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# **Competing Identities in a Plural Society**

Ibrahim Saad

**INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES**



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Tel: 7758111  
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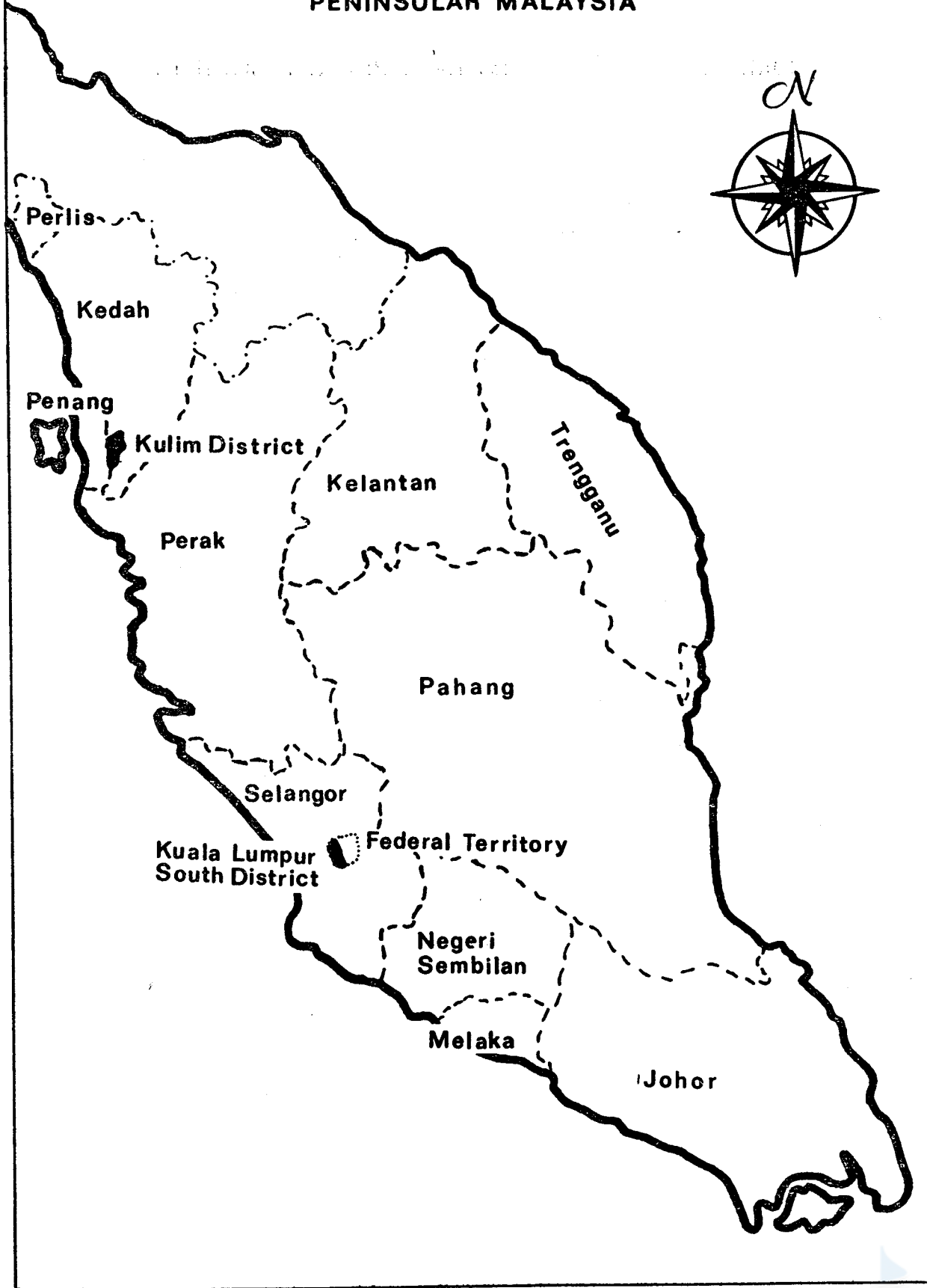
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COMPETING IDENTITIES IN A PLURAL SOCIETY



# PENINSULAR MALAYSIA



# COMPETING IDENTITIES IN A PLURAL SOCIETY

The Case of Peninsular Malaysia

IBRAHIM SAAD

INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

PUSTAKA PERDANA



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## INTRODUCTION

This is a study of national identity in a plural society. Malaysia, a plural society divided by racial, linguistic and religious cleavages, has attempted to forge a national identity overriding these primordial identities. The purpose of this study is to probe the extent to which national identity exists among these groups. At the same time, the study attempts to detect the relationship between national identity and political knowledge.



# I. THE PROBLEM OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

After twenty years of independence, Malaysia cannot be said to have settled its nation-building problems. It has been said that Malaysia is an "ideal laboratory for a student of contemporary nation building techniques; but for the nation builders it is a nightmare."<sup>1</sup>

Twelve years ago, Ness commented "there are essentially no data on Malaysian values that would admit of even an educated guess on the degree of political consciousness that exist in an issue."<sup>2</sup> The same situation exists today since such studies are not encouraged. Nation building in Malaysia, to a large extent, means national integration. It is assumed that steps taken for national integration would ultimately lead to its achievement. Not knowing exactly what the result would be had led to the enforcement of steps taken for national integration, as if to make sure of its success.

Self-assurance had led "national integration" to be the catchword of Malaysian politics. Most Malaysians (especially the political élite) assume that a distinctive nationality is in the process of formation in Malaysia. They assume that a transformation similar to the one in the United States will take place. Talking about the new nationality, anticipating the new identity of future Malaysians, and trying to discern the outlines of this new national character are a national pastime of many Malaysians.

One aspect of national integration is the problem of national identity. "Divided in almost every respect, the people in Malaysia have in common essentially only the fact that they live in the same country."<sup>3</sup> The heterogeneity of such a population gives rise to the question of how national identity can be achieved in the face of such internal diversity and relatedly how a national consciousness may evolve under such conditions. In other words, do people from various racial, religious and linguistic backgrounds identify themselves as Malaysians and not Malays, Chinese, Indians, Muslims, etc.? Writers who have written about Malaysia cannot help but notice

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1 Pran Chopra, "Malaysia's Strategy for Survival," *Pacific Affairs* (Winter, 1974/75), p. 437.

2 Gayl D. Ness, *Bureaucracy and Development in Malaysia: A Study of Complex Organizations in Stimulating Economic Development in New States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 69.

3 Emerson quoted in Frank H.H. King, *The New Nation: A Study of Communalism and Nationalism* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1957), p. v.

that in Malaysia "groups are based on religion, ethnicity and language."<sup>4</sup> People identify themselves and are identified by others according to communal categories. Others have noticed that

other countries also have internal division — of race, caste, pigmentation, religion, language or economic status, but in no country are so many divisions so primordial as in Malaysia, in none each division so deeply reinforced all the others at once.<sup>5</sup>

Many other writers also used the term "primordial attachments" to describe the social relationship existing in the country.<sup>6</sup>

National membership is one of the dimensions of the individual's self-identity, a component of his self-concept commanding varying degrees of commitment to and association with the nation. One of the goals of this study is precisely to detect the relationship between this aspect of social identity and other predetermined "givens". It is a question of identity. How does a person describe himself towards others and himself? What are the salient dimensions of one's self? There is the "Who am I" question.

It is often argued that an integral part of a person's self-identity is his affectively charged attachments to a political community. If this political community is threatened, the ego feels the blow. Of most concern is how primordial attachment or loyalties to subnational groupings — ethnic, linguistic, regional, tribal, etc. — might undermine the nation. Our interest is with the question of competing loyalties. Students of new nations have observed that citizens cling to their prenational loyalties and are reluctant to shift allegiance to the nation state. It is argued that a nation cannot well operate if many of its citizens see themselves as belonging to some subnational group first and the nation second. When forced to choose between the nation and the parochial political community, the people will permit the latter to command allegiance. This is what the political élite in Malaysia are concerned with. They believe that identification with the nation, that is, Malaysia, must supersede all other primordial attachments, especially those of race and religion. The National Ideology — *Rukunegara* — emphasized

4 Milton H. Esman, *Administration and Development in Malaysia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), p. 227.

5 Chopra, op. cit., p. 437.

6 Nancy Snider, "Race Leitmotiv of the Malaysian Election Drama," *Asia Survey*, Vol. 10, No. 12, December 1970; Alvin Rabushka, *Race and Politics in Urban Malaya* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1973); and Cynthia H. Enloe, *Multi-Ethnic Politics: The Case of Malaysia*, Monograph Series, Centre for South and Southeast Asia Studies (Berkeley: University of California, 1970).

from these diverse elements in our population we are dedicated to the achievement of a united nation in which loyalty and dedication to the nation shall override all other loyalties.<sup>7</sup>

From the point of view of the political élite, national identity is the individual's identification with Malaysia. In doing so, individuals must shed their ethnic, linguistic and religious identities. To them identification with the latter identities means less loyalty towards the nation.

