few attempts were made to spell out precisely what this would mean in practical terms, and it has been apparent for some time that few people have expected there to be any real change in the social and economic value attached to English.[15]

The slow implementation of Malay as the sole official language of the country was acknowledged in 1971 when Tun Ismail admitted that the national language policy 'was obstructed in its implementation on various pretexts. Wherever it was implemented in spite of opposition from the non-Malays results were slow in coming'.[16]

In other plural societies, it has been possible to change the ethnic composition of the higher civil service almost overnight by changing the official language of administration. In Sri Lanka, for example, a considerable number of public servants retired on the grounds that they were unable to work in the new official language. In addition the requirement that all new entrants to the public service must develop a working knowledge of Singhalese within three years of their appointment has discouraged Tamil-speaking citizens from applying for public service posts and has altered the ethnic composition of the higher civil service.[17] In Canada attempts were made to encourage more French Canadians to enter the civil service by making French as well as English the official languages of the country.[18]

In Malaysia, the slow implementation of the language policy had three important effects. Firstly, it enabled non-Malay civil servants, both existing and potential, to learn Malay and therefore to accept the changes more easily. Secondly, it continued to provide jobs for the English educated, both Malays and non-Malays. Thirdly, Malay-medium school leavers had greater difficulty in continuing their post-secondary education than their counterparts from English-medium schools.[19]

The inadequacy of job opportunities for Malays from Malay schools has been the source of much friction within the Malay community. One writer accused the government of diverting from its original plan to help the Malay community and stressed that

> It is very necessary for the government to provide for greater opportunities to students from the national (Malay) schools. And this depends upon the value placed on the Malay language. As long as Malay is not truly made the

sole official language and made a condition for government jobs, government scholarships and for admission into government colleges, it would be difficult for government policy to assist Malays to succeed.[20]

The economic advantage of learning English was fully recognized not only by non-Malays but by the Malays themselves. Despite the growth of Malay schools in the country in the immediate post-independence period, the number of pupils in English schools also continued to increase as shown in Table 6.13.

TABLE 6.13

SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT BY LANGUAGE MEDIA, 1956 AND 1967

Language Medium	*1956*	*%*	*1967*	*%*
Malay	2,871	3.2	128,625	27.8
English	59,197	66.3	312,063	67.4
Chinese	26,959	30.2	22,221	4.8
Tamil	310	0.3	–	
Total	89,337	100.0	462,909	100.0

Source: *Educational Statistics of Malaysia, 1938 to 1967*, Kuala Lumpur, Ministry of Education, 1967, pp.40-7.

Parents who were themselves educated in the English language recognized the value of the language as they had experienced its economic benefits. But even some Malay school teachers who were the backbone of the fight for recognition of Malay as the sole official language of the country were themselves sending their children to English schools. It is therefore not surprising to see that as much as 19 per cent of the Malay civil servants were sons of Malay school teachers.

In the case of the Chinese, as the policy of the government was to encourage secondary education only in English and Malay, the enrolment in Chinese-medium schools dropped sharply from 30 per cent of the total secondary school enrolment in 1956 to only 5 per cent in 1967. In the case of the Indians, almost all of them who received a secondary education are English-educated since there was no Tamil secondary school education available. This has meant that for the Indians social mobility has been confined to the urban sector where educational facilities in the English language were available. For the majority of Indians in the estates however, there has been little opportunity for upward social mobility, thus resulting in 'widening differences in values and attitudes between the Tamil-speaking estate labourers on the one hand, and the English educated professional, technical and commercial classes on the other'.[21]

Since 1969 however there has been an intensification in the implementation of the language policy. In 1970 the education policy was

changed so that by 1982, all education, both primary and secondary, will be in the Malay language only. At the universities too, the policy is to change the medium of instruction from English to Malay. At the Universiti Kebangsaan, which was established in 1970, teaching is carried out almost entirely in the Malay language and students from the Malay-medium schools are admitted in large numbers. Thus, although only 6.5 per cent of Malay civil servants in the sample had received their secondary education in the Malay language, it is likely that their number will increase in the future.

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION

As shown in Chapter V the ethnic balance in the civil service as a whole is achieved by the establishment of a quota system which restricts the employment of non-Malays in certain higher services. In the case of regional representation there is no quota system in operation. Yet through government's special efforts to help the rural Malays it has been possible to achieve a fairly balanced representation, as shown in Table 6.14.

The significantly high representation of the relatively backward states can be explained by looking at the sample frame. As the sample was

TABLE 6.14

STATE DISTRIBUTION OF CIVIL SERVANTS COMPARED WITH THE POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN EACH STATE
(in percentages)

State	*Population Proportion 1970*[a]	*Civil Service Proportion*[b]
Johore	12.2	12.5
Malacca	3.9	5.4
Selangor	15.6	12.2
Negri Sembilan	4.6	9.7
Pahang	4.8	6.7
Perak	15.0	18.6
Trengganu	3.9	5.1
Kelantan	6.5	7.1
Kedah	9.2	11.2
Penang	7.4	7.3
Perlis	1.2	1.0
East Malaysia	15.7	0.9
Outside Malaysia	–	1.4
No information	–	0.9
	100.0	100.0

Source: (a) 1970 Census, 'Community Group', p.45.
(b) Information obtained from questionnaire.

drawn from both federal and state civil services[22] there was a tendency for those states which have their own civil services to be more highly represented in the sample. These states were formerly part of the Unfederated Malay States and, except for Johore, are less developed than the western states which had formed the Federated Malay States. If we look at state representation in the higher echelons of the federal civil service only, we see a completely different picture. As to be expected, the more developed western states are over-represented in the federal civil service and the less developed ones under-represented. This is shown in Table 6.15.

TABLE 6.15

STATE DISTRIBUTION OF HIGHER CIVIL SERVANTS IN THE FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE COMPARED WITH THE POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN EACH STATE (WEST MALAYSIA ONLY)
(in percentages)

State	*Population Proportion*	*Civil Service Proportion*	*Differential*
Western States			
Negri Sembilan	5.5	13.2	+7.7
Perak	17.8	24.3	+6.5
Selangor	18.5	22.7	+4.2
Penang	8.8	11.1	+2.3
Malacca	4.6	5.5	+0.9
Other States			
Kedah	10.9	5.8	−5.1
Perlis	1.4	0.5	−0.9
Kelantan	7.7	3.6	−4.1
Trengganu	4.6	1.1	−3.5
Johore	14.5	7.1	−7.4
Pahang	5.7	4.7	−1.0

Source: Syed Haroon bin Mohd. Aljunied, 'Social Background and Representation in the Higher Civil Service in Malaysia and Singapore', M.A. Thesis, unpublished, University of Malaya, 1974, p.169.

In the federal higher civil service, the western states are over-represented. In these states there is a greater degree of modernization and greater opportunities for self-improvement. Over-representation of the more developed regions in the higher civil service is not unique to Malaysia. In India, for example, the states of Kerala, Madras, Mysore and Punjab are over-represented in the federal services due mainly to better educational facilities and higher standards of education in these states.[23] Similarly, in Canada, the state of Ontario is over-represented compared with the other states[24] and in Brazil the south-east region is heavily represented compared with the other regions.[25] In Malaysia, although

there is some over-representation of the more developed states and under-representation of the less developed ones, the imbalance is not alarming nor has it become a major political issue.

TABLE 6.16

STATE DISTRIBUTION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS COMPARED WITH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN EACH STATE
(in percentages)

State	*Population (Proportion)*	*First Year University Population (1971-2 Session)*	*Total University Population (1971-2 Session)*
Negri Sembilan	4.6	7.0	6.5
Perak	15.0	15.2	16.8
Selangor	15.6	19.6	21.4
Penang	7.4	8.0	10.1
Malacca	3.9	4.9	5.8
Kedah	9.2	8.4	7.7
Perlis	1.2	1.8	1.3
Kelantan	6.5	10.9	7.9
Trengganu	3.9	4.0	3.2
Johore	12.2	11.8	11.4
Pahang	4.8	4.9	4.5
East Malaysia	15.7	3.5	3.5

Source: Ungku A. Aziz, 'Access to the University of Malaya', a Case Study prepared for the International Institution for Educational Planning, March 1972, p.89.

The East Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah are significantly under-represented both in the University of Malaya and in the federal civil service. There have been very few suitably qualified applicants from these states for admission to University. Those who do succeed in acquiring suitable academic qualifications would have no difficulty in getting into the federal service, particularly as the 'bumiputra' policy applies equally in these states as in West Malaysia. But most of them prefer to return to their home states where, due to the scarcity of qualified people the demand for them is high and, therefore, opportunities not only for promotion but promotion at a rapid rate are greater than in the federal civil service. Another factor which renders employment and promotional prospects attractive for East Malaysians generally is the lower emphasis placed on the implementation of the language policy. There has therefore been little political pressure for greater representation of East Malaysia in the federal civil service.

Whether or not state representation will become a major political issue in the country would depend on the strength of state loyalties. In some states, particularly in Sarawak and Sabah and in the former

unfederated states of Johore, Kedah, Trengganu and Kelantan, there appear to be strong feelings of identification and 'belongingness' to one's home state. In many cases, however, the opportunities for self improvement are greater in the federal capital than in the states, so many civil servants prefer to work in the federal civil service rather than in the states.

It is interesting to note also that state identification in Peninsular Malaysia is less strong than ethnic identification. When asked whether appointments into the civil service should be based on regional or state representation, about 72 per cent of the civil servants in the sample were of the opinion that this factor should not be considered at all while 24 per cent felt that it should be considered as a factor only after other factors such as qualifications and experience are considered. They appeared to be, however, more ambivalent in their views about ethnic factors. When asked whether ethnic factors should be considered in making appointments into the civil service, about 65 per cent felt that it should not be considered while the others felt that it was necessary in a multi-racial society to take this factor into account so as to achieve some degree of ethnic representation in the civil service. It thus appears that state representation was considered to be of less significance than ethnic representation. In fact the ethnic issue has assumed such proportions in the country that it has blurred the importance of other issues.

[1] Malaysia, *1970 Population and Housing Census*, 'Community Groups', Kuala Lumpur, Department of Statistics, 1972, p.30. Rural areas (including small towns) as defined in the Census are gazetted areas with a population of less than 10,000 persons.

[2] In India, for example, 70 per cent of the Indian Administrative Service officers came from urban backgrounds. C.P. Bhambhri, *Administrators in a Changing Society*, New Delhi, National Publishing House, 1972, p.47. In Turkey, 63 per cent of the civil servants in a sample of junior administrators came from urban backgrounds. A.T.J. Matthews, *Emergent Turkish Administrators*, University of Ankara, Faculty of Political Science, Publication No. 1, 1955, p.18.

[3] See Table 5.7.

[4] Hans-Dieter Evers, 'Higher Civil Servants in Thailand: Social Mobility, Overseas Education and Attitudes Towards Their Own Cultural Tradition', Arnold Bergstraesser Institute for Socio-Political Research, Freiburg, Germany, pp.40-1.

[5] Charles Hirschman, 'Ethnic Stratification in West Malaysia', Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1972, p.58.

[6] Ibid., p.136.

[7] Nordin Selat, 'Mobiliti Melayu Melalui Pelajaran' (Malay Mobility Through Education), in *Dewan Masharakat* (December 1971), p.40.

[8] J.C. Bock, 'Education and Nation-building in Malaysia: a Case Study of Institutional Effect in Thirty-four Secondary Schools', Ph.D. thesis, Stanford University, 1970, p. 203.

[9] H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, London, 1947, p.224.

[10] V. Subramaniam, *Social Background of India's Administrators*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1971, p.145. In 1956 the percentage of civil servants from the professional middle class was even higher—93.75 per cent. The recruit-

ment of candidates from the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes has resulted in a greater proportion of the IAS coming from the lower social stratum.

[11] Evers, op.cit., p.24. Only 16 per cent of the civil servants in Thailand come from lower socio-economic backgrounds as compared with 28 per cent in Malaysia.

[12] In reply to a recent question in Parliament on admissions into the five universities in the country the Acting Minister of Education replied that out of 25,998 applicants, 5,953 were offered admission for the 1977/78 session. Their ethnic background is as follows: Bumiputras—4,457; Chinese—1,187; Indians—266; and others—43. *New Straits Times*, 12 July 1977.

[13] As the majority of estate workers was composed of women tappers this meant that many of the older children had to stop schooling even before they completed their primary education to look after their younger brothers and sisters. One study showed that 58 per cent of the children of primary school age in estates were not attending school at all. K. Radhakrishnan, 'National Integration and Estate Indian Proletariat', B.A. (Hons.), Graduation Exercise, Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya, 1971, p.32.

[14] The Constitution of the Federation of Malaya, Article 152, Clauses 1 and 2.

[15] M. Roff, 'The Politics of Language in Malaya', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 7, 1967, p.322.

[16] Speech in Parliament quoted in *Straits Times*, 4 March 1971.

[17] Richard Harris and Robert N. Kearney, 'A Comparative Analysis of the Administrative Systems of Canada and Ceylon', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1963, p.352.

[18] Zakaria b. Haji Ahmad, 'Ethnicity and Personnel Public Administration: Canada and Malaysia', *Kajian Tadbiran Pembangunan*, January 1973.

[19] A study of educational opportunities showed that those in English-medium schools had a 1:8 chance of entering Form Six (Higher School Certificate classes) compared with those in Malay-medium schools whose chances were 1:176. J.C. Bock, 'Ethnic Sponsorship in Education: a Case Study of Malaysia', unpublished mimeographed paper, 1970, p.17.

[20] Author's translation of Zainal Abidin A. Wahid, 'Ribuan Murid Kita Akan Jadi Korban Wajib Sains Tahun ini?' *Berita Harian*, 23 April 1968.

[21] S. Arasaratnam, *Indians in Malaysia and Singapore*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press for Institute of Race Relations, 1970, p.186.

[22] About 10 per cent of the respondents came from the state civil services.

[23] Subramaniam, op.cit., p.26.

[24] John Porter, 'Power and the Canadian Bureaucratic Elite', in W. D. K. Kernaghan (ed.), *Bureaucracy in Canadian Government*, London, Methuen Publications, 1969, p.77.

[25] Paulo Roberto de Mendonca Motta, 'The Brazilian Bureaucratic Elite: Social Background and Organisational Attitudes', Ph.D. thesis, University of North Carolina, 1972, p.29.

VII Basic Value Orientations of Civil Servants

Civil servants, like everyone else within society, are members of social groups and develop certain values and loyalties side by side with their bureaucratic values and loyalties. Studies of bureaucracies in developing countries[1] have shown that while many of these bureaucracies exhibit a rational Weberian type model in their structure and form, the cultural environment determines the kind of administrative behaviour that actually exists. Often values and attitudes are seen to be inapposite to the kind of social and economic development that underdeveloped countries have set for themselves.[2] As pointed out by Lipset:

> Social pressures from many different group affiliations and loyalties determine individual behavior in most situations. The behavior of an individual or group in a given situation cannot be considered as if the individual or group members had no other life outside the given situation one is analyzing.[3]

This chapter is devoted to a discussion of some of the basic value orientations of Malaysian civil servants.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN NATURE

Several writers have remarked on the conservative, fatalistic attitudes of agricultural groups. The shortage of land and the inability of man to master nature results in a feeling that little can be done to improve one's own position in life. The pie is constant and can only be increased very marginally. This 'constant-pie orientation is based on the theory of limited good in which all the desired things in life exist in finite quantity and are always in short supply'.[4] It follows therefore that any individual or family can improve its position only at the expense of others. Life is seen as a constant struggle in which an individual, family or group tries to increase its share of the limited good at the expense of other individuals, families or groups.

