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Title:
De-ethnicisation of Politics in Malaysia

DE-ETHNICISATION OF POLITICS IN MALAYSIA

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A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for award of the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how de-ethnicisation of politics takes place in Malaysia. Malaysian politics has been dominated by ethnic politics since independence in 1957, yet currently there are indications that there may be a recent move towards a de-ethnicisation of politics. Although the scenario of de-ethnicisation of politics in Malaysia is still in an embryonic stage, it is interesting to look at how such de-ethnicisation could take place in Malaysia. This thesis applies the concept of de-ethnicisation of politics in discussing the issue. In a context of very limited literature on de-ethnicisation of politics due to a lack of scholarship on de-ethnicisation of politics, this thesis offers a three-dimensional exploration of whether, how and to what extent de-ethnicisation of politics is taking place in Malaysia. These three dimensions comprise party membership, party stance and party electoral strategy. As party membership is determined by party Constitutions, discussion is centred on how the Constitution enables\makes difficult the party from moving away from ethnic politics. On the dimension of party stance, focus is paid to the direction each political party is taking in practising/distancing from (non-)ethnic politics. The third dimension explores on how these two dimensions relates to electoral politics, which inclines towards power politics rather than rhetorical politics. As the main unit of analysis in this thesis are political parties, a qualitative interviewing method has been employed with high-level party leaders who have the authority to speak on behalf of their party. The thesis, then, investigates whether, how and to what extent de-ethnicisation of politics is currently taking place in Malaysia at the level of and in the competition between political parties.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my loving family and friends. PhD is a long journey and I am grateful that I have never lacked any support throughout the path. I can never thank enough those who were always there in times of joy and pain.

Acknowledgement

First, I would like to extend my greatest appreciation to both of my supervisors. They have been extraordinary supervisors throughout the whole process. Without their careful supervision, this thesis would never have been completed. I am also indebted to my friends who contributed to bettering my thesis. They have been a great help in proofreading some of my work. Some has even helped me to establish connections with my interviewees during the fieldwork. I am also thankful to both of my sponsors, International Islamic University Malaysia and the Government of Malaysia for giving me the opportunity to complete my PhD in University of Bristol. Lastly, my heartfelt gratitude goes to my family who had supported me tirelessly throughout the stressful journey. Without them, I would never be who I am today.

Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: ....LAU ZHE WEI........................... DATE:......06/08/2018....................

ABBREVIATION

BN   Barisan Nasional/National Front

DAP   Democratic Action Party

IMP   Independence Malayan Party

MCA   Malaysian Chinese Association

MIC   Malaysian Indian Congress

PAS   Malaysian Islamic Party

PGRM   Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia

PKN   National Justice Party

PKR   Justice Party

PPP   People's Progressive Party

PR   Pakatan Rakyat/People's Alliance

PRM   Malaysian People's Party

UMNO   United Malays National Organisation

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Since Independence, ethnicity has played a central role in Malaysian politics. Political parties formed at that time are largely ethnic-based. Politicking during Independence inclined towards ethnicity issues, too. This kind of political scenario was inevitable due to the historical background of Malaysia. Different ethnic groups were segregated within their own ethnic communities. There was a lack of inter-ethnic communication. It is, therefore, not surprising that ethnic politics emerged due to the condition of the political landscape at that time.

Such an emergence of ethnic politics endured for four to five decades before a new trend of negating ethnic politics began to emerge. Usually, there are two general elections that are linked to the de-ethnicization of politics in Malaysia. The first was in 1999. The then deputy prime minister, Anwar Ibrahim, was sacked from his position and jailed the following year on charges of corruption and sexual misconduct, charges that were strongly denied by Anwar Ibrahim. Such a scenario also propelled the emergence of a new movement, the Reformation movement, which sought Ibrahim's release, justice and such like. It was also during this time, before he was sent to jail, that Ibrahim became actively involved in opposition party events, including those dominated by Chinese opposition leaders. He seemed able to break the ethnicity barrier, and inter-party (also inter-ethnic) cooperation between opposition parties was forged to face the incumbent ruling party. Unfortunately, such political cooperation between the opposition parties did not last long. However, upon his release in 2004, Ibrahim tried to reunite opposition parties once again and managed to form an opposition alliance, which continues to exist. In the 2008 general election, this opposition alliance managed to create an all-time record by denying the ruling two-third majority in Parliament and gaining control of five states. This represents the second wave of politics not to be based on ethnicity.

With such occurrences in Malaysian politics, does it signal the decline of the role of ethnicity in politics? Or is ethnicity simply reinventing itself into a new, more inclusive or multicultural guise? Is Malaysian politics, which has been dominated by ethnic politics, being challenged by the emergence of non-ethnic politics? The aim of this dissertation is to explore how the role of ethnicity has changed in Malaysian politics in recent years. As political parties can be viewed as one of the main factors in the shaping of Malaysian politics since Independence until the current day, I will therefore in this research focus on membership criteria, discourse and election. While the literature on ethnic politics is good at explaining how ethnicity becomes relevant in politics, it has less to say about how it becomes less so. This thesis is about the de-ethnicization of politics in Malaysia. It makes an important contribution to the scholarship because apart from filling a gap within scholarship regarding the de-ethnicization of politics, this research may also explain the roles of political parties in furthering the process of de-ethnicization in Malaysia.

THE HISTORY OF ETHNIC POLITICS IN MALAYSIA

In this Introduction, I will give some of the historical background for the emergence of ethnic politics in Malaysia. I do this in three parts. I begin with the post-World War II colonial period, a period when the administration of the Malaysian government was ruled by the British, followed by the Independence era in which the local people started to rule on their own. This is when 'old politics' emerged and continued for decades. The third part is contemporary politics, which is also known as 'new politics'. The emergence of 'new politics' is often a challenge to the existing 'old politics' and a means for politicians to distance themselves from ethnic politics. The post-2008 general election is mostly accepted as the period when 'new politics' emerged, although there are different timelines in drawing the line for the emergence of 'new politics', with some drawing it in the 1999 general election while others argue for the 2008 general election.