This is a study of competing identities among students. It attempts to probe the relationship between the forces of religion, race, regional and national identity; in short, the political attitudes towards the nation. Is it true that if an individual identifies with his racial group, then he has negative attitudes towards the nation? Is it true that if he identifies himself with the nation, he has positive attitudes towards the nation? This study will also attempt to show the relationship between those who have identified themselves with the nation and the political knowledge they have of the nation. Is it true that with more political knowledge an individual identifies himself more with the nation?

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7 Malaysia, *Second Malaysia Plan 1971-75* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1970), p. 3.



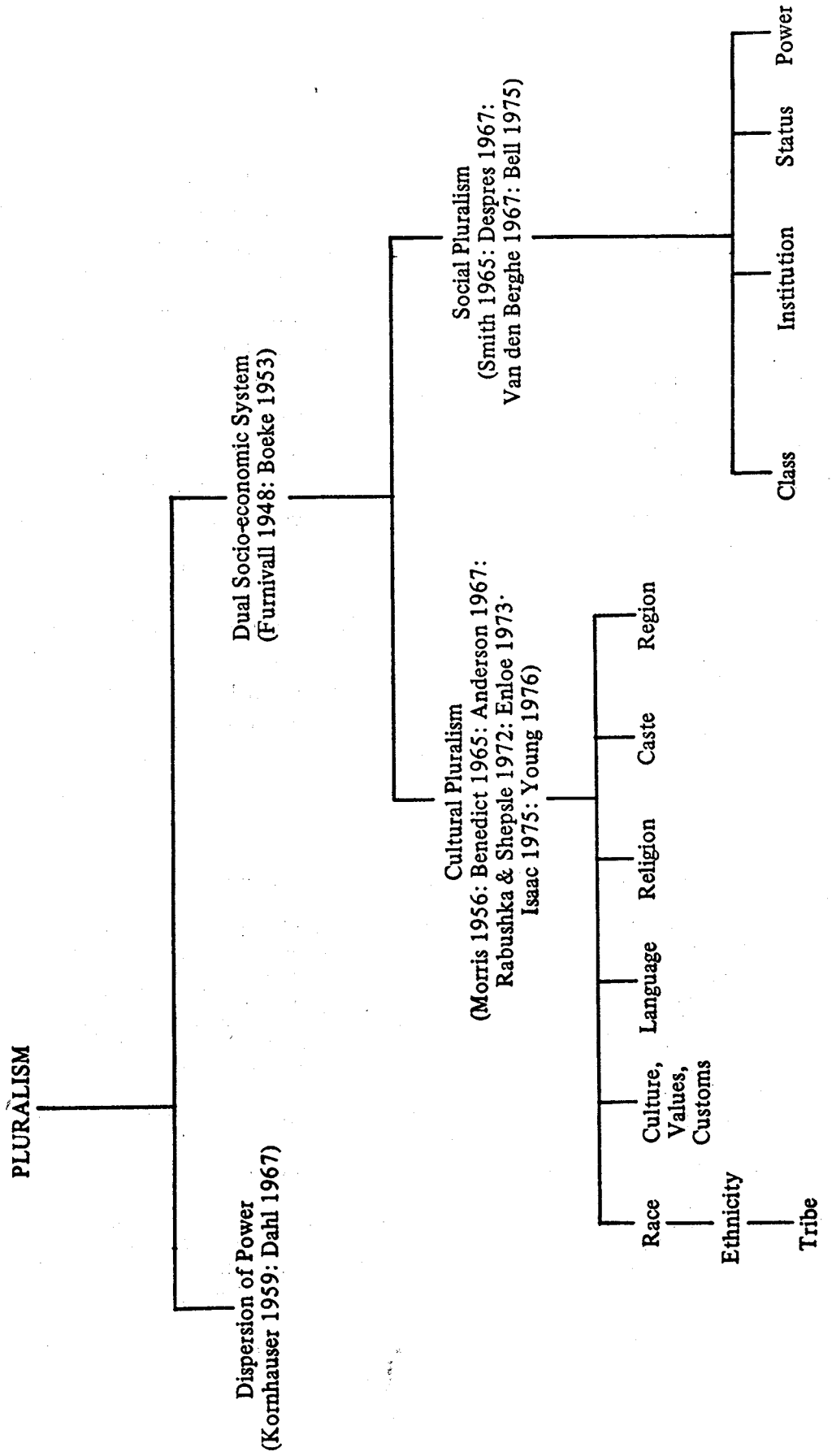
## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

One of the dominant features of newly independent countries today is its plural population. Plural societies have been a subject of analysis since Furnivall introduced the term.<sup>8</sup> Later, writers like Morris, Benedict, Crowley, Braithwaite expanded the definition made by Furnivall.<sup>9</sup> These studies did not reflect the postindependence era when almost everything changed. Since then there has been more than adequate literature on plural societies like those edited by Kuper and Smith pertaining to Africa,<sup>10</sup> Despres on Guayana<sup>11</sup> and Van den Berghe on Africa.<sup>12</sup> Others like Schermerhorn, Rabushka and Shepsle were interested in formulating an all-encompassing theory of a plural society.<sup>13</sup> Young covered all aspects of a plural society with illustrative examples.<sup>14</sup> Figure I shows some major works done on the subject.

From these studies various indicators of a plural society had been forwarded. Enloe and Young among others stated these indicators in their work.<sup>15</sup> Basically a society is plural when there exist differences in ethnicity, language, race, caste, assumed blood ties, customs or territory.<sup>16</sup> Pluralism *per se* does not create many problems to a nation; it is the politicalization and mobilization of these differences that create enormous challenge to nations with plural societies. These processes had created smaller states

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- 8 J.S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1948).
  - 9 H.M. Morris, "Indians in East Africa: A Study of Plural Society," *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. VII, No. 3, October 1956; Burton Benedict, *Mauritius: Problems of a Plural Society* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1965); Daniel Crowley, "Plural and Differential Acceleration in Trinidad," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. LIX, No. 5, October 1957; and Lloyd Braithwaite, "The Problem of Cultural Integration in Trinidad," *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. III, No. 1, June 1954, pp. 82-96.
  - 10 Leo Kuper and M.G. Smith, *Pluralism in Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).
  - 11 Leo A. Despres, *Cultural Pluralism and Nationalist Politics in British Guiana* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964).
  - 12 Pierre Van den Berghe, *Race and Racism* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1967).
  - 13 R.A. Schermerhorn, *Comparative Ethnic Relations* (New York: Random House, 1970) and Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth A. Shepsle, *Politics in Plural Societies: A Theory of Democratic Instability* (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1972).
  - 14 Crawford M. Young, *Politics of Cultural Pluralism* (Madison, Wi.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976).
  - 15 Cynthia H. Enloe, *Ethnic Conflict and Political Development* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1975) and Young, *op. cit.*
  - 16 Young, *op. cit.*

FIGURE I: The Development of the Term 'Pluralism'



within nation states and smaller societies within larger ones. Such a situation became a threat to the political stability and the very existence of these nations. Consequently, it was said that these nations faced the problem of nation building.

Nation building is an important word in the vocabulary of the less developed countries. It has been used freely to explain various processes of change ranging from political to economic development. At times it is difficult to differentiate one from the other since they have been used interchangeably. Nation building can be interpreted as part of a larger process of political development. Pye gave ten definitions of political development.<sup>17</sup> Rustow commented it was "obviously at least nine too many. . . ."<sup>18</sup> Almond and Powell, Dodd and Eisenstadt saw political development in terms of "capacity and capability" of the system to solve problems.<sup>19</sup> According to Almond and Powell, nation building is "the cultural aspect of political development."<sup>20</sup> Pakenham saw it as "bridging regional, religious, caste, linguistic, tribal and other cleavages."<sup>21</sup> Nation building is the problem confronted by many newly independent nations which have populations that are often socially and culturally diverse. It involves the process or steps taken in bringing together people of different races, languages, etc., and moulding their orientations towards a new nation which previously had existed only physically.

One of the problems of nation building concerns one's identity. How does one look at oneself? One's identity is one's awareness of self as object and as active agent. For a political scientist like Pye and an anthropologist like Geertz, individual allegiance could be represented as a dimension of personal identity. Ethnic allegiance — by shifting the loyalty of the individual from the nation to the ethnic group — may undermine the basis upon which the legitimacy of the state is built. Pye and Verba refer national identity "to the belief of individuals and the extent to which they consider themselves members of the nation state."<sup>22</sup> The creation of national identity among members of a nation is a cultural equivalent to the drawing of boundaries of the nation. They refer vertical form of identification to a sense

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17 Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba, eds., *Political Change and Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).