Are these values only rural values and not shared by an urban-based civil service? Some writers have shown that Malaysian civil servants tend to believe in these values. Scott has shown in his study that Malaysian civil servants do have a constant-pie orientation towards life.[5] In

this struggle for scarce resources man is at constant war with others, grabbing what he can get while jealously guarding what he already has. As pointed out by Esman,

> Because of the intense competition for scarce items, every man must jealously guard what he has, for one man's gain in any value is necessarily at the expense of another. The result is generalized intergroup and interpersonal suspicion, corrosive of the social trust which is essential to effective individual and organizational cooperation. In the Malaysian context, this is exacerbated by intercommunal suspicion and distrust which interprets each community's gains, political or economic, as necessarily, coming at the expense of the other.[6]

These views were confirmed by the writer's own findings as shown in Table 7.1.

TABLE 7.1

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS REGARDING HUMAN NATURE
(in percentages)

Statement	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*No Opinion*	*No Response*
Human nature being what it is, there will always be war and conflict	68.3	27.3	3.8	0.5
Today everything is unstable; we should be prepared for a period of constant change, conflict and upheaval	63.5	29.8	6.0	0.7
In the long run, the best way to live is to choose friends and associates whose preferences and beliefs are the same as one's own	56.3	39.4	3.9	0.4

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

Human nature being naturally selfish and opportunistic, there is a need for some sort of external control to prevent man from destroying himself. This external control is seen at two levels—in a belief in God, and in a highly authoritarian but benevolent dictator.[7] The belief that God will act as a restraining influence on man's greed and selfishness is seen in the responses to questions on religion given in Table 7.2.

Nearly 48 per cent of the respondents believed that every person should believe in God while 46 per cent believed that freedom of conscience does not include freedom to disbelieve in God. The belief in God as a restraining influence is also seen in the new 'national ideology' enunciated

TABLE 7.2
RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS REGARDING RELIGION
(in percentages)

Statement	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*No Opinion*	*No Response*
Every person should have a deep faith in some supernatural force higher than himself to which he gives total allegiance and whose decisions he does not question	47.9	39.9	11.2	1.0
Freedom of conscience should mean freedom not to believe in God as well as freedom to worship in the religion of one's choice	36.5	46.1	15.5	1.9

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

by the government as the code of behaviour to be practised by all Malaysians. The code has five 'beliefs', the first of which is a belief in God.[8]

Some writers have shown that religious conservatism and fatalism are less persuasive among the well-educated urbanized civil service than among the rural-based farmers. Bent, in his study of the Turkish bureaucracy has found that the

> . . . tenacity of Islamic conservatism is far less evident in urban areas from which most of the high-level civil servants come. It is among the urban youth that secularism has the greatest attraction. Few lycee and university students regularly attend mosques, observe religious fasts or know the Koran. Attitude studies among students show that religious values are distinctly subordinate to nationalistic ones.[9]

In Malaysia there are two main reasons why religious values have not declined among civil servants. Firstly, as shown in the previous chapter, the majority of civil servants in the sample come from rural areas and small towns where, in addition to the tendency of rural folk to be more religion-oriented than their urban brothers, exposure to religious influences is undiluted by the sophisticated distractions of urban living. Secondly, Malays possess the advantage of a common religious faith—Islam. The awareness of the need for Malay unity in a society comprising nearly equal proportions of Malays and non-Malays has led to a close identification of the Malay race with Islam. As a result, instead of a decline in religious values which might be expected to follow

modernization, there has been a religious revival among Malays generally. Syed Husin Ali pointed out that among Malays,

> Close interactions and feelings of solidarity also arise among the villagers as a result of the common religious faith they hold. Most of the villagers—in fact all the Malays—are Muslims. In Islam they have a religious as well as cultural and social bond that holds them together. They strongly identify themselves with Islam to show that they are Malays.[10]

Thus even when they are exposed to more secular values, they are forced to mask these values in the interests of Malay solidarity. Malays who no longer hold to traditional religious norms are as yet unwilling to challenge these norms openly.[11] Malay nationalism and Islam are closely connected.

As a result of the development of communal politics and the polarization of ethnic groups there tends to be a greater need for group identification on the basis of race rather than class. This is reflected within the civil service. In their professional life, Malays and non-Malays are separated by type of work and service, with Malays dominating the administrative and semi-professional services, and non-Malays dominating the professional and technical services. In their social life too there tends to be a grouping on ethnic lines. However Esman found that:

> The senior civil servants are the least parochial and the most cosmopolitan of all the elite groups in Malaysia. Their educational backgrounds have brought them in touch with members of other races as well as with modern ideas and life styles and have taught them the art of accommodation. This has been reinforced by their work experience where they have associated, usually compatibly, with members of other races and have dealt with problems involving the interests of other communal groups. With few exceptions, they are above the cruder expressions of communal demands and hostility which often are evoked by grassroots politicians and spokesmen for participative institutions . . . . In sum, these tend to be moderate men who are acquainted with the ways of civil compromise.[12]

This view may perhaps be true of the few who are at the very top of the civil service but it does not reflect the state of affairs in the civil service as a whole. Even the higher civil service, the majority of whose members are graduates of the University of Malaya, reflects a division of ethnic groups along academic lines which appear to have begun at university. A report on campus life at the University of Malaya revealed that Malays tend to be concentrated in the Arts and Social Science faculties and non-Malays in the Medical, Engineering, and Science faculties. In social interaction on campus, too, there appears to be a 'lack of comprehension and understanding' among the racial groups 'leading to polarization on serious political issues and even to hostility in times of crises'.[13]

One sees, especially in times of crisis, a high degree of ethnic insecurity. The suspicion and distrust of a constant-pie oriented society is evident in ethnic terms. Each ethnic group becomes obsessed with the idea of maximizing its own economic position even if this means a reduction

in the share of wealth of another group. Because there are, generally speaking, more wealthy non-Malays than Malays, it is assumed by Malays that all non-Malays are rich and all Malays poor. Malays perceive non-Malays as exploiters of economic power, while non-Malays perceive Malays as exploiters of political power because they, the Malays, are in control of the government. There is thus a high degree of insecurity, either economic or political, among different ethnic groups in the society and this is reflected within the civil service.

The Malay civil servants have benefited more than any other group as a result of government policy. Apart from their dominance in the élite administrative service, they also fill senior positions in the numerous statutory corporations and government companies that have mushroomed since 1969. They are in positions of power and influence which it is reasonable to assume they will not relinquish. Non-Malay civil servants, on the other hand, feel threatened by what they look upon as the divisive nature of resurgent Malay nationalism and Islam. Being non-Malay they feel that their loyalty and commitment to government policy is open to question and doubt. Thus they have to be very careful about comments that may be misconstrued as being against government policy. As one of them stated in his reply to the questionnaire: 'It is easier for a Malay civil servant to make a criticism against government

TABLE 7.3

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS REGARDING PLANNING AND TIME
(in percentages)

Statement	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*No Opinion*	*No Response*
There is little purpose in planning because we know so little of the future	9.6	86.0	3.3	1.1
To most officers one day is not very different from the next one so there is no need to move fast or worry about completing things in as short a time as possible	18.8	78.1	2.6	0.5
Planning is a futile business as there are political and economic factors which are beyond our control	18.5	77.3	3.7	0.5

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

policy than a non-Malay. In my case, I am never sure whether my motives are accepted as being *bona fide*.' This fear may or may not be justified. But what is important is that some officers do feel this way and their behaviour is conditioned accordingly.

It has also been shown that where there is a constant-pie orientation there tends also to be a fatalistic approach to life. This may be true in agricultural societies where life is seen as changeless and time as a seamless web. In his study of Malay village life, Syed Husin indicated that the majority of villagers tend to resign themselves to the belief that their fate is predestined.[14] This belief is however not prevalent among civil servants. They have a positive attitude towards planning and time as shown in Table 7.3.

Civil servants believe that they can through planning and effort bring about changes within society. After all, they themselves have been the beneficiaries of such changes. As shown in the previous chapter the majority of them came from low or medium socio-economic backgrounds. As pointed out by Evers, a person whose family has changed its social position in the last generation will be less inclined to take for granted that social conditions are fixed than a person who has been reared in a family who has occupied the same rank for centuries.[15]

ATTITUDES TOWARDS AUTHORITY

The modern Weberian bureaucracy is characterized by an office hierarchy in which there are levels of graded authority in a firmly ordered system of super- and subordination.[16] This system of inequality and status differences also exists in the traditional Malay authority structure where there is a clear division between the ruling class and the ruled.[17] Malay culture, which has become the dominant style in Malaysian administration, places great value on the need for each person to know his own place in the social system and to show respect for authority and deference to those of superior status. Esman pointed out that Malaysian administrators are strong believers in the legitimacy of status differences and in the superiority of some men over others.[18]

Traditional attitudes of authority are reinforced in the modern bureaucratic structure. In fact the colonial policy of recruiting members of the Malay ruling class into the bureaucracy served the purpose of emphasizing the legitimacy of their status within the traditional Malay social system. Today the customary conferment of honorary titles and decorations on civil servants serves the same purpose. Federal civil servants who work in the states often receive state awards from the sultan or the governor while others are eligible for awards given by the Yang di-Pertuan Agung (King) on the advice of the Cabinet. There appears to be a link between one's position and the award one is given so that senior civil servants expect and regard the award as being commensurate with their rank rather than as a reward for outstanding services.[19]

Attitudes of civil servants to authority are seen in Table 7.4.

TABLE 7.4

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS REGARDING AUTHORITY
(in percentages)

Statement	*Strongly Agree*	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly Disagree*	*No Response*
A good son always feels an undying love, gratitude and respect for his parents	46.3	44.2	6.9	0.5	2.1
Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn	37.5	48.4	9.4	1.3	3.4
A highly centralized political and administrative system is the most efficient way of achieving development	18.5	45.0	26.6	3.7	6.2

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

Filial piety is regarded as one of the most important virtues in society. As many as 91 per cent of the respondents agreed with the statement that a good son always feels undying love, gratitude and respect for his parents, while 86 per cent of them felt that obedience and respect for authority are the two most important virtues children should learn. Family obligations are very strong and tend to take priority over the more abstract and impersonal formal relationships. Abueva, writing on the Philippines, made the general observation that,

> When the impersonality of bureaucratic roles remains more of an ideal than a behavioral pattern internalized in the personalities of the administrators, the consequences are predictable. In a society that normally stresses kinship values, friendship based on the unending reciprocity of personal favours (*utang na loob*), and other variants of social segmentation, politics and administration inevitably assume particularistic and ascriptive ways as well.[20]

This applies to Malaysia as well as the Philippines. Wilson points out that 'for most Malays fulfilment of kin obligations takes first place in relation to fulfilment of the conditions of an impersonal contract such as that existing between employer and employee. . . .'[21]

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Interpersonal relations are determined, to a large extent, by one's attitudes towards human nature and by one's attitudes towards persons of different social status. In a society where there is a low estimate of human nature, people tend to be suspicious of others. Administration is, therefore, conducted in a highly personalized manner. Informal, personal communications are usually more effective than the formal, impersonal channels. This is generally true in all systems of administration but in Malaysia personal contacts are especially important. It is the most effective way of getting things done.

The impersonality and formality which characterizes the Weberian bureaucracy exists in form but not in reality. There is little separation of official and private life especially at the state and local government levels where it is likely that one's superior is also a member of the traditional élite. It is true that civil servants function within a system of rules and regulations that have been previously laid down. But it is also well-known that these rules and regulations can be easily bent or adjusted to individual needs. Thus personal status outside the bureaucratic hierarchy is very important in determining how these rules are interpreted by civil servants. A rejection of an application for some government assistance is often interpreted by the applicant as an unwillingness to help on the part of the individual civil servant rather than as an inability to do so because of the existing rules. Thus personal factors influence government decisions even though there is a formalistic legal framework which is supposed to circumscribe and limit administrative action.

Decisions are made according to the status and influence of the individual concerned and then justified by finding the appropriate regulations to support the decision. Thus there are numerous rules and regulations, many of which are subject to conflicting interpretations. Some may even be waived under certain conditions, thus allowing for considerable manoeuvrability. Riggs describes the highly formalistic system of prismatic societies as a system which allows civil servants 'to fabricate interpretations which permit them to do what they wish or what their clients and protégés find profitable', creating the 'twin phenomena of overconformity and non-enforcement'.[22]

It follows from the above discussion that when a decision has to be taken it is important that the person making the decision is fully aware of the 'background' of the applicant so that the 'right' decision may be made. Great pains are taken therefore to ensure that one gets a sympathetic hearing by using whatever contacts and channels that are available. The usual method if one does not know the person directly is to find out who has influence with him and speak to this person. Often one looks to see who one knows personally in a particular department and makes representation to him rather than looking to see who is in charge of a particular matter. Even in cases where no special favour is being

requested it is found necessary to use one's influence to expedite matters. Senior civil servants are usually overworked and therefore have to give priority to what they consider to be pressing matters which require their immediate attention. Other matters may have to be put aside and often remain unattended to for an indefinite period. Often unresolved matters are inherited by a new officer transferred to the post who may know even less about the matter and therefore continues to allow the matter to remain unresolved. This is what has been termed selective neglect. The civil servant selects what matters to attend to and what to ignore, or at least neglect for the time being.

A society which places a high value on authority and compliance usually tends to be highly rigid. People are taught to obey and comply rather than to challenge the known and established ways of doing things. A highly structured authority pattern is therefore inimical to the development of an innovative bureaucracy. Thompson points out that:

> Innovation . . . is a by-product of freedom—a true freedom in which the individual has such a sense of personal security that he is not afraid to make choices. It is by innovation, indeed, that we recognize freedom in an organization. The free person is one who is not afraid to do something different—something not dictated by authority, the group, tradition or personality.[23]

The conditions for innovation appear to be lacking in the Malaysian civil service. There is a high degree of personal insecurity which impedes the development of creative thinking. This appears to be one of the serious obstacles impairing civil service efficiency. The tasks set down by the government require men and women who have new ideas and are willing to experiment with them. Yet the civil service environment stifles initiative and innovation.

Decision-making involves risks. In a society where there is a high degree of personal security there tends to be a greater willingness to make decisions. But where there is a high degree of personal insecurity there is an unwillingness to make decisions if the risks involved are too great. Part of the reason for the unwillingness of subordinates to make decisions is the fear of making mistakes. The penalty for making mistakes may be severe but there is no penalty for avoiding action. This is a system where 'it is commission rather than omission that is more likely to lead an individual into difficulty with his patronal superiors, and it is not strange that all but a few shy away as much as possible either from decision-making or a firm commitment to performance'.[24]

Reluctance to take initiative is also a consequence of the feeling among many subordinates that they will be blamed if anything goes wrong but will not get the credit if things go right. It is significant that about 78 per cent of the civil servants agreed with the statement that 'subordinates rarely get the credit for what they do because superiors take the credit'.

To encourage initiative and innovation there must be an atmosphere of trust and security. The story was told to me of the former Prime Minister's attempt to build up a cadre of dynamic creative adminis-

trators for trouble-shooting jobs at the federal secretariat. When he found such officers he brought them from the districts to Kuala Lumpur. But he was disappointed because they ceased to be the dynamic, creative officers he thought they were. He did not realize that, having been hand-picked by the Prime Minister, many of these officers were too afraid to make a wrong move which would incur his displeasure and spoil all their chances of getting on in the service. It was felt that the Prime Minister did not tolerate 'mistakes' as he called decisions which he did not like or which, with the benefit of hindsight, were found to be not the best. It was natural, therefore, for these civil servants to delay making decisions until they were absolutely sure they were making the right ones. A considerable amount of time was therefore spent in trying to find out the views of important political leaders so that they could then support these views with data and arguments, rather than forming an independent judgement of the merits and demerits of each course of action.