Post-World War II Period

Malaysia is a diverse society with different ethnic groups, religions, cultures and many more social divisions. Although Malaysian (or Malayan) politics can be traced back to centuries ago depending on how we clarify 'politics' in a Malaysian scenario, the most obvious era when local politics started to emerge should be considered as post-World War II. With the return of British rule to its former colonies (including Malaya) after an interruption caused by Japanese occupation during World War II, the political landscape of Malaya at the time seems to be different when compared to previously. Upon the return of British rule to Malaya, Malaya was then ruled by the British Military Administration through Harold MacMichael (the de facto administrator at that time). During that time, the British tried to introduce a union system for Malaya in 1946 called the Malayan Union. By putting all these under a single union system, it could ease the British situation a great deal, such as making administration more convenient, cost savings and so on. However, some elements within the Malayan Union, specifically the Malay communities, made strong objections. For example, with the introduction of the Malayan Union, Malay rulers (referring to royalty) would lose their political power, with their power thereafter limited to Islamic and cultural affairs only. It was then unveiled that Malay rulers were forced to give consent due to the threat of dethronement (Ariffin Omar, 1993). Furthermore, the Malayan Union, which suggested a *jus soli* citizenship policy, caused an uproar from the Malay community because they felt that such a citizenship policy would numerically increase the citizenship of non-Malays, which then threatened the position of native Malays in Malaya.

Such anger from the Malay community propelled them into forming a nationalist union among themselves to defend their rights and welfare. This is because they believed that Malays are the original owners of the land, while the Chinese and Indians are immigrants from China and India. Due to the intense rejection of the Malayan Union, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) was formed in 1946, the same year as the Malayan Union was introduced. Not only UMNO but other ethnic-based parties such as the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) were also formed in the 1940s, although they did not intend to each become a political party to

begin with. These inclined more towards an association that helped or defended their community members when in need. Such an emergence of ethnic politics is more evident when most of the main (with political power) political parties are formed based on ethnicity. Although there are different reasons for each political party to be founded at that time, the main surviving and 'acceptable' ones by British political parties, namely UMNO, MCA and MIC, are purely ethnic-based, be it from the membership eligibility or the core values held by the party to the level of 'representative' of respective communities at that time. The argument above on the formation of an ethnic-based political party (UMNO specifically) in Malaya suggests that it was the Malayan Union that caused the Malay community to form a political party of their own. Regardless of the processes or causes for the formation of an ethnic-based political party, the interest from the historical part is that ethnic-based political parties were formed prior to Independence. It consisted of Malay, Chinese and Indian political parties respectively and these three ethnic groups happened to be the three most populated ethnic groups in Malaya at that time and even now. Such a political trend of ethnic-based politics continued even after Malaya gained independence.

Independence Era and 'Old Politics'

In the effort to prepare Malaya for independence, a more structural political landscape looked set to emerge. The British had included local leaders in their administration through the Member System (similar to the Cabinet system in the UK) in 1950. The selection of local leaders consisted of Malays and non-Malays. The British tried to build a working relationship among leaders from different ethnic groups. From here, we can see that the ethnicity of leaders did take this into consideration by making it more inclusive rather than dominated by a single ethnic group. The introduction of such a system also does not 'pretend' to include local leaders in the Member System by giving them unimportant portfolios. But in fact, these local leaders were given the responsibility to head important portfolios, such as home affairs, education, health and so on, acknowledging that such an arrangement, which was to prepare local leaders for self-governance in later years, was a composition of local leaders from the main communities in Malaya: Malay, Chinese and Indian. From here, we can see that the tone set by the

British at that time was to include all ethnic groups in governmental administration. They did acknowledge the existence of different ethnicities and the importance of allocation based on ethnicity. However, at the same time, these different communities had to work together (mostly through over-arching leadership cooperation rather than a mass over-arching relationship) in preparation for their self-governing direction.

To further strengthen the premise that ethnic politics stands a strong salience, it can be viewed from another standpoint when the founding chairman of UMNO, Onn Jaafar, suggested opening up the party membership to non-Malays, thereby making it a multi-ethnic/non-ethnic-based political party. Such a suggestion was aggressively rejected by UMNO members, forcing the resignation of Onn Jaafar in 1951. Although UMNO members could not accept the opening up of party membership to non-Malays, ironically, in 1952, UMNO did cooperate with the MCA in fighting for the Kuala Lumpur local election, which later formed the Alliance Party (an UMNO/MCA coalition, which later included the MIC). This shows that, at that time, UMNO could not accept their party membership being opened to non-Malays but could accept working with MCA, including the distribution of seats. The former UMNO founding chairman, Onn Jaafar, went on to set up a new party called the Independence Malayan Party (IMP). This was a multi-ethnic/non-ethnic party, similar to the proposal he tried to bring up during his years as UMNO's chairman. However, the party performed badly and years later, IMP was disbanded and Onn Jaafar formed another new party, the National Party (Parti Negara). Interestingly, the National Party was akin to UMNO, where membership was restricted to non-Malays, making it a Malay-based party. These two incidents of UMNO reluctance to opening up party membership and Onn Jaafar's formation of the IMP and National Party show that Malaysian politics at that time was heavily related to ethnicity.

All these incidents neatly characterise the kind of politics inherited since the Independence era, which is acknowledged as 'old politics'. 'Old politics' generally refers to the political landscape where ethnic politics triumphs over any other kind of cleavages or divisions. Such ethnic political trends may be hard to compete as those main ethnic-based party (UMNO, MCA and MIC) had been in strong political position based on

electoral results. Although there are times where one or two of these three parties were weaker by an election-winning measurement, the overall coalition party remains 'strong' in terms of managing to remain a federal power without interruption.

'New Politics'

Although ethnic politics may seem to hold a dominant position in Malaysian politics similar to politics in other parts of the world, the political landscape does not remain stagnant. It faces challenges in altering the political scenario, although the success of overthrowing the current political arrangement is not guaranteed. In Malayan/Malaysian politics, ethnicity cleavage did face challenges from other cleavages, although some of these cleavages are clearer than others. This includes class cleavage and religious cleavage (which will be discussed in more depth in the Background chapter). Regardless, these two cleavages are not the foremost concern of this research. This is because firstly, they did not pose much of a challenge to the existing ethnicity cleavage politics and the importance of ethnic politics was still clearly viable. Secondly, these two cleavages could not detach themselves fully from ethnicity salience because, for example, in class cleavage, as suggested, the class cleavage does not refer to the general class cleavage which happened in other countries where people were divided by class. In Malaysia, although some scholars prefer to argue from the class perspective instead of the ethnicity perspective, they are looking at class within the ethnic group itself. They do not talk about class divisions across ethnicity boundaries but class divisions within each ethnic group. Even the religious cleavage did not involve non-Malays (more accurately Muslim) as the contesting of religious matters surrounded UMNO and the PAS (PAS-Malaysian Islamic Party), outbidding each other to portray themselves as more Islamic, as religion in Malaysia is highly attached to ethnicity, especially Muslim (as Malays must be Muslim).