18 Samuel P. Huntington, "The Change to Change: Modernization Development and Politics," *Comparative Politics*, April 1971.

19 Gabriel Almond and G.B. Powell, *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1966); C.H. Dodd, *Political Development* (London: MacMillan Press, 1972); and S.N. Eisenstadt, *Modernization: Protest and Change* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966).

20 Almond and Powell, op. cit., p. 36.

21 Robert A. Pakenham, "Approaches to Study of Political Development," *World Politics* 17, No. 1, 1972, pp. 108-20.

22 Pye and Verba, op. cit., p. 537.

of attachment that individuals have to some superordinate political unit and to the symbols of that political unit. According to them,

Where members of a political system do not share a common superordinate identification but rather identify with a variety of sub-national political units such as tribe or region, it will be obviously impossible to develop the sense of common membership . . . .<sup>23</sup>

The issue of national identity can be approached from two ways. In the first — that is, the “political religion system”<sup>24</sup> — approach, loyalty and commitment to the nation-state may be developed as a replacement and substitute for other loyalties to tribe, religion, ethnicity, community and in extreme cases the family itself. The central political symbol becomes the primary focus of individual commitment. Where the national élite suspect traditional local commitment of endangering the nation, the choice may be between the acceptance of fragmentation or an attempt to destroy local commitments through enforced political religion. Erikson implied that identity confusion is a painful condition and that if this is to be avoided individuals must integrate the components of their identity.<sup>25</sup> Integration means establishing a hierarchy of identity components which in turn depends on societal integration, so that each person’s identity reflecting this hierarchy would be integrated. Erikson’s stress on hierarchy suggests that identity components cannot be equally valued. Rather they must be ranked. As a result, the more important any one subject, the less likely the other object will be important.

In the second approach — what Verba and Pye called an “incorporative” solution to the conflict between primordial commitment and identification with the nation-state — the commitment of the nation is added but it does not replace the more traditional parochial commitments.<sup>26</sup> The individual develops a multiple set of loyalties on various levels to avoid conflict. In his study on India, Elder found that

one can apparently add national identity to one’s other loyalties. A good family man can still be nationally loyal.<sup>27</sup>

23 Pye and Verba, *op. cit.*, p. 537.

24 David E. Apter, “Political Religion in the New Nations,” in C. Geertz, ed., *Old Societies and New States* (New York: Free Press, 1963), pp. 57-104.

25 Erik H. Erikson, “Identity, Psychosocial,” in David L. Sills, ed., *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1968) pp. 61-65.

26 Verba and Pye, *op. cit.*

27 Joseph W. Elder, “National Loyalties in a Newly Independent Nation,” in David Apter, ed., *Ideology and Discontent* (New York: Free Press, 1964), p. 48.

MacDougall reported that students have equally high loyalty to their race and to the nation in Singapore.<sup>28</sup> Other experiences in Southeast Asia show that it is possible to have national identity and other primordial identities at the same time. Geertz described Indonesian city dwellers as "bicultural" following regional culture in religion, familial matter and metropolitan culture in politics and economy.<sup>29</sup> Coughlin reported that "overseas Chinese have double identity, both Chinese and Southeast Asian."<sup>30</sup> He cited examples in Thailand where Chinese have adopted the Thai way of life but at the same time still remained Chinese. Bunsanong and Skinner also reported the same phenomenon in Thailand.<sup>31</sup> Reading about Southeast Asia, one cannot help but notice the phenomenon of split personality among its citizens.

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- 28 John MacDougall, "The Genuine Singapore Revolution, Part II," *Prospect* 1 16 (1970), pp. 2-7.
- 29 Hildred Geertz, *Indonesian Culture and Communities* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1963).
- 30 Richard J. Coughlin, *Double Identity: The Chinese in Modern Thailand* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), p. 204.
- 31 P. Bunsanong, *Chinese-Thai Differential Assimilation in Bangkok* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971); William G. Skinner, *Leadership and Power in Community in Thailand* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958).



### III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Malaysia is made up of two major segments: (i) Peninsular Malaysia, formerly known as Malaya, consisting of the land form known as the Malay Peninsula and (ii) Sabah and Sarawak, situated along the northern rim of the island of Borneo and formerly known as British North Borneo. For the purpose of this study, all references are to Peninsular Malaysia.

British colonial rule had brought some changes to Malaysia (Malaya at that time) and the most significant is the transformation of the Malaysian population. Between 1880-1959 Malaysia's population multiplied fivefold from less than a million to seven and three quarter million. In 1880, Malays made up about 90% of the population of Malaya and in 1890 two-thirds. By 1911, when the first census was held they made up only 51%. By 1931, it was only 49.2% and by 1957 (the year of independence) the Malays made

TABLE 1: POPULATION OF MALAYSIA, 31 DECEMBER 1957 - 31 DECEMBER 1975

Year	Malays	Chinese	Indian	Others	Total
1957 <sup>1</sup>	3,125,474 49.8%	2,333,756 37.2%	707,108 11.3%	112,420 1.7%	6,278,758
1962	3,706,869 51.2%	2,640,452 36.5%	784,407 10.8%	108,750 1.5%	7,240,453
1966	4,184,766 52.1%	2,890,517 36.0%	853,576 10.8%	103,428 1.3%	8,032,287
1970 <sup>2</sup>	4,652,869 53.0%	3,119,165 35.6%	904,718 10.3%	97,814 1.1%	8,774,564
1975	5,423,260 53.6%	355,677 35.2%	1,058,171* 10.4%	76,855 0.8%	10,114,854
1957- 1975 increase	2,297,786 42.3%	1,223,015 34.3%	351,065 33.1%	-31,565† -31.6%	3,836,096 37.9%

Notes: 1 First census

2 Second census

\* include Pakistanis and Ceylonese

† decrease when Pakistanis and Ceylonese not included in this category as before 1975

Source: *Annual Statistical Bulletin, Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1977), pp. 6, 26.

up 49.7%. The reason for the increased population up to 1957 was the large-scale migration of Chinese and Indians. It was estimated that there was a total of sixteen million Chinese and Indian immigrants over the period 1900-40.<sup>32</sup> The majority, of course, later returned to China or India.

The differences between the Malays, Chinese, Indians, Europeans, etc., in Malaysia have been termed racial, ethnic and communal. We shall restrict ourselves to the term "racial" as categorized by the Malaysian bureaucracy as well as individuals in the society. The population of Malaysia is made up of three major racial groups. In 1975, Malays made up 53.6% of the population, the Chinese 35.1%, Indians 10.4% and Others 0.8% (Table 1).

To a large extent, there is concentration of certain racial groups in certain geographical areas. The non-Malays are mostly concentrated on the

TABLE 2: POPULATION BY STATE AND RACE, 31 DECEMBER 1975

State	Malays	Chinese	Indians	Others	Total
Johor	795,437 53.8%	579,730 39.2%	98,122 6.6%	6,513 0.4%	1,479,802
Kedah	774,398 71%	209,276 19.2%	90,509 8.3%	17,343 1.5%	1,091,526
Kelantan	743,880 92.8%	43,288 5.4%	6,634 0.8%	8,129 1%	801,931
Melaka	241,969 52.4%	180,447 39.1%	36,316 7.9%	3,102 0.6%	461,935
N. Sembilan	248,860 45.3%	209,068 38.1%	89,025 16.2%	2,237 0.4%	549,190
Pahang	362,160 61.7%	180,788 30.8%	42,407 7.2%	1,769 0.3%	587,124
P. Pinang	266,528 30.7%	487,869 56.2%	99,802 11.5%	13,813 1.6%	868,012
Perak	777,937 43.4%	755,929 42.2%	251,836 14.1%	4,868 0.3%	1,790,570
Perlis	106,082 78.7%	22,448 16.6%	2,834 2.1%	3,461 2.6%	134,825
Selangor (including Federal Territory)	860,432 35.2%	863,423 46%	337,422 17%	14,982 0.8%	1,876,259
Trengganu	445,374 94%	24,505 5.2%	3,164 0.7%	637 0.1%	473,680

Source: *Annual Statistical Bulletin, Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1977), p. 8.

32 J.M. Gullick, *Malaysia* (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1969).

west coast of Peninsular Malaysia in the states of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Melaka. In these states (except Melaka) the non-Malay population make up more than 50% of the population. Seventy per cent of the total Chinese population is concentrated in these four states, while 66.7% of the total Indian population and 50.7% of the total population of Others are also concentrated in these states. The Malay population is concentrated in the northern and eastern states of the peninsula. In these states, Malays make up 60% of the total population (Table 2).

Another feature of the Malaysian population is its urban-rural differences. The non-Malays are mostly found in the urban area and the Malays in the rural area. It was estimated that in 1975, 18% of the Malays and 50.7% of the Chinese were urban. On the other hand, 82% of the Malays and 49.3% of the Chinese were rural (Table 3).