[1] See especially Morroe Berger, *Bureaucracy and Society in Modern Egypt: a Study of the Higher Civil Service*, Princeton, N.J., University of Princeton Press, 1957, and Robert Presthus, 'The Social Bases of Bureaucratic Organization', *Social Forces*, 19 (1959), pp.103-9.

[2] Ibid., p.103.

[3] Seymour Martin Lipset, 'Bureaucracy and Social Change' in Robert Merton, *et al.*, *Reader in Bureaucracy*, New York, The Free Press, 1952, p.230.

[4] George M. Foster, 'Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 67, Part 1 (1965), pp.296-7. Although the limited good hypothesis is examined in the context of peasant societies Foster comments: 'I do not believe the Image of Limited Good is characteristic only of peasant societies. Quite the contrary, it is found, in one degree or another, in most or all socio-economic levels in newly-developing countries . . .', Note 5, p.311.

[5] James Scott, *Political Ideology in Malaysia*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1968, pp.94-101.

[6] M. J. Esman, *Administration and Development in Malaysia*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1971, p.114.

[7] This second aspect will be discussed in the next section.

[8] *Rukunegara*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1970. The other four beliefs are 'loyalty to King and Country, upholding the Constitution, upholding the Rule of Law, and good moral behaviour'.

[9] Frederick T. Bent, 'The Turkish Bureaucracy as an Agent of Change', *Journal of Comparative Administration*, Vol. 1 (May 1969), p.54.

[10] S. Husin Ali, *Malay Peasant Society and Leadership*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1975, pp.59-60.

[11] Gordon P. Means, 'The Role of Islam in the Political Development of Malaysia', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (January 1967), p.268.

[12] Esman, op.cit., p.277.

[13] *Report of the Committee Appointed by the National Operations Council to Study Campus Life of Students of the University of Malaya* (The Majid Report), Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1971, p.29.

[14] S. Husin Ali, op.cit., p.100. See also the moving novel by Shahnon Ahmad, *No Harvest But a Thorn*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1972.

[15] Hans-Dieter Evers, 'Higher Civil Servants in Thailand: Social Mobility, Overseas Education and Attitudes Towards Their Own Culture Tradition', p.10.

[16] H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1958, p.197.

[17] Very little is known of the relationship between attitudes to authority and child rearing practices in Malaysia. One study which attempts to discuss the child's position in the household is Rosemary Firth, *Housekeeping Among Malay Peasants*, Monographs on Social Anthropology, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1943, pp.83-6.

[18] Esman, op.cit., p.120.

[19] Zakaria Haji Ahmad, 'The Sociology of Title-giving', *Journal of the Political Science Society*, University of Singapore, Vol. 2 (September 1972), pp.45-59. The civil servants appear to have worked out among themselves at what rank they expect to get what award. The writer was taken aback when, on congratulating a civil servant who had just been awarded some decoration by the Agung, the reply was 'Oh, that was due to me three years ago'.

[20] Jose Veloso Abueva, 'Administrative Culture and Behaviour and Middle Civil Servants in the Philippines' in Edward Weidner, *Development Administration in Asia*, Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 1970, p.157.

[21] P. Wilson, *A Malay Village and Malaysia*, New Haven, Human Relations Area Files Inc., 1967, pp.97-8.

[22] Riggs, *Administration in Developing Countries: the Theory of Prismatic Society*, p.183.

[23] Victor A. Thompson, *Bureaucracy and Innovation*, University of Washington Press, 1969, p.99.

[24] Iltija H. Khan, 'Bureaucracy in a Developing Country: India', *Public Administration* (Australia), Vol. XXXII, No. 4, December 1973, p.361.

VIII Motivation and Morale in the Civil Service

MOTIVATION and morale are complex psychological characteristics that involve several interrelated factors. In this chapter four aspects of motivation and morale will be analysed: prestige of government employment, satisfaction with employment in government service, opportunities for promotion and advancement, and perceptions of civil servants regarding criteria used in determining promotions.

PRESTIGE OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT

During the colonial period when political power was concentrated in the civil service there was considerable prestige in government employment. In particular high prestige was accorded to members of the Malayan Civil Service. Like their counterparts in India and Ceylon, the MCS officers were regarded as 'above the weaknesses common to their human kind and invested with a peculiar uprightness whose operation may be very inconvenient for some individuals but is of utmost benefit to the whole community'.[1] By limiting non-British entry into the MCS to Malays of royal blood the British reinforced the prestige of the MCS as a service for the chosen few. The effect of this on Malay society has been described by Mokhzani as follows: 'Being in the government service in itself already brings prestige and gives a status position of *orang kerajaan* ('government person') which is ranked higher than the ordinary person (*orang biasa*)'.[2] Syed Hussein Alatas points out that the preference of Malays for serving in government is not only because it is difficult for them to enter government service but also because of cultural conditioning. In traditional Malay society the occupation most worthy of prestige was the one associated with the ruler. According to Alatas:

> The British in Malaysia had absorbed the aristocracy into the civil service, strengthened their position and privileges, and guaranteed their continuation and consolidation as it had never been guaranteed in the past. The absorption of the aristocracy into the government service has made that service a place where two mutually reinforcing status systems met. Hence the prestige accorded to government service is enormous. Economically and socially the civil service provided the only opportunity for comfortable life and rapid upward mobility for the aspiring educated Malays.[3]

For graduates with liberal arts degrees, the MCS was the shortest avenue for upward mobility. Other services such as the Customs, Income Tax, and Social Welfare were inferior to the MCS in terms of salary, increments and promotion opportunities. But because of the limited opportunities in the private sector for graduates with liberal arts degrees employment in these services was also in considerable demand.

One would assume that there would be less demand for employment in government service by graduates with professional and technical degrees as there are tremendous opportunities for them in the private sector. In his study Alatas shows that while this is true of Chinese and Indian professionals, this is not true of Malay professionals who tend to prefer government employment even when there are opportunities for them to work in the private sector. According to him, this is the result of 'cultural conditioning'. The association of the aristocracy with the government in traditional Malay society has resulted in the high prestige and status of government employment.[4] Added to this is the security of tenure associated with government employment and the belief that one is assured of a regular income for the rest of one's working life.

The high prestige of government employment is also reflected in another study where students entering the University of Malaya were asked to grade occupations according to prestige and earning capacity. The results are shown in Table 8.1.

TABLE 8.1

PRESTIGE AND EARNING CAPACITY RANKING OF SELECTED OCCUPATIONS

Occupation	*Respondents who ranked prestige in 1st & 2nd position (cumulated %)*	*Respondents who ranked earnings in 1st & 2nd position (cumulated %)*
Engineer	22	14.4
High-level government administrator	30	13.6
Business executive	12	55.6
Secondary school teacher	3	0.6
University lecturer	29	6.3
Medical doctor	49	41.6
Scientist	24	5.4

Source: Peter Bodora, 'Analysis of Some Factors Influencing the Composition of Higher Education in Malaysia', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1974, Tables 20 and 29.

Apart from the medical profession which carries the most prestige, the government administrator ranks very high, although it is not considered among the best paid occupations.

SATISFACTION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT

One would expect to find potential employees more enthusiastic about the profession they are interested in than those whose working experience of it may have dispelled a few illusions. It is somewhat surprising, therefore, to find that civil servants in Malaysia appear to have lost little of their initial enthusiasm and to be generally satisfied with their employment in government service. About 68 per cent of them answered 'Yes' when asked if they would join government service again if they had a second chance to make the choice. This is significant when we compare this finding to similar studies in other countries where it was generally found that the majority of civil servants indicated a preference for other kinds of employment. In Turkey, for example, it was shown that 63 per cent of the civil servants indicated that they would not join government service had they been given the choice again.[5] In India, 59 per cent of the civil servants in a sample study felt that government service was not attractive. The bulk of these preferred business because career prospects including pay were much better.[6] In Korea, only 18.8 per cent of the civil servants in a study indicated that they would join government when asked, 'What kind of occupation would you choose if you were just coming out of college now?'[7] In Egypt, 53 per cent of the civil servants in a sample study answered 'No' to the question 'Are you able to live on your salary as a civil servant?' Civil servants were forced to supplement their low salaries in government with income from property or from other employment.[8] This was also true in the case of Chile.[9]

But although there appears to be general satisfaction in Malaysia with government service as a career there is evidence to show that this is changing. The civil service is no more the chief avenue of élite recruitment especially for Malays, as was the case in the colonial and immediate post-independence period.[10]

The general expansion in the economy has provided greater opportunities for self-advancement outside the government sector. In times of unemployment and economic recession the government job may be attractive as it provides job security. But when there is an economic expansion it is likely that there will be many more opportunities outside the government than within it. As Ness points out:

> The general economic growth and modernization that Malaysia is currently experiencing implies the creation of a new set of opportunities for high status for well-educated young men. The middle class is expanding with new, well-paid positions in a wide range of new private firms. The upper levels of the bureaucracy are no longer the almost exclusive avenues to high status that they were under British colonial rule . . . . Thus, the relative rewards and attractions of the bureaucracy are diminished and the range of acceptable associates outside of the bureaucracy is greatly increased.[11]

In particular, the opportunities for Malays to enter business and commercial occupations have greatly increased in the last few years as a

result of government's policy of correcting the economic imbalance between the Malays and non-Malays. The Second Malaysia Plan, 1971-75, aims that 'within a period of 20 years, Malays and other indigenous people would manage and own at least 30 per cent of the total commercial and industrial activities in all categories and scales of operations'.[12] Tables 8.2 and 8.3 give an indication of the changing attitudes towards government service, the highest proportion being among Malays. Negative responses were also highest among younger civil

TABLE 8.2

NEGATIVE RESPONSES TO QUESTION 'WOULD YOU ENTER GOVERNMENT SERVICE IF YOU HAD YOUR LIFE TO LIVE OVER AGAIN?', BY ETHNIC ORIGIN

	Total Respondents	*Number of Negative Responses*	%
Malays	514	171	33.3
Chinese	144	32	22.2
Indians & Ceylonese	76	22	28.9
Others	18	5	27.8
No information	10	10	—
Total	762	240	31.5

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

TABLE 8.3

AGE GROUP OF THOSE WHO PREFER A JOB OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT COMPARED WITH AGE GROUP OF TOTAL RESPONDENTS

(in percentages)

Age Group (Years)	*Total Respondents*	*Number who preferred Outside Job*
25 and under	8.9	10.8
26–30	21.5	22.5
31–35	20.2	17.5
36–40	16.7	15.4
41–45	13.1	12.5
46–50	10.1	12.1
51–55	8.3	7.9
56 and above	0.8	0.4
No information	0.4	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

servants who perhaps regret that opportunities now available in the private sector were not available when they started their working lives.

Thus although the civil service will continue to attract men and women because of its relatively high salary and prestige there is a possibility that it will fail to attract the best brains in the country in the future. Already there seems to be some doubt whether it has been able to attract the best men and women. About 70 per cent of the civil servants felt that the government was not getting the best men and women into the government service. The new opportunities in business have resulted in not only Chinese but also Malays preferring to study business administration rather than public administration. With the emphasis on public enterprise as an instrument for greater participation by government in business and commercial undertakings a business administration qualification will give students greater mobility both in the public and private sectors. It is significant that out of the 153 students in the Faculty of Economics and Administration in the 1970/71 Session who were given a choice of division,[13] only 8.5 per cent chose the Public Administration Division. The popular divisions were Applied Economics, Business Administration and Accounting. Details are given in Table 8.4.

TABLE 8.4

STUDENTS' CHOICE OF DIVISION IN THE FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND ADMINISTRATION, UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA, 1970/71*

Division	*Malays*	*Chinese*	*Indians & Others*	*Total*	*(%)*
Accounting	5	22	5	32	20.9
Analytical Economics	5	7	3	15	9.8
Applied Economics	3	31	5	39	25.5
Business Administration	8	27	2	37	24.2
Public Administration	2	8	3	13	8.5
Rural Development	2	2	0	4	2.6
Statistics	2	11	0	13	8.5
Total	27	108	18	153	100.0

Source: From data obtained from Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya.

*Only those who scored 550 marks and above were included because this was the group that was in a position to choose the Division they wanted.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROMOTION AND SELF-ADVANCEMENT

Opportunities for promotion in the civil service vary considerably depending on what service one joined and when one joined. In the MCS promotion opportunities are considerable. In 1972, 43 per cent of the

TABLE 8.5
SUPERSCALE POSTS IN THE MCS, 1972

Grade	*Home Service*	*Foreign Service*	*Total*
Chief Secretary	1	–	1
Special Grades A & B	4	1	5
Superscale A	6	3	9
B	9	5	14
C	17	13	30
D	45	17	62
E	6	8	14
F	85	12	97
G	228	38	266
Timescale Grade 10	524	137	661
Total posts	925	234	1,159

Source: Compiled from data in *Senarai Pegawai-Pegawai Perkhidmatan Tadbir dan Diplomatik Malaysia* (List of officers in the Malaysian Administrative and Diplomatic Service), 1972.

posts in the MCS were superscale posts (Table 8.5). Tilman showed that the MCS offered more opportunities for promotion than any other service and that it 'seems unlikely that any career officer who entered at the normal age of recruitment would fail to rise at least to the first superscale rung by the time of his retirement'.[14] Tilman had predicted however that due to accelerated Malayanization the vacancies at higher levels would be filled by young officers, thus blocking promotional opportunities for future batches of recruits.[15]

This prediction however did not take into account the tremendous expansion in the civil service and particularly in the MCS. The number of officers in the MCS at the time of Independence was 360. By 1962 the number decreased to 277 as a result of the Malayanization. But by 1972 the number of MCS posts had increased to 1,159—more than three times its size at the time of Independence. The proportion of superscale posts to total posts in the service also increased. In 1966 about 38 per cent of the total posts in the MCS were superscale posts. But by 1972 this proportion had increased to 43 per cent. Thus the MCS has been the most attractive service in terms of promotional opportunities. As Tilman points out:

> For the young officer entering the Division I bureaucracy the prospects for promotion to a superscale post are nowhere as bright as they are in the MCS. In fact, from the point of view of pure statistical probability, it appears that in the non-MCS bureaucracy the possibility of many career officers retiring from the top of the timescale cannot be ruled out under normal circumstances; yet in the MCS it seems unlikely that any career officer who entered at the normal age of recruitment would fail to rise at least to the first superscale rung by the time of his retirement. Thus, if an opening is available, the MCS is the logical choice

of any young aspiring bureaucrat with the requisite educational and ascriptive qualification.[16]

Promotional opportunities therefore depend as much on the number of promotional posts there are in each service as on the performance of the officers. The number of senior posts varies tremendously between services, and is one of the main causes of conflict between the administrative officers on the one hand and the professional and technical officers on the other. Usually about 20-30 per cent of the posts in each service are superscale posts. But in the MCS, as mentioned earlier, about 43 per cent of the posts are superscale posts.

The resentment among the officers in the non-MCS services can be understood even more clearly when we look at Table 8.6 which gives the numbers of posts in each salary range for the MCS and the other services.