The discussion above shows that, previously, Malaysian politics was often being characterised in ethnicity terms, be these at the explicit or implicit level. On the explicit level, we can see that many of the dominant political parties were formed based on ethnicity. At the same time, some other political parties formed that, although according

to their constitution they were based on multiethnicity, in practice they became a party dominated by certain ethnic groups only. At the implicit level, we can see the difference between 'old politics' (which usually refers to the politics of ethnicity, especially before the late 1990s) and 'new politics' (which usually refers to politics after the late 1990s or after the 2008 general election). This latter can be in the form of non-ethnic politics, new cyberpolitics, such as social media and alternative media, the rise of opposition parties and so on. Although there is no clear definition as to when to draw the boundary between 'old politics' and 'new politics', and what constitutes 'new politics', most of the informants agree that the political landscape post the 2008 general election is acceptable for inclusion as 'new politics' in Malaysia, while politics before the late 1990s are considered as 'old politics'. Although the period between the late 1990s and 2008 is slightly harder to define, this does not create much of a problem, as the terms 'old politics' and 'new politics' are merely referring to the commonly acceptable political scenario rather than rigidly describing a specific scenario. The discussion above shows how ethnicity cleavage was challenged by other cleavages which were unsuccessful due to the salience of ethnicity cleavage. Many from that time still feel that ethnicity should come before any other division, be it class or religion. However, the latest political scenario in the 'new politics' era provides a newer dimension in challenging ethnicity cleavage. Since the emergence of 'new politics', political parties have started to reform themselves to be periodically more inclusive, through the formation of new, non-ethnic parties or the repositioning of existing political parties' direction. The working relationship between political parties since the late 1990s or the post-2008 general election is quite different from those before, although this working relationship itself is not rigid and changes from time to time.

In the late 1990s, with the sacking of the then deputy prime minister, Anwar Ibrahim, and his imprisonment, various movements arose. Ibrahim's wife and followers set up a new political party, the National Justice Party (Parti Keadilan Nasional), a predecessor to the PKR (Parti Keadilan Rakyat or People's Justice Party). This party intended to be a non-ethnicity party (putting aside those other intentions or core values for the moment, such as seeking the release of Anwar Ibrahim, fighting for justice and much more). Malaysia at that time had 'no' active multi-ethnic/non-ethnic party. 'No'

because even if, technically, there were multi-ethnic political parties, these political parties were generally dominated by a certain ethnic group. The PKR, even from its formation, could be seen as the most 'genuine' non-ethnicity/multi-ethnicity party when compared to their counterparts in terms of the composition of party members, party leadership, core values and so on. Apart from the PKN issue mentioned above, another ripple of ethnicity was present in the 2008 general election, when main opposition parties cooperated once again and formed an alliance. The 2008 election did not emphasise ethnicity outbidding or a similar kind of approach. Instead, the focus in their propaganda was on either non-ethnicity issues or to be inclusive of all ethnicities.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In general, and by looking at the current political landscape, Malaysian politics seems to be moving away from ethnic politics as previously practised. Political parties have shown that they are encouraging and moving towards the direction of de-ethnicization. With the political scenarios that are taking place in current politics, it leads to the main research question of how de-ethnicization has taken place in Malaysia. With the attempt to answer the research question, a three-dimensional view of political parties will be utilised as a parameter in explaining the situation. As political parties are the main unit of analysis in this research, political parties will be analysed from three perspectives, namely party membership, party stance and party electoral strategy.

With the scope of discussion and problem statements as explained above, this research will focus on the main research question of to what extent de-ethnicization has taken place in Malaysia from the perspective of political parties. With the main research question as above, it leads to three dimensions for the research question, as below:

1. Party membership

2. Party stance

3. Electoral strategy

With the attempt to answer the research question, a three-dimensional view of political parties will be utilised as a parameter in explaining the situation. As political parties are the main unit of analysis in this research, political parties will be analysed from three perspectives, namely party membership, party stance and party electoral strategy. For party membership, as membership forms the basis of any political party, the eligibility of admission as a member would be viewed as the level of inclusiveness of that political party. Likewise, with the dimension of party stance, the political position taken would be evaluated by the inclination a political party tends to follow. Such inclination could explain the direction of the political party and what they intend to do, as all these could be perceived as their party stance. Finally, on electoral strategy, political parties make promises through their party stance or even through their party membership structure. However, when it comes to candidature selection, it is the time for them to practice what they preach. Ideal ambition may sound good, but when it comes to electoral competition, the party would have to make a decision whether to remain with the conventional candidature selection method or give newcomers, especially minorities, in their party a chance.

THEORETICAL APPROACH

Scholars provide different insights on how to understand ethnic politics, although most agree that ethnic politics is a kind of politics where the level of ethnicity incorporated into the political field is high. This can be in the form of an ethnic-based political party, political rhetoric using ethnicity as the main issue of contention, favouritism in ethnicity policies and much more. However, they have agreed to differ on how ethnic politics can emerge.

One group of scholars believe that the emergence of ethnic politics is due to the external interventions which divide society. One of the most common external interventions is the distribution of materials and goods. Shamsul (1996) views ethnicity is crucial in certain political landscapes as it attaches privileges according to particular

ethnic groups. With such special privileges accorded to a particular ethnic group, the materials and goods they receive will instil conflict between these groups. The salience of ethnicity may also be higher because different ethnicities come with different 'values'. Horowitz (1993) does agree that the distribution of goods, whether material or non-material, may have to do with the identity of a person in some societies. Due to the different treatments being accorded to different groups of society, it brings about the emergence of such differentiation in their local politics. These scholars do agree that ethnic politics is encouraged, if not yet highly inclined, towards that direction. Although there exists such differentiation in terms of benefits received by certain ethnic groups within the same society, this does not automatically mean that ethnic politics must occur in such a society. Apart from the historical background, inter-ethnic group relations (at a mass level), their willingness to accept such inequality and so on, another important factor that determines whether such a society is inclined towards ethnic politics is the political system itself.