TABLE 3: ESTIMATED RURAL AND URBAN DISTRIBUTION BY PERCENTAGE IN 1975

	Urban	Rural
Malays	18	82
Chinese	50.7	49.3
Indians	37.7	62.3
Others	46.9	53.1
Total	32	68

Source: *Third Malaysia Plan* (1975).

The Malaysian population is not only separated geographically and physically but also culturally. By constitutional and legal definition, a Malay is and must be a Muslim.<sup>33</sup> For the Malays, to abandon Islam would be a renunciation of their way of life and loss of all legal and political rights accorded them "on the basis of their claim of being indigenous people. Islam gives the Malay bonds of communal identity as strong as those developed by social and political institutions. For the Malays, the sense of community is inextricably bound up with the concept of community of true believers. In practice, it appears that most Malays have a strong sense of racial identity reinforced by Islamic attitudes towards the infidels."<sup>34</sup> The Malays speak Bahasa Melayu (now known as Bahasa Malaysia), a language spoken in Indonesia, Brunei, southern Thailand, southern Philippines and Singapore where it is the national language. Bahasa Malaysia has a number

33 Malaysia, *Federal Constitution* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1970), Article 160 (2).

34 Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics* (New York: New York University Press 1970), p. 19.

of regional dialects which however do not deviate so much from one another as to render them mutually unintelligible.

At the same time, Malays practise the Malay customs, culture, and belief. Thus, constitutionally the Malay is a person who speaks Bahasa, practises Islam and follows Malay customs. There are Muslim Indians and Chinese but they are not regarded as Malays.

Socially, the Chinese remain separated from the rest of Malaysian society. They maintain a closely knit structure of discrete clans, dialects and associations and are bound together by a common culture and heritage. The Chinese are divided into ten or more related but distinct cultural groups speaking almost as many different and usually not mutually intelligible dialects. For the purpose of writing and education the Chinese use *Guo-yu*. It is through *Guo-yu* that the various Chinese clans and dialect groups are brought together. Chinese group organizations are based on kinship ties and they provide support in the struggle to compete with the other races. The Chinese in Malaysia "regard themselves as part of the larger Chinese society and therefore aim at conforming to the values which they believe hold the wider Chinese society."<sup>35</sup> These values include the Chinese written language, Chinese family organization and the recognition of the homeland as the source of their beliefs and ideas. In their religious beliefs and practices, they are eclectic, choosing to worship both Buddhist and Taoist deities, heroes of Bodhisattvas and performing rites associated with Confucianism. The lore and legends of Chinese history and religious literature give them a sense of unity which helps to overcome the divisions due to dialects and groupings. "Observance of traditional holidays are considered to be part of Chinese culture and they provide the occasion for the reassertion of ties binding together the Chinese community."<sup>36</sup>

The Indians in Malaysia are basically concentrated in the estates. The majority of them are from southern India. The northern Indians are few and relatively insignificant in Malaysia. Most of them are professionals engaged in financial and commercial operations. Caste distinctions are virtually unknown. Most of the Indian *émigrés* are Hindu. Because Hinduism in Malaysia is exclusively an Indian religion, it tends to reinforce — with religious sanctions — the communal exclusiveness of the Indian community.

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35 William Newell, *Treacherous River, A Study of Rural Chinese in Northern Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1962), p. 202.

36 Means, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

#### IV. SAMPLE DESCRIPTION AND DESIGN

There are several aims in this study: (i) to assess the relative strength of ethnic (and other sociocultural identities) versus national identification among Malaysian secondary school students by probing into their self-identity; (ii) to probe the relationship between national identity and political attitudes towards the nation; (iii) to probe the relationship between ethnicity and political attitudes towards the nation; and (iv) to detect the relationship between self-identity and political knowledge of the nation.

First introduced by Kuhn and McPartland, the "Who am I?" test was originally intended as a measure of phenomenal self.<sup>37</sup> The respondents were asked to answer twenty times the question "Who am I?" In this preliminary analysis, Kuhn and McPartland showed that people tend to describe themselves first as members of groups and classes, and then in evaluative terms. These results, indicating a preponderance of social attributes in the self-identity of individuals, are enough to warrant further exploration of the links between the social world and some dimensions of personal identity.

Using a similar approach, Lambert and Klineberg asked children (ages 6, 10 and 14) from ten countries to answer fourteen times the questions "Who are you?" "What else are you?" etc.<sup>38</sup> Their purpose was to study the emergence of national consciousness in various parts of the world and in different development stages.

In this study, the "Who am I?" test had been slightly modified. Respondents were asked the "Who am I?" question but at the same time they were given a choice of five types of answers (Appendix A). The answers were (a) Malaysian (b) ethnic group (c) religious group (d) regional group and (e) don't know. The respondents were asked to choose what to them was the most important identity, the second important identity, and the third important identity (Appendix A). Their answers were then coded. Answers with national identity as the most important and primordial identities as second and third choices were coded as "1". Answers with primordial identities as the most important and national identity as second most important were coded "2". Those with national identity placed as a third

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37 H.M. Kuhn and T.S. McPartland, "An Empirical Investigation of Self Attitudes," *American Sociological Review*, 19, pp. 68-76.

38 W.E. Lambert and O. Klineberg, *Children: View of Foreign People; A Cross National Study* (New York: Appleton-Century-Croft, 1967).

choice after primordial identities were coded "3" and the answers with no mention of national identity were coded "4" (Appendix B).

As our aim was to probe the political attitudes towards the nation, five questions were included to tap these attitudes. The five attitudes tapped were (i) sense of duty towards the nation (ii) willingness to defend the nation (iii) willingness to emigrate to another country (iv) concern over whether the nation should surrender to another country (v) feelings of pride in celebrating National Day. These questions differ from the typical Likert scale in one important respect. Whereas in the Likert technique, subjects were asked to express their agreement or disagreement with a number of statements about attitude objects (usually in four categories of intensity and one neutral category), here the subjects were asked to indicate which of several fixed responses to a question resembled their own true response (Appendix D).

To detect the relationship between self-identity and political knowledge of the nation, ten questions about the nation were included in the questionnaire. Each was a multiple choice type of question. There were five choices with one correct answer. The questions asked were on national symbols, ideology, government and other salient features and events of the nation (Appendix C).

This questionnaire was administered to students in Form One (ages 13-14) and Form Three (ages 15-16) in two administrative districts. One was an urban district, the other rural. It was administered solely by me during the period January to March 1978. Students filled out the questionnaire during class time under my supervision. Many teachers stayed around for a while after the formal introduction but I discouraged them because I wanted to avoid a situation smacking of a school test or even of school itself. To ensure anonymity students were requested not to write their names on the questionnaire. Students were assured that it was not a school test and their answers would have no bearing on their academic or personal future.

The statistical analysis used was crosstabulation. A crosstabulation is a joint frequency distribution of cases according to two or more classificatory variables. This joint frequency distribution is statistically analysed by the chi-square test of statistical significance. It helps us to determine a systematic relationship existing between two variables. This is done by computing the cell frequencies which would be expected if no relationship is present between the variables given the existing row and column total (marginal).<sup>39</sup> The greater the discrepancies between the actual and expected

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39 Norman H. Nie et. al., *Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS)* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970).

frequencies, the larger the chi-square becomes. A large chi-square implies that a systematic relationship of some sort exists between the variables. Conversely, we interpret small values of chi-square to indicate the absence of relationship, often referred to as statistical independence. In the computation, missing data was declared and coded -9 and it was eliminated from the computation.

THE SAMPLE

The questionnaire was administered to 819 students from 12 secondary schools in Peninsular Malaysia. Six schools are situated in the urban area in Kuala Lumpur, the federal capital, and six schools in Kulim, a rural district three hundred and fifty miles away (see *frontispiece*). The 12 schools are all government national medium schools. Those who answered the questionnaire were in Form One (Grade 7) and Form Three (Grade 9). Form can also be regarded as an age variable since those in Form One must be between the ages of 13 to 14 and those in Form Three, between the ages of 15 to 16.

There were altogether 197 Form One students and 204 Form Three students in the urban schools; and 214 Form One and 204 Form Three students in the rural schools (Table 4).

TABLE 4: NUMBER OF STUDENTS BY SCHOOL LOCATION AND FORM

School Location	Form One	Form Three	Total
Urban	197 49.1%	204 50.9%	401 49.0%
Rural	214 51.2%	204 48.8%	418 51.0%
Total	411	408	

TABLE 5: NUMBER OF STUDENTS BY FORM AND SEX

Form	Sex	
	Boys	Girls
One	237 57.7%	174 42.3%
Three	234 57.5%	173 42.5%
Total	471 57.6%	347 42.4%

Out of a total 411 students in Form One, 237 were boys and out of the total of 408 students in Form Three, 234 were boys (Table 5). Four hundred and seventeen (50.9%) students in our sample were Malays, 320 (39.0%) were Chinese, 77 (9.3%) were Indians and 6 (0.7%) were Others (Table 6).