TABLE 8.6

SENIOR POSTS IN THE MCS COMPARED WITH THE REST OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE (EXCLUDING JUDICIARY AND POLICE), 1972

Salary Per Month	*MCS Posts**		*Other Posts*	
	Number	*(%)*	*Number*	*(%)*
$4,000 and above	3	0.3	–	–
$3,500–3,999	12	1.3	2	0.1
$3,000–3,499	23	2.5	9	0.2
$2,500–2,999	72	7.8	47	1.3
$2,000–2,499	92	9.9	449	12.2
$1,500–1,999	235	25.4	561	15.2
Under $1,500	488	52.8	2,624	71.0
Total	925	100.0	3,692	100.0

Source: Compiled from information provided in the Malaysia *Senarai Pegawai-Pegawai Persekutuan* (Staff List of the Federal Higher Civil Service), 1972.

*Home service only.

If we regard the last rung as equivalent roughly to the timescale level, we see that the proportion of superscale posts to total posts is 47 per cent for the MCS[17] whereas for the other services it is only 29 per cent. Even more galling to the officers in the non-MCS services is the fact that the highest posts in government seem to be reserved almost exclusively for MCS officers. For example there are only 2 posts outside the MCS which carry a salary of $3,500 per month or more whereas there are 15 such posts in the MCS. Similarly there are only 56 posts carrying a salary of between $2,500 and $3,500 per month outside the MCS compared with 95 posts in the MCS alone which fall within this salary range. Thus the MCS, which is only about one-fifth the size of the higher civil service, takes about 29 per cent of all superscale posts and

65 per cent of all top superscale posts which carry a monthly salary of $2,500 and above. Thus promotional opportunities are heavily weighted in favour of the MCS.

The question of the availability of superscale posts does not only relate to opportunities for promotion but also to matters of status and influence. There are three levels at which MCS officers exercise influence over the operating ministries and departments: first, at the highest policy-making level where they fill all positions in the Treasury, Public Services Department, Economic Planning Unit, Implementation Coordination Unit, General Planning Unit and Secretariat to the Cabinet; secondly, at the ministerial level where they fill all positions of Secretary-General in the Ministries and the majority of posts in the divisions of planning, personnel and finance; and thirdly, at the state and district levels where they fill some of the positions of State Secretary, State Financial Officer, State Commissioner of Land, State Development Officer, district officer, land officer and chairman of the town board.[18]

There is thus a highly centralized system of control exercised through MCS officers over the operating departments. This results in a feeling of alienation on the part of the professional and technical officers. They have constantly to refer matters up for decision and prior approval. They are constantly thwarted by the lack of proper supplies and equipment, by the shortage of staff, and by the 'red tape' that seems to be characteristic of all government administration. In a newspaper article one writer described the case of a doctor who had 'never wanted to go into private practice when I first joined government service' but who was forced to resign because of the 'irregular working hours, extra (and unrewarded) responsibilities, unattractive compulsory postings where the inadequate facilities and the eternal red tape aggravates matters.'[19]

It is true of course that many professional officers leave government service for more attractive salaries in the private sector. But like the doctor in the case quoted above, many also leave because of the poor working conditions in government service. These officers joined the government knowing full well that they could get better salaries by working in private practice. But they often do so because besides opportunities for research and specialization in government service, many of them are motivated by a sense of duty. Reality and expectation, however, tend to be far removed and they find themselves beset by difficulties. Shortage of staff and adequately trained auxiliary assistants, breakdowns in supplies of equipment and other necessities, bureaucratic interference and insensitivity to professional needs and standards frustrate the expectations they entertained on entering the service. The extra duties which these setbacks entail prevent them from giving the attention they think necessary to those aspects of their work which their sense of duty tells them most need it and which they consider generally most useful and personally most rewarding, and, in addition, disappoint their hopes of engaging in research. A further frustration is that attendance at conferences related to their areas of interest, particularly

those taking place overseas and which are a necessary part of research and specialization programmes are often denied them not only due to pressure of work but because there tends to be a lack of adequate provision for participation in such activities. This results in a sense of frustration and eventual resignation from government service.

The shortage of staff is a serious obstacle impeding the implementation of government's development efforts. When asked to identify the five most bothersome obstacles which impede them in carrying out their work efficiently, the civil servants ranked 'Insufficient numbers of competent staff' as the most serious problem. The shortage of staff is critical in the professional and technical areas where government has not only been unsuccessful in recruiting officers in sufficient numbers but in motivating those who join to stay in government service.[20]

Besides the professional and technical officers other officers in administrative positions (outside the MCS) appear to be frustrated and have a low morale because of the lack of opportunities for promotion. Many officers in these services have only general arts degrees or no university education at all which reduces their occupational mobility. Many of them are dissatisfied with government service but are unable to turn to other jobs in the private sector. Officers in lower administrative services, such as the MAS, the state administrative services and the department of information, customs and cooperatives belong to this category. The MAS which in the past used to be the chief avenue for recruitment into the MCS[21] has become a dead-end service as preference is now given to university graduates with honours degrees who are recruited directly into the MCS. MAS officers thus find their promotion opportunities blocked by a change of policy. Many of them feel that they are doing the same kind of work and have the same responsibilities as MCS officers but are accorded a much lower salary and status. One MAS officer expressed his frustrations in these words:

> The difference in the schemes of service and salaries of MCS and MAS officers has caused immense dissatisfaction among the MAS officers. There are all kinds of obstacles preventing us from being promoted into the MCS just because we failed to obtain the honours degree even though we undertook the same course for three years at the University of Malaya. The Assistant District Officers who are MAS officers do the same work as the ADOs who are MCS officers . . . and yet we are discriminated against.[22]

Recently the government announced that the MAS will be dissolved and a new service created, the General Administrative Service which will merge the MAS with the State Administrative Services, Immigration, National Registration, Election Commission, Road Transport and Manpower Services.[23] Hopefully this will give members of these services greater promotional opportunities.

PERCEPTIONS OF CIVIL SERVANTS REGARDING CRITERIA USED IN DETERMINING PROMOTIONS

When there is a vacancy to be filled, what are the criteria used for deter-

mining who is to be promoted? Here it is essential to know the views of civil servants as this would give some indication regarding morale within the civil service. For example if civil servants feel that no matter how hard they work and how well they perform their functions they will not be promoted as promotions depend on factors other than hard work and performance, it is likely that there will be low morale and inefficiency in the civil service. In the same way if civil servants feel that hard work and performance is rewarded, it is likely that there will be higher morale and a striving for greater efficiency. Table 8.7 shows the perceptions of civil servants regarding the criteria that are used to determine promotions.

When asked to rank the three most important factors which are actually taken into account in determining promotion, civil servants ranked seniority, past performance and qualifications as the three most important criteria. Other factors such as political sponsorships, belonging to the 'right' family or to the 'right' ethnic group did not appear to be important criteria for determining promotion, as seen in Table 8.7.

TABLE 8.7
PERCEPTIONS OF CIVIL SERVANTS REGARDING CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION

Factors	*1st Ranking*	*2nd Ranking*	*3rd Ranking*
Education/training received	99	271	222
Seniority or length of service	224	263	152
Quality of past performance	133	312	157
Political sponsorship	26	54	14
Belonging to the 'right' family	23	60	13
Belonging to the 'right' ethnic group	27	55	19
Good luck	46	30	8
Others	17	25	11

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

Thus civil servants in Malaysia generally believe that they are promoted because of their education, seniority and performance rather than because of political pull or personal considerations. This is very different from findings in some other developing countries. In the Chilean bureaucracy, for example, 52 per cent of the administrative élite and 32 per cent of the professional and technical officers believe that personal, family or political 'pull' were the bases for promotion,[24] and in Ecuador 70 per cent of the sample shared the opinion that political, personal and family ties are of crucial importance in obtaining a position at the level of section chief.[25] The impact of personal and political considerations on the public service in the Philippines has been vividly described as follows:

It is a general observation that when vacancies occur in a particular agency, hordes of job seekers, bearing letters of recommendation from senators and congressmen flock to it. Some well-connected applicants are even accompanied by these politicians personally, or initial letters of recommendation are followed by telephone calls. With all these pressures, administrators have to be specially adept and tactful if they do not want to antagonize these politicians. While they may be really desirous of recruiting the best people, they are most of the time forced to compromise by accommodating protégés of politicians having considerable power and influence over the affairs of the agency.[26]

In Malaysia the problem of graduate employment has not reached the proportions of some other developing countries. Graduates find it relatively easy to find employment although the kind of job they get may not be exactly what they were looking for. A report on patterns of employment and unemployment of University of Malaya graduates in 1970-1972 showed that 42 per cent of the 1972 graduands were able to obtain immediate employment, 31 per cent had to wait for a period of 1-3 months while the rest had to wait longer before their first employment. Only about 13 per cent were still unemployed at the time of the survey, that is in August-September 1972.[27] For the time being at least it has been possible for graduates to find employment without resorting to political and personal patronage.

Thus civil servants appear to accept a system of recruitment based on impersonal factors such as education and experience. The following question was put to respondents: 'As you know, the Government, in employing people usually considers their educational qualifications and experience. In addition, do you think the Government should consider other factors in making appointments?' A checklist of factors such as social position, family connections, wealth, place of birth, racial origin, religion, and political beliefs was given. About 80 per cent of the respondents felt that educational qualifications, experience and participation in extramural activities[28] should be the only factors in recruitment to government service. To some extent at least, the response reflects the general belief of civil servants that they themselves were selected over other applicants because of their qualifications and performance at the selection board interview. They, therefore, tended to discount all ascriptive factors. Even the controversial ethnic factor was rejected by 65.2 per cent of the respondents.[29]

When asked, 'Compared with your colleagues who joined the service at the same time as you, how do you rate your promotions since you joined the service?', 61.3 per cent of the respondents felt that it was 'rapid' or 'normal' while 31.1 per cent felt that it was 'slow'. To another question, 'All things considered, do you honestly feel you have been treated fairly with regard to promotions, salary, workload, status and appreciation of work?', the response is given in Table 8.8.

Only about 20 per cent of the officers appeared dissatisfied with the treatment they had received in government service. This is a very low figure considering that most people generally feel that they do not get

TABLE 8.8

PERCEPTIONS OF CIVIL SERVANTS ON HOW THEY HAVE BEEN TREATED IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE
(in percentages)

Treatment with regard to	*Very Well*	*Reasonably Well*	*Fair*	*Poorly*	*Very Poorly*
Promotions	5.4	28.0	46.7	13.0	6.9
Salary	4.1	25.0	49.1	17.0	4.8
Workload	5.0	32.6	39.5	17.8	5.1
Status	3.7	31.9	40.3	19.0	5.1
Appreciation	4.7	29.4	45.9	15.1	4.9

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

TABLE 8.9

PERCEPTIONS OF CIVIL SERVANTS OF WHAT THEY CONSIDER TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR FOR ADVANCEMENT IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE

Factors	*Number*	*(%)*
Ability and hard work	349	45.8
Ability to get on with superiors	183	24.0
Seniority	105	13.8
Having the backing of important persons	101	13.3
Others	11	1.4
No response	13	1.7
Total	762	100.0

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

as much as they really deserve. This general satisfaction with their conditions of service is significant especially when we compare it with the attitudes of civil servants in other developing countries. To another question asking respondents to give the most important factor for advancement in government service, the response is given in Table 8.9. Ability and hard work are considered by 45.8 per cent of the respondents as the most important factor for individual advancement in government service, while 13.8 per cent believe that seniority is the most important factor. It is significant however that 24 per cent of the respondents believe that ability to get on with superiors is the most important factor. In a system where there is no objective measurement of performance, evaluation reports from superiors provide the only assessment of performance. Promotions are decided by boards composed of members who have little personal knowledge of the candidates and who therefore

have to rely almost entirely on confidential reports from superior officers. For example, the Public Services Promotion Board Regulations provide for the establishment of various promotion boards to decide on matters of promotion for civil servants. There is also established under these regulations an Appeal Board for officers in the highest level, the managerial and technical group, with powers to decide on any appeal made by the Promotion Board.[30] The composition of these boards is laid down in the First Schedule. For promotion to posts of Superscale 'J' Grade and above, the board consists of the Chief Secretary (as chairman), the Director-General Public Services, and at least two but not more than three members of the Managerial and Professional Group to be appointed by the Prime Minister. Thus the ability to get on with superior officers is as important, if not more important than, the ability to do the job.

[1] C.W. Harrison, *Some Notes on the Government Service in British Malaya*, London, Malayan Information Agency, 1929, p.30.

[2] Mokhzani bin Abdul Rahim, 'The Study of Social Stratification and Social Mobility in Malaya', *East Asian Cultural Studies*, Vol. IV, No. 1-4 (March 1965), p.149.

[3] Syed Hussein Alatas, 'The Grading of Occupational Prestige Amongst the Malays in Malaysia', *Journal Malaysian Branch Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. XLI, Pt. I, 1968, p.91.

[4] Ibid., p.93.

[5] A.T.J. Mathews, *Emergent Turkish Administrators*, Ankara University of Ankara, Institute of Administrative Sciences, 1955, p.27.

[6] V.A. Pai Panandiker, 'Values, Attitudes and Motivation of Civil Servants', *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (1966), p.549.

[7] Dong Suh Bark, 'The Problems of Korean Higher Civil Servants: Their Social Background and Morale', in *Some Problems in Public Administration in Developing Countries*, Institute of Advanced Projects, East-West Centre, Occasional Papers Translation Series No. 13, 1966, p.15. He found that 71.3 per cent of the civil servants in the sample indicated that their salary was insufficient and about 64.1 per cent indicated that they supplemented their living expenses from the earnings of other members of the family (p.7).

[8] M. Berger, *Bureaucracy and Society in Modern Egypt*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1957, p.106.

[9] James Petras, *Politics and Social Forces in Chilean Development*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1969, p.313.

[10] Robert Tilman, 'Policy Formulation, Policy Execution and the Political Elite Structure of Contemporary Malaya' in Wang Gungwu, *Malaysia*, Praeger, London, 1965, p.350.

[11] Gayl D. Ness, 'The Malayan Bureaucracy and its Occupational Communities: a Comment on James de Vere Allen's "Malayan Civil Service, 1874-1941"', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 12 (1970), pp.185-6.

[12] *Second Malaysia Plan 1971-1975*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1971, p.42. In 1969, Malay ownership of share capital of limited companies amounted to 1.5 per cent of the total share capital (p.40).

[13] There are seven Divisions in the Faculty of Economics & Administration—Accounting, Analytical Economics, Applied Economics, Business Administration, Public Administration, Rural Development and Statistics. After taking a common course in the first year, students choose the Division in which they will specialize. Those with very high marks were given the Division of their choice while others were assigned Divisions according to vacancies available.

[14] Tilman, *Bureaucratic Transition in Malaya*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1964, p.103.

[15] Ibid., p.78.

[16] Ibid., p.103.

[17] This figure is slightly higher than the figure given in Table 8.5 because of the fact that the salaries do not directly correspond with the grades in each service.

[18] In states where there is already an established state administrative service some of these posts at state and district levels may be filled by officers from the state administrative service.

[19] *New Straits Times*, 11 March 1972. It is significant that many professional officers in government service do not regard themselves as 'civil servants'. 'Civil servants' refers only to MCS officers!

[20] In 1971 the Prime Minister announced that the number of superscale posts in the professional and technical departments would be increased. *New Straits Times*, 1 July 1971. But no action has yet been taken.

[21] Robert Tilman, 'The Malay Administrative Service, 1910-1960', *Indian Journal of Public Administration* (April-June 1961), pp.145-57.

[22] Reply given in response to a question in the questionnaire.

[23] *New Straits Times*, 1 April 1974.

[24] Petras, op.cit., p.307.