Another group of scholars believe the differences among ethnicities causes society to fragment further. From Furnivall's (1948) research in Burma, he is able to describe the inter-ethnic group relationship, suggesting that the low level of inter-ethnic interaction may provide a wider space for political interest groups, especially political parties, to make themselves representative of a particular ethnic group. Such small divisions occurring within the non-political sphere encourages political stakeholders to advance their interests in society. As such representations of particular ethnic groups develop, it tends to divide the already divided society further. Such a principle is agreed by Ufen (2012) when he argues that a diverse society tends to split into factions (or ethnicity) within a society, and such divisions, when incorporated into the political field, encourage the development of ethnic politics.

Due to the salience of ethnicity emerging within a society, it is safe to say that such salience opens up space for political parties to flourish based on ethnicity cleavage. However, ethnicity salience, similar to other kind of cleavages, may not be in a continuously dominant position without being challenged by other cleavages. Scholars

such as Dunning and Harrison (2010) argue that the shift of cleavage from one to another may weaken the existing cleavage. If the level of salience held by the newer cleavage is higher than the old or existing cleavage, it is not impossible for such new cleavage to take over the role as new cleavage, or at least, create a competitive landscape for political cleavages. Chandra (2012) and Zuckerman do agree that in the event of an existing ethnicity cleavage being no longer as salient as before, it is not impossible for political parties to move towards a newer direction of de-ethnicization should such a shift strengthen their political position. Apart from Dunning and Harrison's (2010) suggestion of shifting the attention from an existing cleavage to a new cleavage, Milikowski (2000) also suggests the application of a 'similarity strategy' to commonalise the contention differences between ethnic groups into the dimension where they hold onto similar characteristics. As ethnic politics flourishes based on the differences between ethnic groups, Sussane (2006) suggests that in order to de-ethnicize such a society, it is crucial to find out the similarities and apply such similarities to overcoming differences. While most of the scholarship explains how politics becomes ethnicized, it is less focused on the ways in which it can also become de-ethnicized.

The idea of de-ethnicization explored by the scholars named above, despite mentions of the principle level of how de-ethnicization could take place, does not narrow down the mechanism of how it could be utilised. There are various factors that cause de-ethnicization to emerge. This includes, but is not limited to, the role of political parties (Horowitz, 1993, Lijphart, 1968), influences from the outside world (Fenton, 2003), economy (Gomez, 2012) and others. There is no doubt that all these factors could affect the salience of ethnicity cleavage in a society, especially in Malaysia, but this research inclines towards political parties as a unit of analysis. This is because this research intends to examine how political parties position themselves in a complicated society such as Malaysia. This is because other factors, apart from political parties, could undoubtedly cast an influence on the political landscape of Malaysia, but it is political parties which have a direct influence upon whether or not they wish to continue with the 'old politics' or progress to the challenge of 'new politics'. Furthermore, political parties, in the event of being made a unit of analysis, would have to encounter many complications, such as what constitutes ethnic politics, how they can negate ethnic

politics (or push for the de-ethnicization of politics) and how to deal with the terms 'ethnic-based party', 'non-ethnic-based party' and 'multi-ethnic-based party'.

As the local political scene has less problem in defining what constitutes an ethnic-based party and non-ethnic-based/multi-ethnic-based parties, the local political landscape has a greater issue in drawing the line between non-ethnic-based parties and multi-ethnic parties. Although, academically, these two types of political parties should be defined in a different manner, in this research attention may not be interested in separating them. Scholars such as Chandra (2012) do define that an ethnic party may not necessarily contain a particular ethnicity membership or a particular ethnic group core struggle. An ethnic group can be defined in a more inclusive manner. At the same time, Lijphart's (1977) suggestion of a party including an ethnic-based party to form a grand coalition of component parties will thereafter turn the grand coalition party into a multi-ethnic party. Proponents for non-ethnicity politics try to distance themselves from ethnic-based discussions. Although such definitions may contribute most to the philosophical arguments of how to classify these three types of political parties, due to the nature of the Malaysian political landscape, differentiating between ethnic politics and non-ethnic/multi-ethnic politics is possible, while separating non-ethnic politics and multi-ethnic politics does not seem to be a viable move in the local political scenario.

One of the main elements of 'new politics' in Malaysia is in regard to the shift of the political landscape from ethnic politics to non-ethnic politics (or multi-ethnic politics). Non-ethnic politics and multi-ethnic politics may have different perspectives of their own. Non-ethnic politics is largely being used academically to describe the political landscape that does not touch on ethnicity issues, while for multi-ethnic politics, it may refer to politics which is inclusive of all ethnic groups. These definitions may be true for an ideal description or for nations that have been practising it for a long period but not for an embryonic stage of de-ethnicization in Malaysia. Countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, which are among the most popular immigration nations, have acknowledged their multiculturalism. However, there are not many nations which are as diverse but could successfully call themselves non-diverse nations. One such

example is France, where the government tries to eradicate differences among them, at least in the public sphere: no religious symbols are allowed in public areas and policy discussions are based on native French groups instead of diverse groups. Although ideally, those actions may be seen as having no relevance to individual identity, commonality does not necessarily mean fairness, or at least, it is arguable from the opposite sides. For instance, a blanket ban on public symbols in the public sphere may principally mean that no individual identity is allowed. However, if such a ban is to be narrowed down into individual needs, this does not mean that all religions could be equalised in their acceptance. One example is the wearing of religious symbols for other religions, such as Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism, against the wearing of religiously-allowed attire (the headscarf for Muslim women and the turban for Sikh men). The wearing of religious symbols for the former is not compulsory, although it may be a preferred option. However, for the latter, the attire is required by the religion. Therefore, to have a blanket ban on all does not necessarily means fairness. Ultimately, a non-identity policy in the public sphere may not be a practical success. A similar principle is being applied to the Malaysian political landscape. It is worth noting that multicultural politics follows on from post-immigration diversity, and thus may be expected to be rather different than multi-ethnic politics in a country like Malaysia.

The description of de-ethnicization in Malaysia in this writing would include both multi-ethnicity and non-ethnicity as a single concept. This is because as an embryonic stage of de-ethnicization in Malaysia, a balance ethnicity composition may still be required in a certain sense (at least in the political sphere) to show that ethnicity is not the main consideration. At the same time, even with a balanced composition, the rhetoric may not necessarily mean inclusivity but could incline towards non-ethnicity. Although the premises described above are slightly contradictory, as earlier discussed, due to its embryonic stage of de-ethnicization, a certain level of leverage is needed to balance inclusivity (multi-ethnicities) and total wipe-off (non-ethnic politics).

