

**Why such a racial imparity in gov't?**  
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Racism is an attitude that "the other person of a different ethnicity is a lesser mortal for various privately held beliefs." Racism can be applied in various forms. White South Africa was racist.

Hitler was racist. Americans before Abraham Lincoln were racist. Malaysia today runs the risk of being racist even into the 21st Century.



The Malayan model of racism was inadvertently extended and enlarged into the Malaysian Federation.

The Reid Commission recommended and allowed for some "special considerations to keep the Malayan Public Service predominantly Malay," for all the obvious reasons of the Merdeka negotiations moderated by the British and consistent with the Article 153.

But, they also recommended that the entry quota of 1:4 was only limited to the point of recruitment and embedded that principle of equality of opportunities into the constitution with an article disallowing racial considerations after recruitment.

Why then is it today we have only about 10 percent non-Malays in the public services? Why and when was the 20 percent entry quota reduced to less than 10 percent; and even more glaringly why is even that '10 percent' not reflected in the senior officers of the government of Malaysia?

As someone pointed out that 100 percent of the public universities are headed by Malay vice- chancellors; are there no unsuitable non-Malays?

Any basic knowledge of normal distribution statistics will tell that if, all other considerations are the same, then about 10 percent of the non-Malays from the intake level would finally make it to the top of the pyramid. Why is this not obvious to any casual observer?

#### Racial Issues

First let me reflect on this concept of race. To be academically accurate there is no 'Malay race' per se in the world. In fact, all sociologists would argue that "Malay is not a race but a socio-political category."

See an ISEAS book on the topic of 'Contesting Malayness.' In fact most genetic scientists would even argue that, at best, the Malay may be an ethnic category.

Malays are one of the more than 100 percent ethnic categories found within Indonesia.

Nonetheless, for British Malaya it was important for this ethnic category to be raised to become a nationality; and therefore the 'Tanah Melayu' became a *persekutuan* of the federated and un-federated Malay states to become the Federation of Malaya.

It was made up of nine Malay states and two Straits Settlements. In 1963, the same federation was increased into the Federation of Malaysia with three other states; namely Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak.



Singapore left the enlarged federation and leaving only the remaining three states. Sabah and Sarawak were given special rights and privileges of self-administration of their states, except that the constitution defined and proposed all other rights and privileges as contained in the Federation of Malaysia constitution.

My question then is: are the special rights and privileges of the natives of Sabah and Sarawak protected and preserved by the same Federal Constitution when it comes to public services under the Federal Government?

For example, are there special entry quotas for Sabahans and Sarawakians as opposed to the Malaysians? Why not? What are they if there are?

How are constitutional rights and privileges of all Malaysians now equally protected by the Constitution which sees no racial or ethnic quotas after recruitment?

Quota driven

In 1972, when I joined the public services I believe the quota for recruitment was still about 20 percent for non-Malays. But soon after the *Operasi Isi Penuh* programme was instituted fully under the NEP; there was a massive recruitment programme which saw the recruitment of Malays into the public services.

These recruitments were done under delegated authority of the post-May 13th era and were done not by the Public Services Commission but instead by the Public Services Department.

I believe since then, the recruitment of public servants has become quota driven but not compliant with the Reid Commission recommendation.

More tragically, all such recruitment even ignored the necessary conscious recruitment of the Sabahans and Sarawakians into the public services. Why?

While we saw the first recruitment of three Singaporeans into the RMC in 1965, and the first Sarawakian into the RMC in 1967, I am not sure that the spirit of the Article 153 was adhered to even for recruitment into the RMC; then, a very prestigious school designed to "to train leaders for future of Malaya and Malaysia."

For that matter then, were natives of Sabah and Sarawak ever recruited into the Malay Boys and Girls colleges of Kuala Kangsar and Seremban? If not, why not?

Beyond Malaya to Malaysia

Our Tanah Melayu has never moved beyond from Malay to become Malaysia. LKY was smart enough to figure this out and wanted Singapore out.



Tunku and Abdul Razak (*right*) too were smart enough to let them go.

But, unfortunately the leaders of Sabah and Sarawak were not smart enough to "argue for the Article 153 rights whether with their British protectors or with the political leadership of Malaysia. After all Malaysia was not just a Malay state anymore; it had become a truly Malaysian state!

The word Malay is in fact an English word; Melayu is the local word! Equally, Malaysia is not a Malay nation; but an agreed and formally created nation-state to give independence to the three states of Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak.

They all elected to come together to make for new Malaysia; as a fully formed new whole which is greater than the sum of the older parts.

Therefore, today, most Umno members, except the few, find it difficult to move forward and say that they are Malaysians first.



Malaysian first is our national identity and whether Bugis or Tamil or Hakka or or Kadazan or Iban; that is only our ethnic identity. Let us not confuse categories and create unnecessary problems.

What is now needed is good education for nationhood understanding and an equitable non-racist system of administration of the system based on merit that gives an equal place to all Malaysians under sun of the nation states.

Institutionalised racism in any form because of the poor understanding or knowledge of the process of Malaysia formation, cannot be an acceptable excuse for the lack of political will for nation transformation.

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