TABLE 6: NUMBER OF STUDENTS BY FORM AND RACE

Form	Race			
	Malays	Chinese	Indians	Others
One	207 50.2%	167 40.5%	35 8.3%	4 1.0%
Three	210 51.6%	153 37.6%	42 10.3%	2 0.5%
Total	417 50.9%	320 39.0%	77 9.3%	6 0.7%

Out of the 417 Malays, 212 were from the urban area and 205 from the rural area. One hundred and fifty-six Chinese students were from the urban area and 164 from the rural area. Twenty-nine Indian students were from the urban area and 47 from the rural area (Table 7).

TABLE 7: NUMBER OF STUDENTS BY RACE AND SCHOOL LOCATION

Race	School Location	
	Urban	Rural
Malay	212 25.9%	205 25.0%
Chinese	156 19.0%	164 20.1%
Indian	29 3.5%	47 5.8%
Others	3 0.4%	3 0.4%

The following table shows the breakdown of race and sex:

TABLE 8: NUMBER OF STUDENTS BY RACE AND SEX

Race	Sex	
	Boys	Girls
Malays	261 55.4%	156 44.7%
Chinese	156 32.8%	164 47.6%
Indians	48 10.4%	27 7.8%
Others	6 1.3%	0



## V. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

The statistical analysis of the data will be presented in four categories: (i) the relationship between national or primordial attachment as tapped by the "Who am I?" question with the sociocultural endowment of region, race, age and sex; (ii) the relationship between national or primordial attachment with attitudes towards the nation (whether negative or positive) as tapped by the Likert type questionnaire presented earlier; (iii) the relationship between sociocultural endowment with political knowledge about the nation; and (iv) the relationship between ethnicity and political attitudes towards the nation.

As shown earlier, answers derived from the "Who am I" question fell into four categories, labelled as follows: (i) "national identifiers" for those who chose Malaysia as the most important identity and all other primordial identities (ethnic, religious, state) as secondary; (ii) "peripheral national identifiers" for those who placed ethnic or religious or state identity first and national identity second; (iii) "peripheral primordial identifiers" for those who placed national identity third with ethnic or religious or state identity as first and second choices; and (iv) "primordial identifiers" for those who did not mention national identity at all as any of their choices.

### THE PARAMETER OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

Armed with these labels and assuming that our operational index was a valid one, we addressed ourselves to the question "Who are the people who are national identifiers?" From the sample of 809 valid cases, 40.9% were national identifiers; 23.1% were peripheral national identifiers; 13.5% were peripheral primordial identifiers and 22.5% were primordial identifiers.

TABLE 9: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO NATIONAL IDENTITY

National Identifiers	40.9% (N-331)
Peripheral National Identifiers	23.1% (N-187)
Peripheral Primordial Identifiers	13.5% (N-109)
Primordial Identifiers	22.5% (N-182)

(a) More rural students were national identifiers (42.2%) compared to urban students (39.5%).

At the same time more rural students (24.9%) than urban students (19.9%) were primordial identifiers. It could be argued that rural students were nonnation identifiers because the process of political mobilization had not affected the periphery substantially. It had been predicted elsewhere that those at the periphery, that is, premodern society, were more primordially attached. To some extent our sample reflected this notion but at the same time a large portion of rural students were national identifiers (42.2%). Most probably these students were at the periphery of the urban areas while the other group was farther away from the centre and thus had not been touched by political mobilization. On the other hand, those in the centre identified less with the nation compared to this periphery group. Possibly the process of urbanization, mass culturalization, etc., had made them pay less attention to the nation.

TABLE 10: NATIONAL IDENTITY AND REGION BY PERCENTAGE

	Region	
	Urban (N=329)	Rural (N=417)
National Identifiers	39.5	42.2
Peripheral National Identifiers	23.0	23.3
Peripheral Primordial Identifiers	17.6	9.6
Primordial Identifiers	19.9	24.9

$\chi^2$  Significant at 0.001 level

(b) The number of national identifiers increased with age and school career.

Our data suggests that age is an important indicator of national identity. The percentage of primordial identifiers of those students in Form Three (15 years old, 18.5%) was far below the percentage of those in Form One (13 years, 26.4%) even though they had almost the same percentage of national identifiers (41.7%) as those in Form One (13 years old, 40.1%). This suggests that as the students progressed in their school career, their identification with solely primordial groups became less. This identification was not immediately replaced by national identity; rather it was replaced by shared national-primordial identity in the form of peripheral national and peripheral primordial identity.

(c) More girls were national identifiers compared to boys (38.4%).

Table 12 shows that less girls were primordial identifiers (20.0%) compared to boys. It had been said that parents tended to "shelter" their daughters more than sons. Thus it should be expected that girls would be restricted in their contact with others especially the other ethnic groups;

consequently, we should expect them to be primordial identifiers but our sample did not reflect this assumption.

TABLE 11: NATIONAL IDENTITY AND AGE/FORM

	13 years old (N-409)	15 years old (N-400)
National Identifiers	40.1	41.7
Peripheral National Identifiers	20.3	26.0
Peripheral Primordial Identifiers	13.2	13.8
Primordial Identifiers	26.4	18.5

$\chi^2$  Significant at 0.03 level

TABLE 12: NATIONAL IDENTITY AND SEX

	Sex	
	Boys (N-463)	Girls (N-345)
National Identifiers	38.4	44.1
Peripheral National Identifiers	21.0	26.0
Peripheral Primordial Identifiers	16.2	9.9
Primordial Identifiers	24.4	20.0

$\chi^2$  Significant at 0.01 level

(d) More Chinese were national identifiers than primordial identifiers.

TABLE 13: NATIONAL IDENTITY AND RACE

	Race			
	Malay (N-411)	Chinese (N-315)	Indian (N-76)	Others (N-6)
National Identifiers	26.3	61.0	35.5	50.0
Peripheral National Identifiers	21.7	24.1	28.9	0
Peripheral Primordial Identifiers	20.9	6.7	2.6	0
Primordial Identifiers	31.1	8.3	32.9	50.0

$\chi^2$  Significant at 0.001 level

On the whole the non-Malays identified themselves with the nation more than the Malays. At the same time the non-Malays had identified less with their primordial groups compared to the Malays. It had been argued that the non-Malays in Malaysia had not identified themselves with the nation.

Our sample seems to suggest otherwise. Anyway, it should be noted that to the Malays, being a Malaysian simultaneously means being a Malay and a Muslim. Thus the whole concept of a Malaysian to the Malay is intertwined with and inseparable from his primordial attachments. Being a Malaysian to a Malay can mean being one of three things, that is, Malaysian, Malay, Muslim. Thus we can see an almost identical percentage among national, peripheral national and peripheral primordial identifiers. On the other hand, it is surprising that a large portion of them did not mention Malaysian as any of their three choices (31.1% of the Malays). In other words, the Malays who regarded themselves as indigenous had not identified themselves with the nation.

#### NATIONAL IDENTITY AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE NATION

As we have mentioned earlier, there were five questions to tap attitudes towards the nation. One might label these Likert type answers in various ways: patriotic, less patriotic, unpatriotic, etc.; nationalistic, less nationalistic, unnationalistic; loyal, less loyal, disloyal, etc. For this study, we shall use three labels "positive", "neutral", and "negative" attitudes towards the nation. The choice is made because all five questions include various aspects of attitudes towards the nation — nationalistic, patriotic or loyal.

With this operational index, we want to answer the question "Do national identifiers have positive attitudes towards the nation?"

TABLE 14: SENSE OF DUTY TOWARDS THE NATION

Attitudes	Identities			
	National Identifiers	Peripheral National Identifiers	Peripheral Primordial Identifiers	Primordial Identifiers
Positive	19.9	21.4	28.4	18.7
Neutral	34.1	40.6	35.8	43.3
Negative	45.9	38.0	35.8	37.9

$\chi^2$  Significant at 0.001 level

Table 14 suggests that national identifiers and peripheral national identifiers have more negative attitudes (45.9% and 38.0%) than the other two identifiers (37.9% and 35.8%). To some extent, it shows us that identification with the nation does not necessarily promote positive attitudes towards the nation. In fact national identifiers (19.9%) and primordial identifiers (18.7%) have almost the same percentage of positive attitudes. We had

some sort of a split personality, based on the choices made, among the national identifiers. Even though they regarded themselves as Malaysian, they did not necessarily see Malaysia positively; thus we cannot assume these national identifiers will automatically have positive attitudes towards the nation. At the same time we cannot dismiss primordial identifiers (18.7%) and peripheral primordial identifiers (28.4%) as disloyal and unpatriotic just because they did not identify with Malaysia since some of them may have positive attitudes towards the nation.