Therefore, in this research, the definition applied when discussing de-ethnicization refers to a deviation from ethnic politics. Such deviation from ethnic politics

covers both non-ethnic politics and multi-ethnic politics in this research, as the intention of this research is to argue that ethnic politics is less viable in Malaysian politics rather than to argue whether Malaysian politics is moving towards non-ethnic politics or multi-ethnic politics, as these two concepts are integrated as 'one' throughout this research.

Therefore, as political parties form the main focus of research, such a mechanism is narrowed down to three dimensions. First is party membership. A party is considered to be an ethnic-based party and needs to have a membership which can portray such an identity. Membership, as argued by scholars, could represent personal interest, which has nothing to do with ethnicity. At the same time, some party memberships function in the perspective of ethnicity, such as membership that could reflect the strength of a political party through their own community support (in the sense of becoming an ethnic party member). This concept will be incorporated into the roles of members or membership in helping or harming the effort towards de-ethnicization.

Second is party stance. This approach is being used to explain how political parties maintain or alter their party position when compared to a previous stance taken in an effort to face a new political scenario. Party stance is born out of the mentality of a political party. Each political party has its own set of principles to uphold. Some may uphold identity as their core struggle, some may be dynamic according to situations at the time, and some may even insist on maintaining their traditional core values. This approach is to look at whether political parties remain or change their party direction according to the political wind. If they do make changes, do these changes help or harm the process of de-ethnicization?

The third is electoral strategy. The electoral system remains largely as it was during previous elections. However, the way political parties approach the electoral system is different from time to time. Due to the diversity of election candidates, a political party could choose how to nominate their candidate. Nominating candidates without examining ethnicity as the main consideration is helping to push the political scenario towards de-ethnicization. Contrarily, should ethnicity remain the main

consideration and election winning put above party principles, it may cause a hindrance to the process of de-ethnicization.

Therefore, in summary, de-ethnicization of politics in Malaysia for this research focuses on these three domains: party membership, party stance and electoral strategy. Such a narrow mechanism is believed to be able to dissect the role of political parties in pushing or preventing de-ethnicization from taking place.

SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

There are two scopes to the project in this research. The first is geographical location. In this research, the geographical location covers only Peninsular Malaysia where eleven states and two federal territories are located. The two states that are excluded are Sabah and Sarawak, which are located in East Malaysia. Such limitations are due to Sabah and Sarawak having very different political landscapes when compared to Peninsular Malaysia. Political parties dominant in East Malaysia are mostly active in the state boundary only, although no doubt there are some slight exceptions. The cultural background there is very different to the cultural background in Malaysia, which causes a generalisation that could not be made in regards to Peninsular and East Malaysia. Some autonomy is granted to these two states according to the Malaysian constitution, which leads to a different manner of political competition. Aside from these, there are many more differences between Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia. For this reason, this research will focus only on Peninsular Malaysia.

The second scope is in regard to time. As this is real-time research, many changes are taking place while this research is being conducted and even after fieldwork is done. It is impossible to follow up with the latest political development, as every new day may mean a new development. For this reason, a limitation is being set for end of the

period when fieldwork is being completed. This means that for this research, the discussion will be on scenarios occurring before June 2015 only.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. These seven chapters begin with Background on Malaysian Politics, followed by Literature Review and Methodology, before moving onto three substantive chapters of Party Membership, Party Stance and Electoral Strategies, followed by the Conclusion.

Chapter 1: Background on Malaysian Politics

In the first chapter, readers are provided with background information regarding the politics of Malaysia, including the past and current political development. As a case study for a particular country may be less suitable for general consumption, this chapter portrays the history of Malaysian political development. This explains the basic political system in Malaysia, major events that have taken place and the emergence of cleavages in Malaysian politics with a particular focus on the evolution and development of ethnic cleavages. This continues with the discussion of the current political configuration, with a focus on the two main political fronts, namely Barisan Nasional (BN) and Pakatan Rakyat (PR) (and the major component parties within these two political fronts). Its purpose is to give an overall idea of the political parties in Malaysia before moving into a more in-depth discussion in later chapters about the development of these parties. With such an arrangement, readers are able to follow the political development in Malaysia, starting with the history of Malaysian politics and followed by the current political configuration before moving onto the political parties' development.

Chapter 2: Theoretical context

As explained by its title, this chapter focuses on a review of past literature in relation to this research. The chapter critically evaluates the scholarship on ethnic politics before setting out the approach it will take in this thesis. This chapter is divided into two main sections. This first section is to discuss ethnic politics generally and the de-ethnicization of politics specifically. This begins with a brief comparison on the definition of 'ethnicity' by different scholars before moving onto a discussion of how ethnicity is related to politics. This final subsection for this chapter is to look at the literature which relates ethnicity to cleavages.

The second main section of this chapter is to examine the field of 'de-ethnicization of politics'. This section rolls the ball by examining how scholars look at the idea of de-ethnicization. Although there is a wealth of literature on de-ethnicization, there is a limited literature concerned with the de-ethnicization of politics, and the situation is even worse for technicalities and mechanisms on how politics is being de-ethnicized. Therefore, for the general discussion of de-ethnicization of politics, this section includes subsections on how politics could be de-ethnicized in mechanism terms. A three-dimensional approach has been introduced. This includes party membership, party stance and electoral strategy in looking at the development of de-ethnicization of politics.

Chapter 3: Method

This chapter explains how this research is carried out. Apart from the common overall introduction in this chapter, this chapter begins with a discussion of the methods chosen for this study and why those methods are appropriate. It then turns to a discussion of the selection of samplings for data collection. As this research applies qualitative interview methods, the selection of samples is crucial, as the method of selection could affect the overall data collected. For this research, explanation focuses on why purposive sampling is chosen and how each sample is selected, including the number and principles behind the method. This chapter further discusses how data is collected from the samples and

how this collected data is to be analysed. These three steps of selecting samples, collecting data and analysing data are interrelated as a different approach being applied to whichever steps may have an impact on the other two.

Although these steps above justify the methodology of this research, another section paid attention to and integrated during and after fieldwork is ethnical practice. As this research involves human beings, a certain level of ethnical practice should be upheld. This is to protect the interest and 'safety' of informants, while at the same time, produce an ethnically accepted action in obtaining information for this research. In this section, how such ethnic practices are being upheld are discussed.