[25] Freeman J. Wright, *The Upper-Level Public Administrator in Ecuador*, Quito, Institute of Administrative Studies, Central University of Ecuador, 1968, p.22. In Brazil, civil servants felt that patronage was still an important factor in recruitment and promotion despite the attempts to establish a merit system. Lawrence S. Graham, *Civil Service Reform in Brazil: Principles versus Practice*, Austin, Texas University Press, 1968, p.86. For a useful summary of studies on bureaucracy in Latin American countries see Jerry Weaver, 'Role Expectations of Latin American Bureaucracies: Hypothesis and Data', LADAC Occasional Papers, Series 2, No. 3, Austin, University of Texas, 1971.

[26] G. Francisco, *Higher Civil Servants in the Philippines: a study of Backgrounds, Career Patterns and Attitudes of Filipino Higher Officials*, Quezon City, College of Public Administration, University of the Philippines, 1960, p.193.

[27] *Pantai Poll Report—A Report on Patterns of Employment and Unemployment of University of Malaya Graduates 1970-1972*, Persatuan Siswazah Selangor, December 1974. There are of course differences in job opportunities between races. Of the Malay graduands of 1972, 1.9 per cent were unemployed at the time of the survey as compared with 15 per cent of the Chinese and 40 per cent of the Indians.

[28] About 82 per cent of the respondents were of the view that extramural activities are important as they indicate potential leadership qualities.

[29] For a fuller discussion on the replies regarding racial origin, see Chapter V, p.100.

[30] *Public Services Promotion Board Regulations 1972*, PU(A) 47, Vol. 16, No. 4, Government Gazette, 24 Feb. 1972. See also *Public Services Promotion Board (Amendment) Regulations 1972*, PU(A) 275, Vol. 16, No. 19, Government Gazette, 14 Sept. 1972.

IX Administration and Development

MALAYSIA has enjoyed a respectable rate of economic growth since Independence. This has been achieved largely through a free enterprise system. Until 1969 government policy had been directed towards encouraging private investment, while at the same time trying to achieve a more equitable distribution of wealth among the ethnic groups. In particular, the rural development programmes were aimed at achieving a higher standard of living for the rural Malays.

Since 1969, while the government is still committed to a free enterprise system, it has also become more directly involved in the economy. Through government owned and controlled public enterprises and joint ventures with private enterprise, the government has become an entrepreneur. In addition the government has attempted to regulate, more tightly than it has done before, the activities of private enterprises. This has necessitated a highly efficient and dynamic administration, which has the flexibility to adapt to changing environments and the technical capacity to deal with the technical complexities of a modern government.

But the bureaucratic structure, which was inherited from the colonial past and which may have been suitable for administering a colony, has certain dysfunctional aspects and has been found to be inappropriate for solving problems of innovation and directed change. This is seen especially in the highly centralized and hierarchical nature of administrative authority.

The dysfunctional effect of a highly centralized system of administration is clearly indicated in responses to questions on problems of administration. When asked, 'How often does each of the following situations occur in your organization?' the response given showed that one of the biggest problems impeding efficient administration is the lack of effective delegation of authority. This is seen in Table 9.1.

The respondents felt that the major defect of the over-centralized system was that there were unnecessary delays and that senior officers did not have enough time to concentrate on long-range goals or to give adequate supervision to their staff. The concentration of authority in the hands of a few officials at the top is partly the consequence of the system of government in which, despite the federal form, power is concentrated in the central government.

But even within the central government there is a concentration of

TABLE 9.1

RESPONSES TO STATEMENTS SHOWING DYSFUNCTIONAL EFFECTS OF CENTRALIZATION OF AUTHORITY

(in percentages)

Statement	*Frequently*	*Sometimes*	*Seldom*	*Never*	*No Response*
Men at higher levels not having enough time to explain matters fully to staff who have to carry out decisions	34.6	34.1	23.4	7.3	0.6
Decisions made too slowly to meet programme needs	45.8	32.4	15.9	5.4	0.5
Quick decisions made by persons not familiar with the problems	24.4	29.1	29.3	16.5	0.7
Men at higher levels spending their time on matters that should be left to people at lower levels	35.2	25.9	26.0	12.7	0.2
Men at higher levels being too concerned with today's problems but not with long-range goals	38.8	32.9	19.2	8.4	0.7

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

power in the hands of the MCS officers who hold key positions in the central secretariat. The civil service is divided into separate services with the MCS at the top and the other services at lower levels. The MCS maintains control over the operating departments through its powers to make decisions over policy matters.

The emphasis on control is therefore one of the main reasons for the highly centralized administration. This stems from the basic insecurity of a constant-pie oriented society and the need to establish external controls to ensure order and compliance.[1] The insecurity of a multi-racial society has aggravated the problem. Even within the civil service one sees the element of ethnic insecurity. The MCS which is composed primarily of Malays is seen as necessary in order to control the other branches of the civil service, especially the services in which non-Malays predominate, so that government pro-Malay policies are not sabotaged. The policies of government which are directed at assisting Malays to improve their economic position are especially vulnerable to suspicions and fears. Fears that non-MCS officers may abuse their authority and obstruct the implementation of government policies are used to justify the concentration of authority in the hands of the Malay MCS officers.

Thus control is ensured by minimizing the number of decision-making

positions in the operating departments. In fact even when attempts are made to delegate powers to make decisions to operating departments they are quickly 'neutralized' by introducing rules and procedures which ensure that effective control is maintained by the MCS officers. For example it was shown in one study that the Ministry of Health was given authority to make decisions to employ doctors on a temporary basis to ensure speed in the processing of applications and thus overcome the problems of shortage. But the MCS officers in the Ministry of Health insisted on scrutinizing all applications again and querying specific decisions made by the professional officers on the grounds that 'the Directors of Medical and Health [Departments] of each State and Heads of Institutions were not following strictly to instructions in recruiting staff. They therefore had to be fully supervised and checked.'[2]

The administrative problems created by a highly centralized system are not unknown to politicians and administrators and often one hears about the need to decentralize authority and give more powers to make decisions to officers at lower levels.[3] But little has yet been done to change the system. In fact it is unlikely that the system will be changed in the near future. The basic insecurities that result in the need for a control-oriented government and civil service must first be removed to give way for a less suspicious and a more open society. At present the system resembles very closely the description of the Indian bureaucracy where development programmes are 'reviewed by too many persons, in too many organs of government in too detailed, too repetitive, and in too negative terms. Perhaps nowhere else have so many systematic barriers been erected to prevent accomplishment of that which, it has been determined, should be done.'[4]

The role of the MCS in controlling and directing policies makes it the most politicized branch of the civil service. This is a role which it inherited from the British colonial administration and which it has strengthened since Independence. The superiority of the MCS *vis-à-vis* the other services was justified during the colonial period on the grounds that the senior posts were political posts and MCS officers filling the posts of Residents and Advisers were responsible for the direction of policy and had need for constant contact with the Rulers.[5]

As in India the district officers (known in India as district collectors)

> . . . were entrusted with total responsibility for the region, indeed for all administrative activities ranging from the collection of land revenue and the keeping of law and order, to the general co-ordination of all local activities. . . . Once such an institution became entrenched, a lot of myth and legend naturally grew around it. Report after report on India explained how the district collector was the foundation of British administration. Such legends buttressed the faith of the administrator in himself as a generalist co-ordinator over and above his basic British conviction about the superiority of the gentleman amateur. The district engineer and the medical officer who came much later on the scene faced this entrenched and confident overlord.[6]

Thus in the absence of a local political leadership the function of the administrative cadre in the colonies was political. But with independence and the existence of a political leadership one would have expected the role of the administrative cadre to diminish politically. This, however, did not happen. The ethnic composition of the MCS was changed to 'match' that of the political leadership. In particular, strong links were forged between the now Malay-dominated MCS and UMNO. These links were not only political in nature but religious, cultural and linguistic. At the highest levels the common interests of these two groups made for a close and mutually committed working relationship. As a result of its close identification with the political leadership, the MCS continued to enjoy the high status it had acquired and to strengthen its political position. Its loyalty and commitment to the leadership earned it their confidence and trust which gave it an important role in political decision-making. An example is the role of the district officer after Independence. The creation of district development and security committees with the district officer as chairman and the heads of specialist departments as members institutionalized the superiority of the administrator-generalist over the specialist and buttressed the myth of the district officer as a political overlord. And as ethnic insecurity increased after 1969, even the most routine of administrative decisions began to assume dimensions of political and ethnic significance, and the civil service inevitably became directly involved in politics.

Thus the MCS has not only maintained but improved its status and power in society, widening the disparities that had already existed between it and the other services during the colonial period. It has expanded in size and in areas of influence and control. The trust and confidence of the political leadership has given it a major role in policy-making.

Not only has the power of the MCS increased since Independence, but it is likely to gain more ground in the future. The multi-racial character of society and the fears of inter-racial conflicts, especially since 1969,[7] has strengthened the need for controls. The political objectives of national unity through restructuring society have become of primary importance, the maintenance of law and order has been re-emphasized, and the need for greater controls which is the consequence of an inherent insecurity is emphasized. This means a further strengthening of the political role of the MCS. Whereas in some newly independent countries the pòlitical role of the civil servant has been undermined,[8] in Malaysia his position has been strengthened.

Thus the plural nature of Malaysia's political system which is characterized by a struggle for scarce resources among competing groups gives a political bias to all decisions, even those which in other countries would be considered routine administrative decisions. The political nature of decision-making has further strengthened the position of the administrative élite because this is the area in which they work closely with the political élite. It has also emphasized the need to give priority

to decisions which strengthen the authoritative character of the state and improve the legitimacy of the government. Thus although technical-economic criteria may be used in decision-making they are not as important as political criteria, although they are often used to justify a decision which has already been reached on political grounds. Although at times it may be possible to make decisions which fulfil both political and technical economic criteria, when there is a clash between these two considerations, it is clear that political considerations will outweigh any others. This dilemma is one which many other developing countries seem to be facing. A recent United Nations report on Personnel Policy for Development emphasized the 'fundamental contradiction' between political and technical considerations and commented that when there is such a clash 'the laws of government and administration are such that political factors will generally prevail'.[9]

There are, however, important areas of administration where technical and professional knowledge is necessary. As part of the political objective of restructuring society the government has committed itself to a more direct role in the economy than it has played in the past. In addition to encouraging private investment in the direction of government policy, the government is participating more directly 'in the establishment and operation of a wide range of productive enterprises through wholly owned enterprises and joint ventures with the private sector'.[10]

These new functions of government call for a new kind of technical and managerial competence. Where is the government to obtain such expertise? There is a shortage of such expertise in the country as a whole and especially in the Malay community. It is therefore likely that Malay administrators will be required to perform these new functions.[11]

There are a large number of Malays with general arts degrees who could be employed as administrators in government service or in public enterprises. They do not have, however, the kind of specialized knowledge required. They are generalist administrators who are now required to perform functions requiring specialized knowledge. This is the dilemma that is faced by all generalist administrators who have to make decisions requiring technical or professional knowledge.[12] Modern government has become so highly complex and technical in nature that administrators cannot make policies unless they have some technical or specialized knowledge. The need for administrators to become more specialized was emphasized in the Fulton Report:

> Frequent moves from job to job within the service or within a department give 'generalist' administrators proficiency in operating the government machine, and in serving Ministers and Parliament. But many lack the fully-developed professionalism that their work now demands. They do not develop adequate knowledge in depth in any one aspect of the department's work and frequently not even in the general area of activity in which the department operates. Often they are required to give advice on subjects they do not sufficiently understand

or to take decisions whose significance they do not fully grasp. This has serious consequences. It can lead to bad policy-making; it prevents a fundamental evaluation of the policies being administered; it often leads to the adoption of inefficient methods for implementing policies—methods which are sometimes baffling to those outside the service who are affected by them; and it obstructs the establishment of fruitful contacts with sources of expert advice both inside and outside the service.[13]

The need for administrators to have more specialized knowledge is recognized in Malaysia. The Montgomery-Esman Report on Development Administration in Malaysia recommended that administrators be assigned to a particular job for at least three years so that they develop some specialized knowledge.[14] Another report on training recommended that administrators should develop specialized knowledge by post-entry training in one of the following areas: (i) Administrative management; (ii) International relations and foreign affairs; (iii) Economic administration; (iv) Rural and agricultural development—district or land administration; (v) Social development; (vi) Internal security and defence; (vii) Urban affairs and local government.[15]

The need for post-entry training is recognized to a greater degree by administrators rather than by professional and technical officers in the civil service. When asked, 'In general, do you feel that the education which you received prior to joining Government Service provided you with the most suitable background for your job?', 38 per cent of the officers in the MCS and 45 per cent of the administrative officers in public enterprises answered 'No'. But less than 20 per cent of the officers in the professional and technical departments gave the same answer. When asked, 'What kind of education or training would you think would have been more suitable?', many of the administrators felt they would have benefited from training in more specialized fields of public administration such as finance, accounting and personnel management, while others felt that training in business would have been more suitable. It is clear that as public activities extend to more specialized and complex areas of commerce and industry there will be a need for personnel with such talents and skills. As pointed out in the United Nations document on personnel policy, there can be profound psychological as well as administrative costs in selecting people who believe that they have been chosen because they possess desirable 'merits' but know that they are not adequate for the tasks expected of them.

A serious administrative problem associated with the civil servant's lack of confidence in his ability to deal with the tasks expected of him is delay in making decisions. Decisions are not made or are shelved simply because officers lack sufficient understanding of the subject and are afraid to make decisions. Committees are frequently formed so that responsibilities for decisions can be diffused and impersonalized. The Malaysian administration suffers from a serious organizational disease that one writer called 'committeeitis'.[16] Civil servants complain about the large number of committee meetings they have to attend.

About half the working time of respondents was spent on attending meetings. When asked to rank the five most bothersome obstacles which impede them in their work, respondents ranked 'bogged down with too many committee meetings' as the major one.

The formation of committees may of course be a useful device for increasing the flexibility of government administration, especially in situations where rigid hierarchical pyramids prevent quick action. But as has been shown in some other countries it has often served as a device for avoiding hard decisions and protecting the interests of their members.[17] It allows the administrator to conceal his inability to make decisions while at the same time filling up his day and thus giving a pretence of being busy while in essence doing very little.

The immediate answer to the problem is to provide post-entry training in the kinds of specialized areas that are required. At the same time it will be necessary to motivate the administrators to adjust to their new role as bureaucratic entrepreneurs. In other words, it is necessary for them to be less control-oriented and less status conscious than they are at present. In a society where emphasis is placed on paper qualifications rather than on performance, there is a tendency for the bureaucracy to be complacent and arrogant. In India, for example, the high entry qualifications into the IAS have given the bureaucracy an 'exaggerated belief in the superior efficacy and cruciality of its own decision-making abilities in contrast with those potentially available outside the bureaucratic orbit'.[18]

In Malaysia the tradition of platonic rule where the administrators are held to know what is best for the country lingers on. This attitude is reflected in the perceptions of administrators towards politicians, particularly those at state and district levels. It is also reflected in an attitude of indifference towards the public. The majority of civil servants agreed with the view that 'Instead of expecting services or benefits as a matter of right most people feel that they are asking a personal favour when they approach government officials for service or benefits'. The public is seldom brought into the decision-making process. This is admitted by the civil servants themselves. When asked to indicate the degree of government success in bringing about public participation, about 62 per cent felt that government success was limited. In all other aspects of development civil servants felt that government had achieved greater success.