Table 15 shows the response to the question about whether Malaysia should surrender to another country. A positive attitude indicates opposition if Malaysia surrenders to another country, while a negative attitude indicates Malaysia should surrender to another country.

TABLE 15: SHOULD MALAYSIA SURRENDER TO ANOTHER COUNTRY?

Attitudes	Identities			
	National Identifiers	Peripheral National Identifiers	Peripheral Primordial Identifiers	Primordial Identifiers
Positive	77.3	80.2	87.2	82.4
Neutral	15.7	10.7	8.3	11.0
Negative	6.9	9.1	4.6	6.6

$\chi^2$  Significant at 0.01 level

On the whole there is a positive attitude towards the nation, but when comparison is made among the four identities there is an inverse relationship between national identity and attitudes towards national integrity and political autonomy; that is, the national identifiers (77.3%) and peripheral national identifiers (80.2%) had weaker opposition with regard to surrender to an aggressor-country compared to primordial identifiers (82.4%) and peripheral primordial identifiers (87.2%). In other words, the more nationally identified, the higher the disposition to surrender.

Table 16 shows the response to the question about whether they were willing to defend the country in case of attack by an enemy.

TABLE 16: ARE YOU WILLING TO DEFEND THE NATION?

Attitudes	Identities			
	National Identifiers	Peripheral National Identifiers	Peripheral Primordial Identifiers	Primordial Identifiers
Positive	33.2	37.4	33.0	30.8
Neutral	28.7	31.0	20.2	23.6
Negative	38.1	31.6	46.8	45.6

$\chi^2$  Significant at 0.05 level

In this case a positive attitude indicates willingness to defend the country while a negative attitude indicates unwillingness. The table suggests that there is a greater percentage of negative attitudes. In other words, irrespective of their identity choice, the respondents were not very willing to defend the nation. It also suggests that those with primordial and peripheral primordial identities (48.8% and 45.6%) were not too willing to defend the nation. In this respect the fears of nation builders in Malaysia are quite valid. All this while, it had been argued that primordial identities (be they ethnic, religious, etc.) are detrimental to national identity. It is also interesting to note that although the respondents valued their liberty or political autonomy (as shown in Table 15), they were not willing to defend their liberty or political autonomy against an aggressor.

The other two questions on whether they want to emigrate to another country and on their feelings about celebrating national day were found to be not significant. The table is shown in Appendix E.

#### NATIONAL IDENTITY AND POLITICAL INFORMATION

Our data also indicates that students know very little about their nation. Questions asked were not only those found in their textbooks but also those of events and information that had been reinforced in school most of the time. Independence Day is celebrated with a public holiday, a pledge of loyalty and a school parade. The Malaysian flag is raised every morning and can be found in most classes. The national ideology is printed in all exercise books used in school (a regulation?) and children repeat it almost every Monday morning at the school assembly. The official religion is symbolized in school by Muslim students who wear national dress on Friday for prayers and school is dismissed early for everybody. (In some states Friday is a holiday.) The King's portrait and the portrait of the Sultan of the State are displayed in most classrooms. In spite of all this, our data indicates that the students know very little about their nation.

Table 17 shows that those who identified themselves with the nation did not necessarily have more political information than those who did not. The nation identifiers had higher percentage scores in five items (1, 6, 7, 9, 10) while nonnation identifiers (nation not mentioned) had higher percentage scores than the nation identifiers in the remaining items. The nonnation identifiers in fact had higher percentage on seven items (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9) compared to those who chose nation as the second choice. This again suggests that more political information does not lead to identification with the nation. Our sample also indicates that those nation identifiers had more or less the same amount of political information.

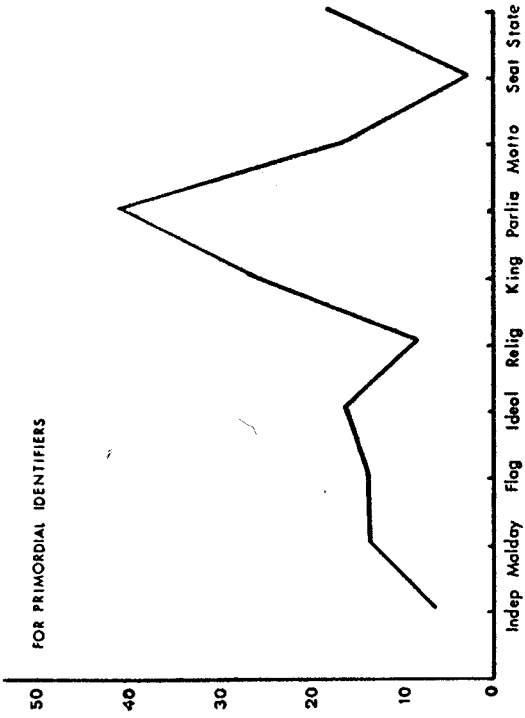
There is also very little relationship between political information and

TABLE 18: NATIONAL IDENTITY AND SOCIOCULTURAL VARIABLES

Questions	Region			Age						Race						Sex				
	Urban		Rural	13 years		15 years		Malays		Chinese		Indians		Others		Boys		Girls		
	right	wrong	right	wrong	right	wrong	right	wrong	right	wrong	right	wrong	right	wrong	right	wrong	right	wrong		
1. Independence Day	6.3	93.8	6.0	94.0	5.8	94.2	6.4	93.6	5.5	94.5	6.3	93.7	7.9	92.1	16.7	83.3	7.0	93.0	4.9	95.1
2. Formation of Malaysia	11.2	88.8	12.7	87.3	11.9	88.1	12.0	88.0	9.9	90.1	13.2	86.8	8.4	18.6	16.7	83.3	11.9	88.1	12.1	87.9
3. Stripes of Flag	14.5	85.5	8.6	91.4	14.6	85.4	8.3	91.7	12.0	88.0	11.0	89.0	11.8	88.2	0	100	10.8	89.2	12.4	87.6
4. National Ideology	16.5	83.5	14.8	85.2	16.1	83.9	15.2	84.8	14.9	84.1	16.0	84.0	17.1	82.9	33.3	66.7	18.7	81.3	11.2	88.8
5. Official Religion	3.7	96.3	6.7	93.3	5.6	94.4	4.9	95.1	8.7	91.3	1.6	98.4	2.6	97.4	0	100	7.2	92.8	2.6	97.4
6. King's Name	27.4	72.6	28.9	71.1	29.0	71.0	27.5	72.5	30.8	69.2	25.1	74.9	26.3	73.7	50.0	50.0	27.2	72.8	29.7	70.3
7. Malaysian Parliament	51.4	48.6	45.0	55.0	47.7	52.3	48.5	51.5	43.0	57.0	55.2	44.8	46.1	53.9	66.7	33.3	45.0	55.0	52.5	47.8
8. National Motto	7.2	92.8	11.0	89.0	10.0	90.0	8.3	91.7	10.3	89.7	6.6	93.4	10.5	89.5	50.0	50.0	9.6	90.2	8.4	91.6
9. Parliamentary Seats	1.0	99.0	5.7	94.3	3.2	96.8	3.7	96.3	2.4	97.6	5.3	94.7	1.3	98.7	1.3	98.7	2.5	97.5	4.6	95.4
10. Sultan of State	38.6	61.4	11.9	88.1	26.7	73.3	23.1	76.9	28.1	71.9	21.3	78.7	23.7	76.3	0	100	26.5	73.5	22.9	77.1

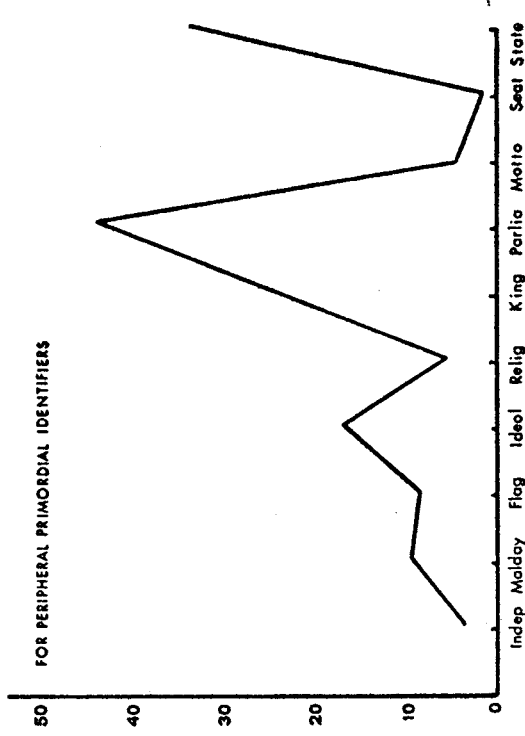
NATIONAL IDENTITY AND POLITICAL INFORMATION