Chapter 4: Party Membership

This chapter explains how each political party views party membership in the new wave of political de-ethnicization. Apart from the Introduction as the opening of discussion in this chapter, the coalition party is explored, as the five main political parties to be discussed in depth are within the coalition party. Furthermore, as the coalition party functions as a bridge for different component parties, compromise, if necessary, happens within the coalition party. The discussion of the coalition party of both the BN and PR comes first, before narrowing it down to each component party. Separating both the coalition party and the component party is necessary, as although party leadership generally possesses two positions – one in their own component party, the other in the overall coalition party – there may or may not be some contradiction or priority for these political leaders. Therefore, the first section is to discuss both coalition parties to start the ball rolling.

In this chapter, the discussion also focuses on how party membership impacts on the effort to de-ethnicize the political landscape. As UMNO and MIC are fully Malay- and Chinese-based, while PAS is highly dominated by Malay, making their parties more inclusive is tough but not impossible. Similarly, for the Democratic Action Party (DAP),

although it is technically a multi-ethnic party due to its high Chinese membership, DAP may need to make their party even more inclusive, as urged by their constitution.

Chapter 5: Party Stance

In this fifth chapter, the discussion surrounds the idea of what kind of party stance does each political party take in facing the trend of 'new politics' in the Malaysian political landscape? Similar to the approach above, a general discussion of de-ethnicizing Malaysian politics through party action and direction is being discussed before narrowing it down to an individual party. Such general discussion is necessary as it could provide a bigger picture of the political development in Malaysia, especially on how de-ethnicization of politics could take place through a political party's stance. This is thereafter narrowed down to the action taken by each component party and the direction in which these component parties are heading.

In this chapter, focus is paid to what kind of action or party direction each political party wishes to take, be it in de-ethnicizing themselves through events and programmes which are more inclusive and less ethnic-based politicking or to remain with the status quo without making many changes to the way they handle the de-ethnicization issue. This chapter would also be able to examine how informants view their own party, as an ethnic-based party or conversely.

Chapter 6: Electoral Strategy

In this sixth and final substantive chapter, there will be an examination of how political parties walk their talk when it comes to electoral election. It is meaningless if the suggestions from the previous chapters remain suggestions without being applied to electoral politics by the respective political parties. In this chapter, a detailed analysis is made on whether voters vote according to ethnic preference or not, according to ethnic bloc voting. As voting is secret, this chapter applies two approaches to arguing whether voters vote according to ethnicity or not. The first approach is to determine which seat

can provide a chance for comparing the voting trend due to ethnicity. As a brief explanation, seats contested by different ethnicities are considered. Should a seat be contested by the same ethnic candidates, it could not be verified through the electoral results on the ethnicity voting trend.

On the second level, in the event of these seats being selected, a safe assumption is made based on the voting results, such as seat composition (voters by ethnicity), majority votes won by the candidate and history of the seat result. Although an assumptive method could not be ascertained, as there are chances for common law principles not to be followed, why such an assumptive argument is safe when based on common law, the law for the common people principle, is further argued in this chapter.

Conclusion

This seventh and final chapter provides a clear and concise answer to the research questions about the ethnicization of politics in Malaysia. The first three sections in this chapter individually analyse whether these three dimensions, namely party membership, party stance and electoral strategy, provide for de-ethnicization of politics in Malaysia. This is then followed by an overall view of whether de-ethnicization of politics in Malaysia by political parties is a success. As the beginning of this chapter has mentioned, this research intends to look at the de-ethnicization development in Malaysia, which is still in an embryonic stage, and the intention is not to prove that de-ethnicization has happened fully in the Malaysian political landscape.

CHAPTER 1:

BACKGROUND ON MALAYSIAN POLITICS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a diverse nation with multiple ethnic groups, multiple religions, multiple languages, multiple cultures and so on, living under the same roof (Nagata 1974). This diversity has much to do with the history of colonial era (Siddique & Suryadinata 1981). Mass migration into the country has been colonial mainly for economic reasons, the Chinese from mainland China, and Indian from India. With the migration of Chinese and Indians into the country, these new immigrants start to build their homes and became part of the Malaysia people (Neo 2006). With such a historical background, this diversity has been carried forward to the modern-day Malaysia.

As during the colonial era when immigrants were brought into Malaya (predecessor for Malaysia), these immigrants could barely communicate beyond their own community. As suggested by Furnivall (1948) in his research in Burma, different segments of society communicate in the marketplace for buying and selling purposes, but not much more beyond that activity. They could hardly understand one another, and the highest level of relationship between them would only reach up to a "mixing" level and it was almost impossible to reach the stage of "combining". In the case of Malaysia, especially on the last colony of Malaya established by the British, the scenario is worse due to the divide-and-rule policy implemented which segregated different communities (Abraham 1997). This geographically segregated society, with different segments of the society living in different areas and working in different economic sectors, there is barely any space for them to interact with one another. Therefore, it is not surprising that these communities formed their own organisations among themselves through a loose community network, a clan (Lim 2006) or into more organised kinds of political parties. The path different ethnic groups took toward first ethnic associations and then political parties, however was neither linear nor uniform.

Unlike the formation of the UMNO (which was formed because of the protest against the introduction of the Malayan Union; a more politically driven reason for the establishment of UMNO) which is explained in the introductory chapter, the formation of Chinese and Indian ethnic groups had less to do with political issues. The main purpose for these immigrants leaving their home town for a new place is due mainly to the purpose of generating income (Madhavan, 1985). Furthermore, the ties between these immigrants and their homeland remain strong compared with the sense of belonging that these groups feel towards Malaya (Lim, 1977). When these immigrants arrive in Malaya they do not have much in the way of protection from the colonial government (Lee, 1989) but, even so, these immigrants did group together and extend their assistance to one another. This kind of "groupness" had much to do with their identity, however, it was also to do with their narrow identity in the beginning.