The administrative system appears to be rigid and geared primarily to achieving the rather narrow objective of providing infrastructure facilities and social amenities in the rural areas. The operations room technique, which was developed by Tun Razak when he was Minister of National and Rural Development, was particularly suitable in a situation where success of the rural development programme was measured in physical terms such as miles of new roads, units of electricity, numbers of schools, health clinics, community centres, areas of new land opened for settlement, etc.[19] But community development which

TABLE 9.2
PERCEPTIONS OF CIVIL SERVANTS REGARDING SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF DEVELOPMENT PLANS
(in percentages)

Aspects of Development Programmes	*Very Successful*	*Successful*	*Moderately Successful*	*Somewhat Unsuccessful*	*Definitely Unsuccessful*	*No Response*
Achievement of targets	5.1	42.0	45.7	5.6	0.8	0.8
Coordination of organizations at federal level	3.0	41.7	43.2	8.7	0.5	2.9
Coordination between federal and state organizations	4.7	42.3	41.7	8.3	0.8	2.2
Bringing about public participation	2.5	23.0	41.6	17.9	2.4	12.6
Adjustment of programmes to changing circumstances	3.2	37.1	48.3	8.1	1.7	1.6

Source: Information obtained from questionnaire.

involves active participation of the people was a neglected aspect of the rural development programme in Malaysia.[20] Thus although there has been some success in achieving the targets of the rural development programme there has been some dissatisfaction with the inadequacy of the programme in achieving a more balanced distribution of wealth between the urban and rural areas and particularly among the ethnic groups. In response to a question,[21] the majority of civil servants felt that the rural development programme was not significant to development even though the programme itself had been successful. One civil servant expressed his disappointment with the rural development programme in these words:

> Programmes in rural development and improvements in road networks, electricity and water supply have been instrumental in providing the basic economic infrastructure and have been successful in themselves but have failed to close the gap in the economic imbalance of the urban and rural areas on which is dependent the moulding of an equitable, progressive and united society.[22]

The inadequacy of the rural development programme in achieving economic balance among the ethnic groups was brought into sharp focus as a result of the racial riots in Kuala Lumpur. It was felt that the major cause of the ethnic conflict was basically economic in nature

and that there will not be national unity as long as there are substantial differences in wealth and income between ethnic groups. The two-pronged New Economic Policy was thus enunciated as a prerequisite to national unity. The first prong is to reduce poverty for all Malaysians irrespective of race and the second prong aims at 'accelerating the process of restructuring Malaysian society to correct economic imbalance, so as to reduce and eventually eliminate the identification of race with economic function'.[23]

This policy has been generally accepted, at least in principle, by all ethnic groups. The civil servants hailed it as the policy that has been the 'most significant to development'.[24] But the civil service faces new problems in the implementation of the New Economic Policy. First of all it has tended to increase the political power of the bureaucracy. In the past it has been possible for the civil service to maintain some degree of impartiality and neutrality while at the same time giving extra benefits and privileges to one group, the Malays. Although the New Economic Policy has not substantially changed this arrangement, there has been a shift in emphasis in the implementation of the policy so that it is generally regarded as a policy aimed at benefiting Malays only.[25] This not only means a larger political involvement of the bureaucracy but a likelihood of intensification of conflicts between the ethnic groups within the civil service.

Secondly, the civil service has to have the ability to implement the development programmes in line with the objectives of the New Economic Policy. It has to change its highly centralized pattern of authority and its rigid adherence to rules and regulations. It has to upgrade its professional and technical capabilities and obtain expertise in new fields such as management, accounting and various branches of engineering. In other words there is a vital need for substantial reform of the present system of administration to make it more flexible and responsive to the requirements of a modern government.

[1] Esman, *Administration and Development in Malaysia*, pp.118-19. See also chapter VII.

[2] Abdul Hamid bin Jaafar, 'Evaluation of the Recruitment Unit of the Ministry of Health', Project Paper submitted as part requirement for the Diploma in Public Administration, University of Malaya, 1973, p.54.

[3] See especially *Straits Times*, 2 September 1970.

[4] *Public Administration in India: Report of a Survey*, Government of India, Cabinet Secretariat, New Delhi, 1953, p.11.

[5] Clementi, High Commissioner, to Colonial Office dated 25 January 1934 contained in File 00717/102/33318, in the Public Records Office, London. Clementi rejected the recommendations of a committee which recommended the upgrading of certain professional and technical posts. The Report of the Committee is contained in the same file.

[6] V. Subramaniam, 'The Relative Status of Specialists and Generalists: an Attempt at a Comparative Historical Explanation', *Public Administration* (London), 1968, pp.337-8.

[7] The racial riots that followed the general elections of 1969 have exacerbated communal tensions in the country.

[8] As a result of the rise of political institutions, for example the Panchayati Raj system in India.

[9] *New Approaches to Personnel Policy for Development*, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ST/TAO/M/66, 1974, p.23.

[10] *Second Malaysia Plan 1971-75*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1971, p.7.

[11] The secondment of Malay administrators to public enterprises has the advantage of ensuring overall central control. A recent report recommended that MCS officers should fill key positions in all statutory authorities as 'they provide a direct and effective link between the government and its Statutory Authorities and in particular exercise a degree of control in the implementation of government policies'. *The Report of the Commission on Remunerations and Conditions of Service in Local Authorities and Statutory Authorities*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, p.4.

[12] The problems of the generalist administrator in having to 'administer' complex technological departments which he has very little knowledge about are illustrated in the true story of a case in Singapore where, in response to a request for a revote for a 50-cycle generator, an administrator replied, 'Revote for generator approved. Explain why the additional bicycles required.' Editorial, *New Nation* (Singapore), 22 April 1975.

[13] Report of the Civil Service Committee, 1966-67 (Chairman: Lord Fulton), London HMSO Cmnd 3638, Vol. I, p.18 (referred to as the Fulton Committee Report).

[14] *Development Administration in Malaysia*, Report to the Government of Malaysia by John D. Montgomery and Milton Esman, Government Printer, 1968.

[15] *Report of the Committee on Training for Development in West Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur, Prime Minister's Department (November 1969), p.44.

[16] D. Harner, 'The Committee Use and Misuse', *Institute Teknoloji Mara Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (September 1969), p.11.

[17] See F.W. Riggs, *Thailand: the Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity*, Honolulu, East-West Centre Press, 1966, p.334; and Robert H. Jackson, 'Administration and Development in Kenya: a review of problems outstanding', in *Development Administration: The Kenyan Experience* edited by Goran Hyden, Robert Jackson and John Okumu, Nairobi, Oxford University Press, 1970, p.330.

[18] Iltija H. Khan, 'Bureaucracy in a Developing Country: India', *Public Administration* (Aust.), Vol. XXXII, No. 4, December 1973, p.356.

[19] Mavis Puthucheary, 'The Operations Room in Malaysia as a Technique in Administrative Reform', in Hahn Been Lee and Abelardo Samonte, *Administrative Reforms in Asia*, Manila, EROPA, 1970, pp.194-5.

[20] See Gayl Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development in Malaysia*, Univ. of California Press, 1967, pp.155-7.

[21] 'Which of the new programmes introduced by the Government has in your judgement, not been significant to development even though the programmes themselves have been successful?'

[22] Extract from a reply in the questionnaire. It has been shown recently that the rural development programme has not even been successful in providing social amenities to a large proportion of the rural people. For example, only 12 per cent of the living quarters in Trengganu and 13 per cent of the living quarters in Kelantan have piped water. *1970 Population and Housing Census of Malaysia*, 'West Malaysia Census of Housing, 1970, Final Report', Kuala Lumpur, 1973, pp.107-10.

[23] *Second Malaysia Plan 1971-75*, Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1971, p.1.

[24] This reply was given in response to the question, 'Speaking generally about development, what one new Government policy introduced by the Government in the last year or so, do you regard as most significant to development?'

[25] Fred R. von der Mehden, 'Communalism, Industrial Policy and Income Distribution in Malaysia', *Asian Survey*, Vol. XV, March 1975, No. 3, p.251. The Prime Minister, Dato Hussein Onn, recently mentioned that there were several 'misunderstandings' in the implementation of the New Economic Policy. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 February 1976, and the MCA President complained about the 'unbalanced approach to the implementation of the New Economic Policy'. *New Straits Times*, 10 August 1975.

X Conclusion

As shown in earlier chapters the civil service of Malaysia has a highly political style of administration. This is especially seen in the MCS where the major policy-making posts are concentrated. What is perhaps more significant is that it is likely that the civil service will become even more politicized in the future with the close identification of Malay officers with the New Economic Policy. The achievement of the NEP objectives is dependent on an expanding economy and the government has taken pains to assure non-Malays that a bigger Malay share of the cake will not be achieved by reducing the non-Malay share but by an increase in the size of the cake. Yet there appears to be a 'constant-pie' orientation among civil servants and, one suspects, among Malaysians as a whole. And as pressures mount for more drastic action to be taken to implement the NEP, the conflict of loyalties among the civil servants is likely to become more apparent. Ethnic tensions are likely to increase should there be any faltering in the rate of economic growth that is necessary to sustain a growth population and also give a larger share of the increased wealth to Malays. If this happens it is likely that these tensions will be reflected in the civil service.

There is, of course, one important advantage in having a politicized bureaucracy. Senior administrators are brought into the policy-making process and participate in decision-making with political leaders as members of a team. Their constant contacts with politicians, not only formally in minister-civil servant relationships, but also informally as friends and party supporters, help civil servants to understand better the aims and aspirations of their political leaders.

But there are several disadvantages in having a politicized bureaucracy, particularly in a plural society like Malaysia. Firstly it tends to result in an erosion of public confidence in the civil service. In Malaysia the problem of legitimacy of the government is particularly important as political parties tend to be basically mono-racial in composition. In such a situation the civil service could play an important role in national unity by acting, as Esman pointed out, as managers of communal conflict. But it can only play this role if it remains outside communal politics and is able to present a convincing image of itself to the public as a neutral, just and fair civil service.

Secondly a neutral civil service tends to attract the best graduates as recruitment and promotion are not based on political factors but on

academic standing, experience and performance. In Malaysia the new tasks of government require personnel with specialized knowledge and experience in a wide range of subjects. If these tasks are to be effectively accomplished it will be necessary for government to recruit personnel with the required knowledge and experience and offer them a career in the civil service which is attractive enough for them to want to join and remain in government service.

The responses to questions on morale and satisfaction with employment in government service showed that on the whole civil servants appear generally satisfied with their salaries and promotion opportunities. But it must be remembered that this study was conducted before inflation in the country had become a major problem. One suspects that there will be a much larger proportion of dissatisfied officers if the questionnaire were administered now. Also it appears that there is a more recent dissatisfaction among non-Malay officers regarding their promotions *vis-à-vis* Malay officers. This is seen in the MCS in particular where the majority of the non-Malay officers feel that they are unlikely to be promoted beyond a certain level as the higher posts being political can only be filled by Malays. This inevitably results in low morale and frustrations in the civil service. As Gordon Means comments:

> In theory Malay special rights apply only to recruitment, and not to promotion within the public service. In practice, however, Malays have been promoted because of race to assure that the highest policymaking positions will be filled by Malays regardless of objective performance standards. Thus, the administrative positions formerly filled by British expatriate officers are today filled almost exclusively by Malays who were promoted at a rapid rate to fill the gap created by 'Malayanization'. These practices not only give the public service a built-in pro-Malay bias, but they have contributed to an erosion of public confidence in the public service, particularly among non-Malays. Likewise, the morale of non-Malay public servants is frequently low, since they see that they are artificially prevented from moving into higher administrative and policymaking positions, while their superiors often appear to be underqualified and biased. A special rights syndrome thus permeates the public service arising from a general awareness that ethnic-communal calculations frequently supercede the application of objective and uniform performance standards. In no small measure, Malay special privileges have contributed to a weakening of the legitimacy of the government in the eyes of non-Malays.[1]

The problem of shortage of qualified staff in government service is likely to have the most adverse effect on efficiency in the public service. It has not been possible for the government to obtain managerial and technical staff in the numbers that are required. Not only has it been difficult to find trained personnel to fill the new vacancies created by the growth in the size of the public sector, but it has not even been possible to find personnel to replace those who resign or retire from government service. New replacements usually do not have either the qualifications or the experience of their predecessors, thus resulting in a general decline in efficiency. It therefore becomes imperative that if the government's

ambitious objectives of restructuring society are to be achieved it will be necessary for the civil service to upgrade its technical and professional capability. This can only be done through the introduction of a neutral civil service where selection is based on merit and where promotions do not depend on personal or political contact but on proven ability.

A neutral civil service has a politically circumscribed role. While admitting that, especially at the higher levels, there is bound to be some blurring of political and administrative functions, the doctrine of political neutrality is based upon the assumption that the politician's role is political and the civil servant's role is technical-professional. Emphasis, then, should be given to the recruitment and training of civil servants to ensure that they are professionally competent to perform their jobs. Their political role, although recognized, should be given less emphasis. To effect a change from a highly politicized bureaucracy to a politically circumscribed one would require fundamental changes in the socio-political environment. In particular, political institutions will have to play a more important role in influencing policy than they have done in the past. That such institutions can exist within the present socio-political environment is seen in the recent establishment of the Economic Bureau of UMNO. This bureau acts as a watchdog of the NEP and exerts some degree of control over the bureaucracy.

Furthermore, the development of strong political institutions is likely to result in changes that will bring about a higher degree of administrative efficiency, as there will be some degree of external control over the civil service, and pressures may be put on the bureaucracy to reform their rigid bureaucratic structure and their attitudes so that they are able to perform more effectively the complex tasks of a modern government. Like any other organization, the bureaucracy is unlikely to bring about reforms within itself without some external pressure, and without this pressure, it is likely that the bureaucracy will remain 'an instrument for maintaining the *status quo* rather than of modernization and change'.[2] Jackson, writing on the Kenyan situation, stated that:

> If any generalization can be advanced about bureaucracies and bureaucrats, it is surely their preference for the existing organizational *status quo* and their suspicion of change. Organizational reforms among private firms are sometimes dictated by the market-place, by the need to change in order to remain competitive. Public organizations also have their market, but it is more often a political one and not always so exacting. This seems especially so in less developed countries where political markets comprising active, well-organized, and articulate interests are themselves not fully developed. They are therefore less able to influence and discipline the performance of government ministries and other public organizations. This permits public administrators to carry on much as they always have done without being constantly prodded and provoked to change. If administrative productivity is therefore to advance in Kenya, it may well require the parallel development of an organizational infra-structure capable of demanding improved performance and better services.[3]

Thus political and administrative development must take place side

by side if there is to be the reform necessary to achieve administrative efficiency and accountability. In Malaysia the heavy commitment to economic development has obscured the importance of political controls which are necessary if the civil service is to continue as a dynamic body whose functioning, being open to scrutiny and independent assessment, will give it a proper sense of direction and perspective and improve its efficiency. This failure to recognize the importance of external controls has resulted in the growth of a civil service which to a large extent is accountable only to itself. The consequence of having no feedback which would help to alert the attention of civil servants to deficiencies and errors in their work is a civil service functioning at less than maximum efficiency with the attendant evils of, among others, wavering public confidence, internal frustrations, delays in implementing government policies, intensification of factional interests and other divisive factors. Even in the not too long run this can only operate against the interests of the civil service as well as to the detriment of the country. The development of well organized, articulate political institutions will contribute to diminishing the political power now in the hands of the civil service and a more realistic notion of the rationale of its being by increasing its accountability to the public. Even if this, initially at least, must rest with Malay-based political institutions the effect on the civil service will still be beneficial with the advantage that, being Malay initiated, the changes are likely not only to have greater effect but to come about sooner and with less opposition from within the civil service. When this happens, when external controls impose on the bureaucracy the need for public accountability and an altered conception of its role, efficiency will be accorded its proper priority. From this will follow a shift in emphasis—a shift from factors unrelated to efficiency and smooth functioning to bureaucratic performance and a recruitment policy based on ability and qualifications. But the achievement of effective, abiding, administrative reform can be realized only where conditions conducive to the growth of a democratic system of government exist, or can potentially exist. A truly neutral, just civil service, functioning at maximum efficiency and in full possession of public confidence is, perhaps, an ideal unattainable in any country. But it is an ideal worth striving for, especially in a country like Malaysia where ethnic differences and insecurities stand in the way of national unity. A civil service in which, through appropriate reforms, difficulties of this nature are ironed out, and inequalities arising out of race, religion or class removed, could serve as the basis on which can be built the belief that a plural society need not be an insuperable barrier to the realization of a united, democratic Malaysia.