FOR PRIMORDIAL IDENTIFIERS



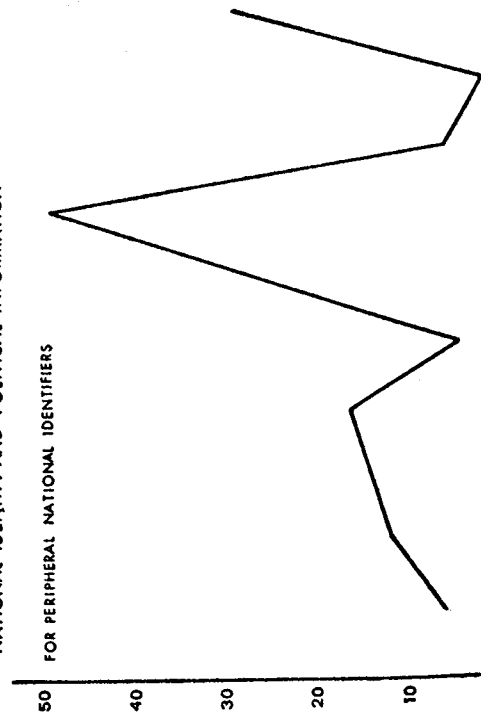
NATIONAL IDENTITY AND POLITICAL INFORMATION

FOR PERIPHERAL PRIMORDIAL IDENTIFIERS



NATIONAL IDENTITY AND POLITICAL INFORMATION

FOR PERIPHERAL NATIONAL IDENTIFIERS



NATIONAL IDENTITY AND POLITICAL INFORMATION

FOR NATIONAL IDENTIFIERS

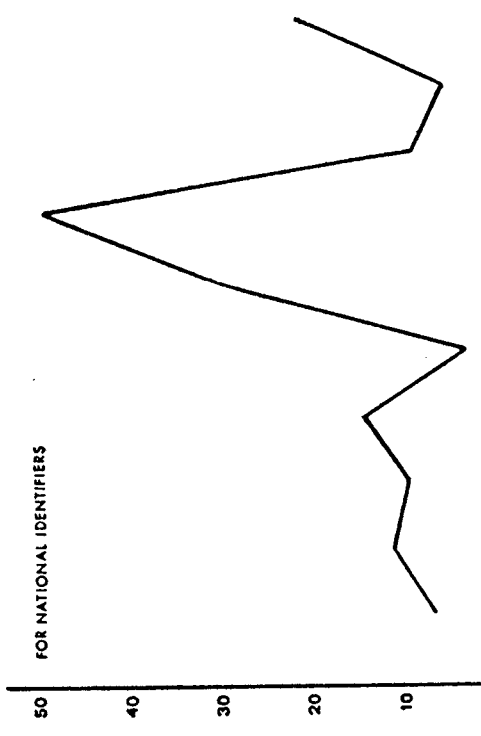


TABLE 17: NATIONAL IDENTITY AND POLITICAL INFORMATION

Questions	Identity							
	National Identifiers		Peripheral National Identifiers		Peripheral Primordial Identifiers		Primordial Identifiers	
	right	wrong	right	wrong	right	wrong	right	wrong
1. Independence Day	6.3	93.7	6.4	93.6	3.7	96.3	6.0	94.0
2. Formation of Malaysia	11.2	88.8	11.8	88.2	9.2	90.8	14.8	85.2
3. Stripes of Flag	9.7	90.3	13.4	86.6	8.3	91.7	14.8	85.2
4. National Ideology	14.5	85.5	16.0	84.0	17.4	82.6	16.5	83.5
5. Official Religion	3.6	96.4	4.8	95.2	5.5	94.5	8.8	91.2
6. King's Name	31.1	68.9	26.2	73.8	24.8	75.2	26.9	73.1
7. Malaysian Parliament	51.4	48.6	51.9	48.1	44.0	56.0	43.4	56.6
8. National Motto	7.9	92.1	7.0	93.0	4.6	95.4	17.0	83.0
9. Parliamentary Seats	5.1	94.9	1.6	98.4	1.8	98.2	3.3	96.7
10. Sultan of State	22.9	77.1	28.2	71.8	34.6	65.4	18.9	81.1

the other variables, that is, region, race, age, and sex. Overall, the component of government (item 7) had consistently high percentage compared to the other items and the number of parliamentary seats (item 9) had consistently the lowest percentage (Table 18).

#### ETHNICITY AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE NATION

One of the fears of nation builders in Malaysia is that Malaysians, especially the non-Malays, do not have a positive attitude towards the nation of adoption. These leaders feel that in order to build an integrated nation the non-Malays must look positively towards the nation. It was found in our sample that not only the non-Malays but also the Malays themselves had negative attitudes towards the nation. Table 19 shows that Malaysians are not proud about celebrating their national day, that is, the only common holiday that cuts across ethnic, religious and regional lines. (Most Malaysian holidays are based on religious occasions.)

TABLE 19: ARE YOU PROUD WHEN CELEBRATING NATIONAL DAY?

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Malays (N-416)	13.5	26.7	59.9
Chinese (N-319)	7.2	25.4	67.4
Indians (N-76)	7.9	15.8	76.3
Others (N-6)	0	16.7	83.3

$x^2$  Significant at 0.01 level

For the purpose of this study, a negative response means that the respondents are not proud when celebrating National Day. The celebration of National Day which is a national holiday is compulsory in schools. Regardless of the nationalistic and patriotic aspect of the occasion, it was startling to find the respondents were not even happy with the holiday!

Table 20 shows the response to the question about the sense of duty towards the nation. A positive answer means that the respondents regard duty towards the nation as extremely important while a negative answer means the respondents regard duty towards the nation as unimportant to them.

TABLE 20: SENSE OF DUTY TOWARDS THE NATION

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Malays (N=416)	28.8	40.1	31.0
Chinese (N=319)	12.2	36.7	51.1
Indians (N=76)	19.7	26.3	53.9
Others (N=6)	0	50.0	50.0

$\chi^2$  Significant at 0.001 level

It can be seen from the above that the respondents did not have a sense of duty towards the nation.

Not many of the respondents were willing to defend the nation in times of attack by another country (Table 21), but on the other hand they

TABLE 21: ARE YOU WILLING TO DEFEND THE NATION?

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Malays	34.1	19.5	46.4
Chinese	34.5	35.1	30.4
Indians	31.6	31.6	36.8
Others	0	50.0	50.0

$\chi^2$  Significant at 0.001 level

felt strongly that the nation should not surrender to another country (Table 22). In other words, they wanted someone else to defend the country for them. This coincides with their earlier response that duty towards the nation was not that important. There was some sort of "non-involvement" nationalism; that is, although there was the feeling that the nation should not surrender its independence to another country, the respondents were not willing to engage in any sort of nationalistic action.

Table 23 shows the response to the question about whether they wish to emigrate to another country. It has always been known to Malaysians that

TABLE 22: SHOULD MALAYSIA SURRENDER TO ANOTHER COUNTRY?

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Malays	13.5	26.7	59.9
Chinese	7.2	25.4	67.4
Indians	7.9	15.8	76.3
Others	0	16.7	83.3

$\chi^2$  Significant at 0.001 level

many non-Malays emigrate to other countries. The Malays regard that as nonpatriotic and as confirming their fears that the non-Malays are not loyal enough to the country. It has also been assumed that since the Malays are the indigenous race they will stay in the country no matter what happens. Our data does not concur with this assumption. More Malays (26.4%) wanted to emigrate compared to the Chinese (24.1%) and the non-Malays had a greater percentage of those wishing to remain in Malaysia. It is said that one of the reasons non-Malays emigrate is economic and political dissatisfaction while Malays emigrate because of economic dissatisfaction. Economically, on the average, the Malays are far worse off than the non-Malays and they must have felt that they would be better off in some other country than "their own" country.

TABLE 23: WOULD YOU EMIGRATE TO ANOTHER COUNTRY?

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Malays	38.3	35.3	26.4
Chinese	41.1	34.8	24.1
Indians	38.2	34.2	27.6
Others	100.0	0	0

$\chi^2$  Significant at 0.01 level



## VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study on national identity was carried out on lower secondary students in Malaysia. Eight hundred and nineteen students from 12 secondary schools answered the questionnaire. Four hundred and eleven were at that time in Form One and 408 in Form Three. Less than half the students identified themselves with the nation while less than a quarter totally ignored the existence of the nation. As the students progressed in their school career, they became more aware of the nation and less primordially attached. Non-Malays identified with the nation more than Malays. At the same time Malays ignored the nation more than non-Malays (Table 13). This study also pointed out to us that Malaysian students irrespective of their groupings know very little about the nation. It also indicated that those who identified themselves with the nation did not necessarily have more political knowledge of the nation.