Chinese immigrants at that time grouped themselves according to the dialect they speak, the geographical area of their home town (which could be as small as a village or as wide as a province). This intensified the formation of associations, guilds, clans and even secret societies (Moese, Reinknecht & Schmitz-Seisser, 1979). For instance, Cantonese-speaking immigrants were grouped together as one, and Hakka-speaking immigrants were grouped together as another. It is not surprising, therefore, that groups speaking different dialects fought among themselves for various reasons, most notably economic, even though they were all Chinese, came from mainland China and were alike in identity and background.. However, as time passed more Chinese resided and were born in Malaya (unlike their senior generation who were born in mainland China and migrated to Malaya) and their ties with Malaya were stronger compared to their senior generation (Wang, 1970). The level of concern towards Malaya (including politics) as also higher and when the British colony tried to repatriate these immigrants or the Malaya-born generation back to China because of the impact of communism in Malaya at that time (as most members of Malayan Communist are Chinese), the MCA was born as an umbrella body to defend the Chinese community as a whole, while at the same time being acknowledged by the British government (Pek, 1988). The repatriation plan was called off and the MCA was highly accorded as a Chinese association, mainly taking care of the welcome of the people. During the period of independent struggle, the MCA joined

the negotiation delegation and started to become involved more directly with local politics and started to contest in the early days of elections held by the British government. Although the MCA was mainly focused on the Chinese community, its leaders did realise the importance of working together with other ethnic groups. During an election, the MCA and UMNO established political cooperation as the UMNO-MCA alliance (Fernando, 2003) before forming a coalition party which consisted of the main ethnic groups in Malaya (UMNO represents Malays, MCA represents Chinese and MIC, which joined later, represents Indians).

A similar situation occurred with the Indian community. Indian immigrants were brought in through the Kangani system (Ramasamy, 1992), where one of the labourers is made their leader and he is responsible for taking care of the rest. No doubt in the process, there are some leaders who misuse their power and suppress their own people (Basu, 2011). Like the Chinese immigrants, their loyalty inclined more towards their home land instead of Malaya. The main purpose for the establishment of the MIC was to help India to gain independence. Due to the commonality among Indian immigrants in Malaya, this was also one of the unifying factors among them. When Malaya tried to negotiate with the British for independence, like the MCA, these three main ethnic groups, through their respective parties, worked together for independence of Malaya (Md Shukri Shuib, 2010). This is how MIC, like the MCA, ventured into local politics directly, which differed from their founding objectives. For these reasons, ethnic-based political parties are among the earliest forms of political parties. For these reasons, ethnic-based political parties are among the earliest forms of political parties.

Such politics, which relies heavily on ethnicity, had dominated the political landscape of Malaysia (Gomez 2007). As these political parties are formed based on ethnicity cleavages, it is not surprising that these parties are championing ethnicity more than other issues. However, at the same time as these political parties are cooperating with one another under a coalition party, their struggles have to be within the same parameters of such a coalition (Shamsul 1994). Interaction between different ethnic groups largely depends on their representative political parties. The leadership of these

ethnic-based parties would then overarch their communication among themselves. This is part of Lijphart (1977) suggestion in his consociationalism theory, although consociationalism theory has been negated by some scholars, especially after the racial riots happened in 1969. At the same time, the issues championed by political parties have much to do with their opponents. The intensity of ethnic outbidding may at some point have been higher and some point lower, depending on the ethnicity issue confrontation by opponents (Rabushka & Shepsle 2009). Such ethnic politic trends were carried throughout Malaysian politics for most of the time until the late 1990s, or some draw the line in 2008.

The issue of de-ethnicisation in Malaysian politics started to rise up in the late 1990s (commonly known as the "Reformation Era") when Anwar Ibrahim, a former Deputy Prime Minister, had been sacked (Gomez 2007). He, together with his followers, formed another political front in opposition to his former party UMNO, a Malay-based political party (Prasad 2015). This is a time in modern politics where the issue of non-ethnic politics (or multi-ethnic politics) started to resurface. A more solid inter-ethnic cooperation had started to emerge for the opposition bench (Gomez 2007). Some argue that this is the time when de-ethnicisation of politics in Malaysia started to take place, while others argue that the result is not well as the opposition bench hardly put any pressure on the incumbent government, not even managing to break the two-thirds majority in Parliament that was held by the government. In the 2008 General Election, another similar political cooperation existed in the opposition bench and they managed to break the two-thirds majority in Parliament held by the incumbent government (Tunku Mohar Mokhtar 2008). During this election, opposition parties seldom, if not any longer, speak on ethnicity anymore. Even when it is necessary to touch on ethnicity, it will then refer to all the major ethnic groups in Malaysia.

Although the terms 'multi-ethnicities' and 'non-ethnicity' carry two different meanings academically, in Malaysian politics, at least at this stage, both of them have the same meaning. When "Malaysian politics" (referring to politicians as individual, political parties and so on) speaks about multi-ethnic politics, it refers to the inclusion of all as the

subject. When talking about non-ethnic politics, it refers to issues that are not tied down to politics principally, although practically, the over-dominance of a particular ethnic group on non-ethnic issues could pave an easier path to turn it into an ethnic-based discussion. That is why, for Malaysian politics to move towards de-ethnicisation, I will refer to this as the embryonic stage, requiring a certain level of definition compromise.

In this chapter, I will split it into three sections. The first section will give an idea of what Malaysia is all about, with attention paid to those Malaysian backgrounds that are related to ethnicity and are necessarily a foundation for understanding further discussion. In the second section, discussion will focus on the past political landscape in Malaysia. These past political events are necessary to understand the development of Malaysian politics more fully. Furthermore, these past political events lead to the current political configuration. Although ethnicity is the main concern of this research, this sub-section it does touch on class and religious cleavages to give a better and more wholesome understanding of the flow of political developments in Malaysia. The third section will include discussion about the current political configuration. This section necessitates a foundation for further analysis in subsequent chapters.