[1] Gordon Means, 'Special Rights "as a Strategy for Development"', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. V, October 1972, pp.46-8.

[2] Khan, 'Bureaucracy in a Developing Country: India', p.354.

[3] Robert H. Jackson, 'Administration and Development in Kenya: a Review of Problems Outstanding', *Development Administration: the Kenyan Experience*, edited by Goran Hyden, Robert Jackson and John Okumu, Nairobi, Oxford University Press, 1970, pp.352-3. See also F. Riggs, *Administration in Developing Countries*, pp.222-37.

Appendix I

Research Methodology

THE objective of the study was to obtain information on the socio-economic background of a group of civil servants, to find out about their attitudes towards their job in government service and to some aspects of life, and to gain some knowledge of their perceptions of the administrative problems that they are confronted with in the course of their work. The study did not aim at a definitive evaluation of the capacity of the civil service to implement development programmes but was rather an attempt to develop inferences on the capacity of the civil service based on the data contained in the questionnaire and on interviews with civil servants.

THE SAMPLE

As the emphasis was on the development functions of civil servants, the sample was selected to cover only those categories of officers involved in what were considered to be primarily developmental functions. Thus, officers in the Ministries of Defence, Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Justice were excluded from the study. Secondly, an attempt was made to obtain a sample of civil servants at the three levels of government: the federal, state and district levels. Thirdly, the sample included officers working in statutory corporations especially those working at the field level. The sample was therefore drawn from the following levels of government:

APPENDIX TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE ACCORDING TO LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

Level	*Government Offices*	*Statutory Corporations*	*Total*	*(%)*
Federal	364	98	462	30.8
State and district	848	190	1,038	69.2
Total	1,212	288	1,500	100.0

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was sent out from the Department of National Unity. This was done to ensure adequate response from civil servants who would not normally have the time to spend on filling in long questionnaires. Civil servants were assured that the questionnaire was distributed in order to get information especially regarding problems that they are facing in the implementation of the Malaysian plans and not for any other purpose. As such they were not asked

to write their names on the replies. The Minister of Special Functions, Tan Sri Mohamad Ghazali b. Shafie, and the Director of Research in the Department of National Unity, Dr. Agoes Salim, both stressed, in covering letters accompanying the questionnaire, that civil servants should answer the questions frankly and fully and assured them that their anonymity would be preserved. Each civil servant was given a Malay and English version of the questionnaire with the instructions to return either one as early as possible. A copy of the questionnaire and the covering letters are given in Appendixes II, III and IV.

THE RESPONSE

A total of 762 returns were received, that is about 51 per cent responded to the questionnaire. This was considered quite satisfactory bearing in mind the length of the questionnaire and the fact that, being a mailed questionnaire, there was no way of checking who replied and who did not.

The ethnic composition of the respondents was as follows:

APPENDIX TABLE 2
ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF RESPONDENTS

Ethnic Composition	*Number*	*(%)*
Malays	514	67.4
Chinese	144	18.9
Indians	76	10.0
Others	18	2.4
No information	10	1.3
Total	762	100.0

Malays are slightly over-represented when compared with their proportion in the government service as a whole:

APPENDIX TABLE 3
ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF GOVERNMENT SERVICE COMPARED WITH ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE RESPONDENTS (DIVISIONS I, II AND III)
(in percentages)

Ethnic Composition	*Proportion in Federal Service*	*Proportion in Total Federal & State Services*	*Proportion in Sample*	*Proportion of Respondents*
Malays	56.8	61.4	64.8	67.4
Chinese	26.6	22.9	21.3	18.9
Indians	15.5	14.1	12.3	10.0
Others	1.1	1.6	1.6	2.4
No information	–	–	–	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The age-structure of the respondents follows closely the pattern in the government service as a whole:

APPENDIX TABLE 4
AGE STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT SERVICE
COMPARED WITH AGE STRUCTURE OF RESPONDENTS
(in percentages)

Age	*Federal & State Services*	*Respondents*
Under 30 years	29.7	30.4
30–34 years	15.7	20.2
35–39 years	15.3	16.7
40–44 years	16.8	13.1
45–49 years	11.6	10.1
50 and above	10.9	9.1
No information	–	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0

The younger group is slightly over-represented (67.3 per cent are under 40 years as compared with government service as a whole where 60.7 per cent are under 40 years), due mainly to the emphasis given in the sample to obtaining adequate representation at state and district levels where younger and more junior officers are located.

Although the respondents are fairly young, many of them have had several years of experience in government service:

APPENDIX TABLE 5
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY
NUMBER OF YEARS IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE
(in percentages)

Number of Years in Government Service	*(%)*
One year or less	13.5
2–3 years	18.5
4–7 years	19.1
8–11 years	13.0
12–15 years	13.0
16 years and above	20.0
No information	2.9
Total	100.0

The Malaysian Civil Service is divided into four divisions according to qualifications and status. Division I posts are those which usually require a university degree and contain what may be generally regarded as higher civil servants. At the other end are Division IV posts in which are contained daily-rated manual workers. As this study concentrated more on the development functions per-

formed by civil servants, it contained a large number of Division I officers as well as a smaller number of Division II and III officers. If we take the government service as a whole, the sample forms only about 2 per cent of it. But there is a much higher degree of Division I representation among the respondents as the following figures show:

APPENDIX TABLE 6

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY DIVISION IN THE SERVICE COMPARED WITH TOTAL FIGURES

Division	*Total Number (Federal & State)*	*Total Respondents*	*% of Respondents to Total*
Division I	4,401	376	8.5
Division II	5,061	167	3.3
Division III	64,775	103	0.2
Statutory Corporations	(not known)	116	

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS

Follow-up interviews were conducted to check the replies and allow for in-depth studies. Interviews were held with officers selected at random from the sample whether or not they replied to the questionnaire. Generally the interviews were conducted in a frank and informal manner.

A total of about 100 interviews were carried out at the national, state and district levels. The majority of the interviews were conducted outside Kuala Lumpur. Visits were made to several states including Johore, Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, Trengganu and Pahang during 1971 and 1972.

Appendix II

The Questionnaire

A STUDY OF DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

1. How often does each of the following situations occur in your organization? Please circle **one** number most appropriate, as follows:

   1. Very frequently
   2. Frequently
   3. Sometimes
   4. Seldom
   5. Never

		Please Leave Blank	
(a) Men at higher levels not having enough authority to perform duties effectively	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(1)
(b) Men at higher levels not having enough time to explain matters fully to staff that have to carry out decisions	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(2)
(c) Subordinate officers being afraid to express disagreement with superior officers	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(3)
(d) Decisions made too slowly to meet programme needs	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(4)
(e) Quick decisions made by persons not familiar with the problems	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(5)
(f) Men at higher levels being too concerned with today's problems but not with long-range goals	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(6)
(g) Men at higher levels spending their time on matters that should be left to people at lower levels	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(7)
(h) Overseas conferences being attended by men not directly connected with the subject matter of the conference	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(8)

		Please Leave Blank
(i) Training programmes not being attended by men who would most benefit from the training	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (9)
(j) Personnel being shifted so frequently that the jobs to be done are never really tackled properly	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (10)
(k) Delays resulting from conflicts between administrative and technical officers	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (11)
(l) Delays resulting from conflicts between Government officers and politicians	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (12)
(m) Delays resulting from too many controls over expenditure	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (13)
(n) Delays resulting from the unwillingness of the public to cooperate with the Government	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (14)

2. Indicate the degree to which, in your opinion and with regard to the activities **in your own organization,** the Government has been successful in the various aspects of development programmes. Please circle **one** number most appropriate, as follows:

1. Very successful
2. Successful
3. Moderately successful
4. Somewhat unsuccessful
5. Definitely unsuccessful

(a) Achievement of targets	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (15)
(b) Coordination of organizations with related functions at the Federal Government level	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (16)
(c) Coordination between Federal and State Government organizations	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (17)
(d) Bringing about public participation	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (18)
(e) Adjustment of programmes to changing circumstances	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (19)

3. Here are some obstacles which may impede you in carrying out your work efficiently. Please tick **five** of the most bothersome:

(a) Rigid rules and procedures	_____	☐☐ (20) (21)
(b) Lack of discipline of subordinate staff	_____	☐☐ (22) (23)
(c) Incompetent superior officers	_____	
(d) Incompetent subordinate officers	_____	☐☐ (24) (25)

		Please Leave Blank
(e)	Insufficient numbers of competent staff _____	
(f)	Loss of time as a result of having to be present at too many ceremonial functions _____	☐☐ (26) (27)
(g)	Lack of delegation of authority _____	
(h)	Lack of understanding and cooperation at the top _____	☐☐ (28) (29)
(i)	Having to carry out personal demands of superiors _____	
(j)	Bogged down with too many committee meetings _____	
(k)	Bogged down with trivial details that cannot be delegated to others _____	
(l)	Others (specify) _____	

.....

.....

4. There are some matters that are decided at your level and other matters that are sent up to your superiors for decision or approval. Could you roughly state what proportion of your work:

(Please tick where appropriate)	About 75%	About 50%	About 25%		
(a) is sent to your superior for his signature only	_____	_____	_____	☐	(30)
(b) is sent to your superior for him to make a decision	_____	_____	_____	☐	(31)
(c) is sent to your superior for him to refer it to a higher officer	_____	_____	_____	☐	(32)
(d) is handled at your own level	_____	_____	_____	☐	(33)

5. Some officials are often primarily responsible for the formulation of policy while others are primarily involved in the implementation of policy. Which **one** of the following statements most accurately defines your role?

(a) My role is almost exclusively that of initiating and formulating policy _____	☐	(34)
(b) Roughly half my time is spent on policy formulation and half on policy implementation _____		

(c) While I have been involved in policy formulation this work is not my primary responsibility _____

(d) My role entails little, if any, policy formulation. Basically I implement policy made by others _____

Please Leave Blank

6. Do you feel you are given sufficient opportunities to participate in the making of decisions that affect your job? Yes/No ☐ (35)

   If 'No', please state the kind of decision-making you would like an opportunity to participate in:

7. Speaking generally about development, what **one** new Government policy, introduced by the Government in the last year or so, do you regard as most significant to development?

8. Which of the new programmes introduced by the Government has, **in your judgement,** not been significant to development even though the programmes themselves have been successful?

9. Usually there exists in Government a small group of government officers who are powerful in influencing decisions. Would you name in your opinion the **three** most influential government officers in the Government as a whole. (Please do not look merely at the grade or positions held by these officers; we are interested to know who you consider actually are powerful in influencing decisions).

	Name	**Ministry/Department**
(a)	.....	.....
(b)	.....	.....
(c)	.....	.....

10. Suppose you were the head of the Department of National Unity, what specific steps would **you** take to achieve the goals of this Department as you understand them?

Please Leave Blank

11. Obviously the enormous task of achieving national unity cannot be the job of a single department of the government. What, in your opinion, are **three** concrete programmes **your department** can take towards achieving national unity?

12. Which **one** of the following statements on the Rukunegara best describes your personal views about it?

(a) The Rukunegara is a set of ideals and principles that must be memorized by all Malaysians _____ ☐ (36)

(b) The Rukunegara is a pledge of allegiance which means very little _____

(c) The Rukunegara is clearly an expression of the beliefs and values of most Malaysians today _____

(d) The Rukunegara is a set of convictions which should be expressed in the behaviour of most Malaysians _____

(e) The Rukunegara is a set of ideals and principles which contradict each other and which most thinking people cannot accept _____

13. Would you enter Government Service if you had your life to live over again? Yes/No ☐ (37)

If 'No', what would you prefer as a career?

14. Would you prefer to work in your home State?

Yes/No/Indifferent ☐ (38)

If 'Yes' or 'No', why?

15. As you know, the Government in employing people, usually considers their educational qualifications and experience. In addition, do you think the Government should consider other factors in making appointments? For example:

(a) social position Yes/No ☐ (39)

(b) family connections Yes/No ☐ (40)

(c) wealth Yes/No ☐ (41)

(d) place of birth (state/district) Yes/No ☐ (42)

(e) racial origin Yes/No ☐ (43)

(f) religion Yes/No ☐ (44)

		Please Leave Blank
(g) political beliefs	Yes/No	☐ (45)
(h) geographical/regional/state representation	Yes/No	☐ (46)
(i) extra-mural activities	Yes/No	☐ (47)
(j) others (specify)		
.....		
.....		
Give reasons for each of the factors you feel should be considered:		
16. Do you think the Government is getting the best men and women into the Service?	Yes/No	☐ (48)
If 'No', what do you think needs changing in the general recruitment and personnel policy to attract the best men into the Service?		
17. Compared with your colleagues who joined the service at the same time as you, how do you rate your promotions since you joined the Service?	normal/rapid/slow	☐ (49)
18. Here is a list of factors which may be used to determine the promotion of employees. Rank the **three** most important factors which you think **are actually used** in the promotion of employees in your service: (Indicate rank by 1, 2, 3)		
(a) education/training received	_____	☐ (50)
(b) seniority or length of service	_____	☐ (51)
(c) quality of past performance	_____	☐ (52)
(d) political sponsorship	_____	
(e) belonging to the 'right' family	_____	
(f) belonging to the 'right' ethnic group	_____	
(g) good luck	_____	
(h) others (specify)		
.....		
.....		

19. Generally speaking, would you say that individual advancement in the Government Service depends **most of all** on:

(Please tick **one** only)

Please Leave Blank

(a) ability and hard work _____ ☐ (53)

(b) ability to get on with superiors _____

(c) seniority _____

(d) having the backing of important persons _____

(e) Others (specify)

.....

.....

20. All things considered, do you honestly feel you have been treated fairly with regard to:

(Please tick where appropriate)

	Very Well	Reasonably Well	Fair	Poorly	Very Poorly		
(a) promotions	____	____	____	____	____	☐	(54)
(b) salary	____	____	____	____	____	☐	(55)
(c) workload/ responsibilities	____	____	____	____	____	☐	(56)
(d) status commensurate with responsibilities	____	____	____	____	____	☐	(57)
(e) appreciation of individual performance	____	____	____	____	____	☐	(58)

21. Is there any particular job in the public sector as a whole that you would like to be in? If so, please state the nature of the job.

22. Do you feel that your work fully uses your skills and abilities?

(Please tick **one** only)

(a) Yes, always _____ ☐ (59)

(b) Usually _____

(c) Sometimes _____

(d) Seldom _____

(e) Never _____

23. Is there any part of your work that could be handled by a person having less experience?
(Please tick **one** only)

		Please Leave Blank
(a) A great deal	_____	☐ (60)
(b) Quite a bit	_____	
(c) Some	_____	
(d) A little	_____	
(e) None	_____	

24. How do you feel about your job today compared with it 3 years ago as regards stress and tension?
(Please tick **one** only)

(a) More stress now	_____	☐ (61)
(b) Somewhat more	_____	
(c) Same	_____	
(d) Less	_____	
(e) Much less	_____	

If you have ticked (a) or (b), what do you think are some of the reasons for the increased stress?