On the whole, the sample illustrated the fear of nation builders in Malaysia, that is, racial groups identified themselves with their respective groups rather than with the nation itself. The coming of age of the Malaysian nation had not brought about the coming of age of the attitudes of its future citizens. The belief that giving more political information would promote identification with the nation is open to argument. Because of this assumption, direct political socialization had been carried out in schools in many developing countries, including Malaysia. Our sample showed that direct political socialization did not mean stronger political identification with the nation. Direct political socialization had very little impact in Malaysia.

To a large extent, the data showed that those who were national identifiers had positive attitudes towards the nation. But at the same time there was some sort of split personality among these national identifiers. Even though the respondents identified themselves with the nation, they at the same time did not look at Malaysia positively. In other words there were other sociopolitical forces that competed with this identity. This is the reality that nation builders in Malaysia have to face. If they feel that national identity supersedes every other identity, then they have to work towards this goal which means that the nation will become less tolerant, less democratic and more authoritarian in its implementation of policy. At present the nation builders want a national identity that supersedes every other loyalty but they have not taken steps to curb the other identities that challenge the national identity. Their policy has been of "the political religion"

approach but the implementation has been more of the "incorporative" model. This is another of the "politics of ambiguity" so successfully managed in Malaysia on almost all sensitive issues. The politics of ambiguity is the interpretation of policy according to the audience the political élite face. To the Malays, the official policy is constantly being stressed and its achievement glorified; to the non-Malays, the continuing existence of this cultural, religious heritage not found in other Southeast Asian countries is being emphasized.

# APPENDIX A

## Who Am I (English Translation)

In this question we like you to describe yourself. If you are asked the question "Who am I?" what would your answer be.

Here are four groups of answers that you can choose.

I am a/from .....

- |              |  |   |  |               |
|--------------|--|---|--|---------------|
| A. Malaysian | B. Malaya<br>Chinese<br>Indian<br>Ceylonese<br>Pakistani<br>Eurasian<br>Others | C. Muslim<br>Christian<br>Hindu<br>Buddhist<br>Taoist<br>Others | D. Selangor<br>Wilayah<br>Pulau Pinang<br>Perlis<br>Kedah<br>N. Sembilan<br>Johor<br>Pahang<br>Trengganu<br>Kelantan<br>Sabah<br>Sarawak<br>Melaka | E. Don't Know |
|--------------|--|---|--|---------------|

Choose the answer according to what you think the most important to you, the second important to you and the third important to you.

### EXAMPLE

You feel that the most important to you is you are a Chinese (B); second important is you are a Malaysian (A); and the third important is you are from Perak (D).

Answer:

Most Important	[B]
Second Important	[A]
Third Important	[D]

Now fill in your answer script, what you think is important to you when you are asked "Who am I".

Most Important	[ ]
Second Important	[ ]
Third Important	[ ]

## APPENDIX B

### Codes: National and Racial Identity

			Code
<b>If answer:</b>			
most important	—	A	
second important	—	B or C or D	1
third important	—	B or C or D	
<b>If answer:</b>			
most important	—	B or C or D	
second important	—	A	
third important	—	B or C or D	2
<b>If answer:</b>			
most important	—	B or C or D	
second important	—	B or C or D	3
third important	—	A	
<b>If answer:</b>			
most important	—	B or C or D	
second important	—	B or C or D	4
third important	—	B or C or D	

#### Interpretation of codes:

1. National identity is the most important thing to the respondent. His primordial identities like race, religion and region are secondary — national identifiers.
2. His primordial identity is the most important thing to the respondent and national identity is of second importance — peripheral national identifiers.
3. Primordial identity is very important to the respondent and he places it two steps above his own national identity — peripheral primordial identifiers.
4. The respondent did not even consider national identity. To him it is the least important and he did not take it into consideration — primordial identifiers.

## APPENDIX C

### Questions on Political Information

1. The Federation of Malaya achieved its independence on
  - (A) 31st August 1967
  - (B) 31st August 1957
  - (C) 13th August 1957
  - (D) 31st September 1957
  - (E) 13th September 1967
  
2. Malaysia was formed on
  - (A) 31st August 1957
  - (B) 16th September 1957
  - (C) 16th September 1963
  - (D) 31st September 1963
  - (E) 31st September 1967
  
3. How many stripes does the Malaysian flag have
  - (A) 12
  - (B) 15
  - (C) 11
  - (D) 13
  - (E) 14
  
4. Which group consist the five principles of the RUKUNEGARA
  - (A)
    1. loyalty to the law
    2. belief in king
    3. constitution is supreme
    4. good behavior and morality
    5. belief in god
  
  - (B)
    1. upholding the constitution
    2. belief in god
    3. upholding the law
    4. loyalty to king
    5. good behavior and morality

- (C) 1. belief in god  
2. loyalty to king and country  
3. upholding the constitution  
4. rule of law  
5. good behavior and morality
- (D) 1. belief in god  
2. loyalty to king and country  
3. purity of the constitution  
4. upholding the constitution  
5. good behavior
- (E) 1. good behavior and morality  
2. upholding the constitution  
3. loyalty to king and country  
4. law is supreme  
5. belief in god
5. The official religion of the nation is
- (A) Taoism  
(B) no official religion  
(C) Christianity  
(D) Buddhism  
(E) Islam
6. What is the name of the Yang Dipertuan Agung (King)
- (A) Tuanku Haji Abdul Halim Muadzam Shah  
(B) Sultan Salahudin Abdul Aziz Shah  
(C) Tuanku Yahya Petra Al-Marhum Sultan Ibrahim  
(D) Tuanku Ismail Nasiruddin Shah  
(E) Tuanku Syed Putera Jamalulail
7. The three components of the Parliament are
- (A) Yang Dipertuan Agung, Dewan Negeri, Dewan Rakyat  
(B) Yang Dipertuan Agung, Dewan Negara, Dewan Rakyat  
(C) Yang Dipertuan Agung, Dewan Negera, Dewan Rakyat  
(D) Dewan Negara, Dewan Negeri, Dewan Rakyat  
(E) Dewan Negeri, Dewan Rakyat, Dewan Bandaran
8. What is the motto of the nation
- (A) Unity for strength  
(B) Unity in diversity  
(C) Unity is strength  
(D) Unity for quality  
(E) Unity and strength

9. How many members does the Dewan Rakyat have (House of Representative)
- (A) 154
  - (B) 145
  - (C) 104
  - (D) 140
  - (E) 149
10. What is the name of the Sultan of this state. (What is the name of the Datuk Bandar [Mayor])
- (A) Tun Syed Zaharudin bin Syed Hassan
  - (B) Tan Sri Yaacob bin Abdul Latiff
  - (C) Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah
  - (D) Tun Datuk Haji Sardon bin Jubir
  - (E) Tuanku Haji Abdul Halim Muadzam Shah

## APPENDIX D

### Questions on Attitudes Towards Nation

1. No duties are more important than duties towards the nation
  - (A) I very strongly agree
  - (B) I strongly agree
  - (C) It is as important as other duties
  - (D) I disagree
  - (E) I strongly disagree
  
2. If Malaysia is attacked by an unfriendly country
  - (A) I am willing to die to defend it
  - (B) I will defend only if called upon
  - (C) I am not willing to die to defend it
  - (D) I will not get involved
  - (E) I will surrender
  
3. You are a citizen of Malaysia, would you emigrate to another country
  - (A) I shall not emigrate
  - (B) I might emigrate
  - (C) I shall emigrate if there's an opportunity
  - (D) I shall emigrate
  - (E) I love to emigrate
  
4. Would you be willing to see Malaysia surrender to another country
  - (A) I shall very strongly oppose
  - (B) I shall strongly oppose
  - (C) I shall not do anything
  - (D) I shall not oppose it
  - (E) I would like it to happen
  
5. How do you feel when celebrating National Day
  - (A) I feel very proud
  - (B) I feel proud
  - (C) I have mixed feelings
  - (D) I am not proud
  - (E) I don't like it

## APPENDIX E

### Emigrating to Another Country and Celebrating National Day

Would You Emigrate to Another Country?

Attitudes	Identities			
	National Identifiers	Peripheral National Identifiers	Peripheral Primordial Identifiers	Primordial Identifiers
Positive	39.0	44.4	34.9	39.0
Neutral	38.1	29.4	40.4	31.3
Negative	23.0	26.8	24.8	29.7

Are You Proud When Celebrating National Day?

Attitudes	Identities			
	National Identifiers	Peripheral National Identifiers	Peripheral Primordial Identifiers	Primordial Identifiers
Positive	8.5	10.7	13.8	11.5
Neutral	23.3	27.8	22.0	28.0
Negative	68.3	61.5	64.2	60.4



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**THE AUTHOR**

Ibrahim Saad, who obtained his doctorate in Education from the University of Wisconsin, is currently lecturer at the Department of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. He has contributed articles and a monograph on education as well as edited the Journal of Education. A book (in Malay), *Issues in Malaysian Education*, is forthcoming.