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GENERALIZATIONS FROM THE MALAYSIAN  
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POLITICAL IDEOLOGY IN THE NEW NATIONS:  
GENERALIZATIONS FROM THE MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE

by

James Campbell Scott

A Dissertation

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## SUMMARY

This study represents an attempt to define and account for the basic patterns of political ideology among Westernized elites in new nations. The data from which the analysis is drawn consists of lengthy interviews with a random sample of Malaysian civil servants and a series of questionnaires designed to test conclusions from the interviews.

Three basic value orientations and their political implications are examined in some detail: the orientation toward human nature, to nature itself, and to time. A view that man is by nature inclined to asocial self-seeking leads to a distinctive conception of political life and of politicians, and contributes to the desire for firm rulers who can enforce community-serving behavior. The orientation to nature is what we have called a "constant-pie" orientation; one which assumes a fixed scarcity of desired material goods. Political and economic life becomes, in this context, a zero-sum game in which social distrust is widespread, in which cooperation and compromise are difficult, and in which distributive justice rather than service is the focus of political evaluation.

The origin of the constant-pie orientation lies in the fixed social product that is characteristic of the existential base of traditional society. In the West, lengthy experience with an expanding social product has gradually extinguished this orientation, while in much of the non-West neither the rate nor duration of growth in per capita real income has been sufficient to transform the politics of scarcity into the politics of affluence.

In traditional society, a variety of social control mechanisms contained the centrifugal potential of a constant-pie environment but, in transitional society, these mechanisms have broken down. The Hobbesian qualities of the environment have consequently increased and short-run personal goals are more easily realizable than long term group goals. Thus not only the constant-pie orientation but also the "exploitationist" time orientation are congruent with the existential base of transitional society rather than the result of a pathological response to colonialism and rapid social change as some analysts have contended.

Neither primary nor secondary socialization in new nations contributes to the growth of a "democratic style." Instead, manifest political training, and satisfaction with the effectiveness of the system are the only resources of a democratic regime. A crisis of effectiveness would thus place the democratic regimes of new nations in grave jeopardy.

Support for liberal democracy is comparatively low among Malaysian elites and tends to crumble when more important values such as unity and stability are threatened. Support for a more paternalistic, authoritarian regime is widespread since the assumptions such rule makes about the environment are more congruent with Malaysian realities--e.g., communal tension, illiteracy, narrow loyalties, the elite's monopoly of modernizing skills--than the assumptions of liberal democracy. The existential base is again a more compelling explanation for ideology than the pathology generated by social change.

To the Memory of my Parents,

Dr. Parry M. Scott  
Augusta B. Scott