25. Here are some statements that refer to your job and life in general. There are no right or wrong answers. Please circle **one** number which best describes your own views and thinking on the subject, as follows:—

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Disagree strongly
5. No opinion

i. Most departments accomplish not more than 60% of what they plan in any fiscal year	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (62)
ii. The administrative difficulties of sacking inefficient employees are such that it seldom occurs	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (63)
iii. There is little purpose in planning because we know so little of the future	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (64)
iv. Most departments cannot plan because they are not sure what their objectives are	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (65)
v. In general, Government is not recruiting the most talented men in the country	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (66)

			Please Leave Blank
vi.	The politician requires loyalty from the Government servant even more than he needs his skills	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (67)
vii.	In the long run the public interest would be effectively served if politicians left administrators alone to decide what programmes to carry out and how to carry them out	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (68)
viii.	A strong leader would make this country better than all the laws and talk	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (69)
ix.	The senior civil service would be more efficient if only degree holders were promoted to superscale positions	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (70)
x.	The senior civil service would be more efficient if there was more recruitment from the private sector	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (71)
xi.	Heads of organizations should be given authority in disciplining inefficient employees even to the extent of recommending their dismissal	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (72)
xii.	The technical and professional departments would be more efficient if they were headed by men from the Malaysian Home and Foreign Service	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (73)
xiii.	As political aspects inevitably enter the policymaking process, senior civil servants closely associated with the present government's policies should be changed if and when a new government comes into power	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (74)
xiv.	To most officers one day is not very different from the next one so there is no need to move fast or worry about completing things in as short a time as possible	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (75)
xv.	Most citizens are too ignorant to intelligently take part in making decisions that affect them	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (76)
xvi.	Religion is a total way of life and cannot be separated from politics, administration and development	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (1)
xvii.	A highly centralized political and administrative system is the most effective way of achieving development	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (2)

xviii.	The trouble with democracy is that we spend too much time and money arguing and too little time for the work that must be done	1 2 3 4 5	Please Leave Blank ☐ (3)
xix.	Decentralization of the decision-making function is impossible because subordinate staff are not willing to make decisions	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (4)
xx.	A good son always feels an undying love, gratitude and respect for his parents	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (5)
xxi.	Every person should have a deep faith in some supernatural force higher than himself to which he gives total allegiance and whose decisions he does not question	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (6)
xxii.	Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (7)
xxiii.	Planning is a futile business as there are political and economic factors which are beyond our control	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (8)
xxiv.	Today everything is unstable; we should be prepared for a period of constant change, conflict, and upheaval	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (9)
xxv.	Human nature being what it is, there will always be war and conflict	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (10)
xxvi.	Bosses should say just what is to be done and exactly how to do it if they expect us to do a good job	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (11)
xxvii.	Democracy is a western concept and cannot work in non-western cultures	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (12)
xxviii.	The amount of education a person has should be a major factor in determining his pay scale	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (13)
xxix.	A subordinate who questions his superior's decisions will usually find that his superior will hold a grudge against him thereafter	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (14)
xxx.	In the long run, the best way to live is to choose friends and associates whose preferences and beliefs are the same as one's own	1 2 3 4 5	☐ (15)
xxxi.	Generally speaking, politicians have a responsibility to their party and		

			Please Leave Blank	
	supporters, while administrators have a higher responsibility to protect all elements of the society above political considerations	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(16)
xxxii.	Unless there is freedom to discuss important issues and for many points of view to be presented, there is little chance of national harmony	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(17)
xxxiii.	Freedom of conscience should mean the freedom not to believe in God as well as the freedom to worship in the religion of one's choice	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(18)
xxxiv.	In dealing with dangerous enemies of the nation, we cannot afford to depend on the courts, laws and their slow and unreliable methods	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(19)
xxxv.	Whether you like it or not, in order to advance, it is important to get along with your group than to have ability or a sense of duty	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(20)
xxxvi.	Most superiors I know welcome suggestions and criticisms if these are offered constructively and diplomatically	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(21)
xxxvii.	It is not enough to be efficient, you must also have political backing to get what you deserve	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(22)
xxxviii.	In government service, subordinates rarely get credit for what they do because superiors take the credit	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(23)
xxxix.	Most politicians get what they want even though it is against existing policies and rules	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(24)
xl.	Instead of expecting services or benefits as a matter of right most people feel that they are asking a personal favour when they approach government officials for service or benefits	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(25)
xli.	Work is often delayed because of personal conflicts and petty jealousies in the government service	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(26)
xlii.	The proliferation of new agencies and semi-autonomous bodies has resulted in overlapping of functions and lack of coordination of government administration	1 2 3 4 5	☐	(27)

The remaining questions are mainly questions about yourself. As you will see, they are not questions to identify you as an individual but to try and find out whether various groups of civil servants feel similarly about some of the matters mentioned in the earlier part of the questionnaire. (Please tick where appropriate)

Please Leave Blank

26. Your Age:

25 and under	_____	41–45	_____	☐	(28)
26–30	_____	46–50	_____		
31–35	_____	51–55	_____		
36–40	_____	56 and above	_____		

27. Your Place of Birth: Rural _____ ☐ (29)
Small town _____
Urban _____

28. Home State (i.e. the State you consider your home):

Johore	_____	Kelantan	_____	☐☐	(30) (31)
Malacca	_____	Kedah	_____		
Selangor	_____	Penang	_____		
Negri Sembilan	_____	Perlis	_____		
		Sabah	_____		
Pahang	_____	Sarawak	_____		
Perak	_____	Outside Malaysia	_____		
Trengganu	_____				

29. Ethnic group

Malay	_____	☐	(32)
Chinese	_____		
Indian & Ceylonese	_____		
Others	_____		

30. Knowledge of languages (place tick where appropriate):

Written:	Fluent	Good	Fair		
Malay (Jawi)	_____	_____	_____	☐	(33)
Malay (Rumi)	_____	_____	_____	☐	(34)
English	_____	_____	_____	☐	(35)
Chinese	_____	_____	_____	☐	(36)
Tamil	_____	_____	_____	☐	(37)
Others (specify)	_____	_____	_____		
Spoken:	Fluent	Good	Fair		
Malay	_____	_____	_____	☐	(38)
English	_____	_____	_____	☐	(39)
Chinese (specify dialect)	_____	_____	_____	☐	(40)

	Please Leave Blank
Tamil _____ _____ _____	☐ (41)
Others (specify) _____ _____ _____	

31. Education (please tick where appropriate):

(a) **Medium**	**Primary**	**Secondary**	
Malay	_____	_____	☐ (42)
English	_____	_____	☐ (43)
Chinese (Mandarin)	_____	_____	☐ (44)
Tamil	_____	_____	
Others (specify)	_____	_____	

(b) Name of last school attended: _____

(c) Standard completed: _____ ☐ (45)

32. Post-secondary scholarships held:

Type of award(s): _____ ☐ (46)

No. of years in receipt of award(s): _____ ☐ (47)

Bond? Yes/No ☐ (48)

33. If you have attended a university or post-secondary institution please give details:

Name of University/ College	Country	Number of years of study	Degree, Diploma, etc. Obtained	Class Obtained (if any)	Major Field of Study	
						☐ (49)
						☐ (50)
						☐☐ (51) (52)
						☐ (53)
						☐ (54)

34. Name of service you are in _____ ☐ (55)

No. of years in this service _____ ☐☐ (56, 57)

Division _____ ☐ (58)

Ministry/Department _____ ☐☐ (59) (60)

35. Were you in any service previous to entering the present service? Yes/No ☐ (61)

If 'Yes', please tick the relevant service:

Clerical service _____
Junior technical service _____
State civil service _____
Malay Administrative service _____
Others (specify) _____

Please Leave Blank

☐ (62)

36. In general, do you feel that the education which you received prior to joining Government Service provided you with the most suitable and adequate background for your job?

Yes/No ☐ (63)

If 'No', what kind of education or training would you think would have been more suitable?

Are there facilities in Government Service for you to receive this kind of education or training?

Yes/No ☐ (64)

37. If you have received any kind of training since joining Government Service, please give details. Evaluate the training you received in terms of making you better equipped for the job you now hold (Very good, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor).

Course/ Programme	Place of Training	Length of Training (weeks, months)	Degree, Diploma or Certificate obtained	Evaluation

38. Important Committees, Boards, Councils, Commissions which you have served on:
(Please attach sheet if necessary):

Name of Committee, etc.	How long a Member	Office held

Please Leave Blank

39. How many conferences, seminars, workshop sessions etc. outside Malaysia have you attended in the course of your career? _____ □□ (65) (66)

40. Details about your father:

(a) Highest educational level achieved: _____ □□ (67) (68)

(b) Language(s) in which he received his education:

_____ □ (69)

(c) Which category of occupations do you think your father belonged to at the time when **you were in secondary school?**

(i) Small farmer (less than 10 acres) _____ □□ (70) (71)

(ii) Large farmer/landlord (more than 10 acres) _____

(iii) Fisherman _____

(iv) Skilled/semi-skilled/unskilled labourer _____

(v) Clerical/technical employee (Division II-IV) in Government service _____

(vi) Clerical/technical employee not in Government service _____

(vii) Teaching (Divisions I-II) _____

(viii) Teaching (Divisions III-IV) _____

(ix) Administrative/professional/technical (Division I) in Government service _____

(x) Small businessman/merchant _____

(xi) Large businessman/manager _____

(xii) Professional _____

(xiii) Commissioned Army Officer (Second Lt. upward)/Police Officer (Inspector upward) _____

(xiv) Army/Police other rank personnel _____
(xv) Others (specify) _____

Please Leave Blank

41. If you are married, please give details about your spouse:

(a) Highest educational level achieved: _____ ☐☐ (72) (73)

(b) Language(s) in which she/he received her/his education: _____ ☐ (74)

(c) Occupation (if any). Please refer to 40 (c) for category of occupation: _____ ☐☐ (75) (76)

This questionnaire is the beginning of an attempt to learn something about civil servants and their attitudes towards their job. Are there any other aspects of your work that you feel are particularly important that have not been covered here?
(Please attach sheet if necessary.)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION
IN THIS RESEARCH

Sept 1971.

Appendix III

Letters Sent Out to Civil Servants

Jabatan Perpaduan Negara

5hb Oktober 1971.

KAJIAN MENGENAI PEGAWAI2
TINGGI KERAJAAN

Negara ini sedang menghadapi satu dugaan yang teramat penting dalam sejarah hidupnya. Ranchangan pembangunan negara yang berlandaskan kepada dasar ekonomi baru, selaras dan sesuai pula dengan chita2 mewujudkan perpaduan negara sedang dilancharkan dengan gigihnya. Dalam hubongannya dengan ranchangan pembangunan ini, peranan yang dimainkan oleh pegawai Kerajaan adalah teramat penting. Malahan ditangan merekalah terletaknya kejayaan yang kita idami ini.

Kita ingin dan perlu mengetahui ragam fikiran dan perasaan pegawai2 Kerajaan mengenai masaalah2 yang terpaksa kita hadapi dalam perlaksanaan ranchangan pembangunan ini. Untuk tujuan inilah maka saya telah mengarahkan supaya kajian mengenai pegawai2 tinggi Kerajaan ini dijalankan. Moga2 dengan kajian ini dapat kita bersama membaiki chara2 menjalankan ranchangan2.

Saya sedar bahawa soalkaji yang dikemukakan ini adalah panjang. Namun saya mempunyai penoh harapan dan penoh mengharap agar setiap soalan dapat dijawab dengan segala kejujuran dan terus terang.

Mungkin ada sebahagian dari kita yang tidak begitu faseh atau mahir dalam Bahasa Malaysia. Apa yang sebenarnya saya pentingkan isilah jawapan yang tepat. Bagi memenohi maksud ini terjemahan soalkaji dalam Bahasa Inggeris dikembarkan juga bagi kegunaan kita yang kurang mahir dalam Bahasa Malaysia. Saudara2 adalah mendapat sepenoh kebebasan samaada untuk menjawab dalam Bahasa Malaysia atau Bahasa Inggeris.

Dengan ini saya pohonkan kerjasama saudara agar menjawab dan memulangkan kembali soalkaji ini dengan sesegera yang boleh.

Kerjasama yang saudara berikan, saya dahului dengan uchapan setinggi2 terima kaseh.

Yang ikhlas,

(Tan Sri Mohamad Ghazali bin Shafie)
Menteri Dengan Tugas2 Khas

Jabatan Perpaduan Negara

5hb Oktober 1971.

Saudara,

Bersama ini saya sampaikan soalkaji yang mengandongi beberapa soalan tentang peranan pegawai Kerajaan dalam pembangunan dan perpaduan negara. Kajian ini ditujukan kepada pegawai2 tinggi dan adalah diharap dengan hasil kajian ini kita akan dapat suatu gambaran yang jelas mengenai peranan dan masaalah pegawai2 Kerajaan dalam menjalankan polisi dan sebagainya.

Oleh kerana pegawai2 Kerajaan adalah besar bilangannya maka kajian ini adalah berupa sample survey. Pertama tidak semua Jabatan Kerajaan dimasok-kan kedalam kajian ini. Kedua, daripada pegawai2 yang ada didalam jabatan2 yang termasok dalam kajian, hanya sebilangan saja yang dipilih. Pilihan pegawai pula ialah sechara rambang (random sample).

Saudara telah terpilih untuk menjawab soalan2 ini. Oleh itu saya harap sangat2 akan kerjasama saudara. Perlu saya tegaskan bahawa sungguhpun nama saudara telah terpilih tetapi kami tidak akan mengetahui siapakah yang menjawab borang2 ini. Dengan ini kami berharap akan mendapat jawapan yang terus terang.

Bersama ini juga saya sediakan satu sampul yang telah pun dialamatkan ke Pejabat ini. Saya harap dapat saudara pulangkan borang ini setelah menjawab-nya sechepat mungkin. Sila pulangkan hanya *satu* borang sahaja. Atas kerjasama saudara saya uchapkan berbanyak terima kasih.

Yang ikhlas,

Dr. Agoes Salim
Pengarah Penyelidekan
Jabatan Perpaduan Negara

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Studies of administration in developing countries have tended to emphasize the internal aspects of structure and organization, with a view to upgrading the technical and managerial skills of the civil service. Not enough attention, however, has been given to the external aspects, such as the role of the civil service in political decision-making, which may have an equally important effect on the style of administration in a particular country.

This study of the Malaysian civil service is therefore an attempt to bridge the gap between the administrator, on the one hand, whose preoccupation with the internal structure of the bureaucracy leaves him with little time for external aspects of administration, and the historian and political scientist, on the other hand, who tend to emphasize the historical and political perspectives rather than the functional, day-to-day aspects of administration. In particular this study illustrates the special relationship that exists between the civil servant and the society in which he lives. This is crucial to an understanding of administration in Malaysia, where the political and ethnic realities of society are mirrored in the bureaucracy, creating a style of administration that is highly political.

The study consists of three parts. In the first part the civil service of Malaysia is analysed from a historical point of view. The relationship between the senior civil servants and the political leaders is described and the effect this has on the style of administration that has evolved since Independence. In the second part the civil service is analysed in terms of its social background, its values and basic orientations and its ethnic composition. In the third part some of the administrative problems that exist and their effect on the morale of the civil service are discussed. Finally the role of the civil service in the socio-economic development of the country is analysed and various reform measures recommended to improve the administrative and managerial capability of the civil service.

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