1.2   MALAYSIAN BACKGROUND

Malaya gained independence from the British on 31st August 1957. Malaya at that time consisted of only the Peninsular of Malaysia. With the effort taken by leaders from different ethnic groups negotiating with the British, they managed to convince the British of their ability to rule by themselves with a diverse society (Hutchinson 2015). Although the British had granted Malaya independence, other places within the region such as Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei are still under the rule of the British. At that period of time there was a heightened level of communism in Southeast Asia due to the Cold War, and the British tried to grant independence to these nations as a counter-measure against communism, while at the same time adhering to United Nations encouragement of decolonisation (Fernando 2012). There was a suggestion of combining

Malaya, Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei all together, as this could expedite the decolonisation of the other four states as well, apart from Malaya which had already gained independence. With Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak agreed to join into a federation in 1963, this federation was named Malaysia, a name which is still in use today (Md Shukri Shuib et.al 2010). However, due to political incompatibility between the Prime Minister of Malaysia (federal-level government) Tunku Abdul Rahman, and Chief Minister of Singapore (state-level government) Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore was split from the Federation of Malaysia in 1965 and became a country of their own (Chan 1969, Munusamy 2012). Therefore, Malaysia today consists of Peninsular Malaysia (formerly named as "Malaya") Sabah and Sarawak. Although three locations have been gazetted as Federal Territories, geographically they are still within the land of these 13 former states

Moving forward from the historical aspect of Malaysia, it is generally known as a plural society consisting of three main ethnic groups (Malay, Chinese and Indian) and some smaller indigenous communities (mainly living in Sabah and Sarawak). According to the Department of Statistic Malaysia (2016), the percentage of Bumiputera (son of the soil) consists of 68.6%. This 'son of the soil' group generally refers to Malay and indigenous groups. According to Siddique & Suryadinata (1981), "bumi" can be translated as "earth" while "putera" means "prince". Although these terms are borrowed from Sanskrit, it has been used in a Malaysian context which carries the meaning as the "owner" of the land. This group is acknowledged as the origin of the land and, therefore, is entitled to certain special privileges as enshrined in the Malaysian Constitution, Article 153. Such privileges are applied through the implementation of governmental policies (Debernardi 1994). Due to this, such categorisation of 'ethnicity' cannot be ignored in this research. The second largest population in Malaysia is Chinese, who stand at 23.4%, followed by Indians at 7.0%, while the balance of 1.0% is other than these three main categories (Department of Statistic Malaysia 2016). This is where the idea of Malaysia having three main ethnic groups comes from. This percentage will be useful for further analysis in the later chapters as such percentages will affect how the political systems are shaped in old and new politics.

As the above ethnic group percentages show, the overall population division by ethnicity is not equally divided as a percentage throughout Malaysia. In Malaysia, there are 13 states and three Federal Territories as shown in Table 1 below. Geographically, 11 states and two Federal Territories are located in the Peninsular of Malaysia, which is the focus of this research as mentioned in Chapter 1, while another two states (Sabah and Sarawak) plus one Federal Territory (Labuan) are located in the east of the Peninsular Malaysia, usually referred to collectively as East Malaysia, separated by the South China Sea.

	WEST MALAYSIA (PENINSULAR MALAYSIA)	EAST MALAYSIA
Number of states	11	2
Number of Federal Territories	2	1

Table 1: Number of states and federal territories according to geographical location.

As explained in Chapter 1, the political landscape in East Malaysia has vast differences in their political landscape, therefore, East Malaysia is not included in this research. In the Peninsular, out of the 11 states there are six states where they have a significant percentage of Chinese, while in most of the other states the Malay have the highest population numbers. Such percentages could directly affect the political arrangement of particular states. For example, in Penang, according to Penang Institute (2016), a state government research think tank, the Chinese population in Penang is 41.5% of the overall population, while Malay numbers come in at 40.9%. The gap between these two ethnic groups was larger decades ago as compared to now. For this reason, the position of Chief Minister of the state (head of state government) is held by the Chinese from independence until now. This is also the only state where the head of government is a non-Bumiputera.

STATES	PERCENTAGE OF CHINESE POPULATION (%)
Penang	> 40
Perak, Selangor, Negeri	20 - 30

Sembilan, Malacca and Johor	
Kedah, Pahang and Perlis	10 - 20
Kelantan, Terengganu	Less than 10

Table 2: Percentage of Chinese population according to states. (Department of Statistic Malaysia 2016)

Apart from Penang, all the states beyond Penang to the south of the West Coast of Peninsular Malaysia have a significant percentage of Chinese population, estimated to be between 20% and 30% as shown in Table 2 above. These include Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Malacca and Johor. This is one the reasons why the political power of non-Bumiputera in these states is significant especially in the states of Perak and Selangor where the opposition managed to win against their non-Bumiputera counterparts in the election (Lee 2010). This is because, in the 2008 and 2013 General Elections, opposition parties seemed able to garner a lot of non-Bumiputera votes, particularly from the Chinese community (Chin 2013). In Penang, where the Chief Minister is from DAP, the DAP managed to make a clean sweep for all the seats it was contesting.

For the balance of five other states, three states, namely Kedah, Pahang and Perlis, have a much lower percentage of Chinese population. Even so, the influence of non-Bumiputera elected representatives is still present, although the magnitude is not as great as the six states discussed above (Chin 2013). For the states of Kelantan and Terengganu, these states are generally Malay-dominated and it is rare to have a non-Bumiputera elected representative (Gomez 2007), although it is not impossible for certain reasons. For instance, in the state of Kelantan, a converted Chinese Muslim has been a state assemblyman and state EXCO member (akin to cabinet at federal level), while in Terengganu, MCA Chinese candidates did manage to win a state seat there, although the seat has a large majority of Malay voters compared to Chinese voters. This could be due to the concept of power sharing that the BN is practising (Saravanamuttu 2016). With this, it shows that UMNO is not contesting all seats and left their component partner with none to contest, although such seats have a higher number of Malay voters than non-Malays. The discussion of ethnicity distribution in Malaysia above could give a good picture of

the ethnicity landscape in Malaysia. Such description is the statistical data (Table 2) that Malaysia is having currently. Even so, it is helpful to have a general view on this historical background of Malaysia, too, as the historical background could explain why Malaysia is has such ethnicity composition and why ethnicity has become part of Malaysian politics. Apart from that, such demographic distribution does have an impact on the electoral strategy due to the electoral system that is practised in Malaysia.

In terms of the Malaysian electoral system, they practise a single-member district plurality system (first past the post) for all elections held in Malaysia (Balasubramaniam, 2006). This includes parliamentary elections (Lower House or Dewan Rakyat) and elections for seats in state assemblies. A plurality system means that a candidate can win a seat even with a narrow majority of votes and all factors, including the ethnic distribution within a seat, is taken into consideration although the importance of ethnicity does decline over the time. This is explained in detail in Chapter 6 on electoral strategy.

The same plurality system applies for both parliamentary and state assembly elections. As Malaysia is practising a federation system, technically elections for parliamentary and state assembly seats are separated, although in actuality most of the state assemblies tend to call off their elections at the same time as parliament dissolution. Also, due to the nature of the federation system that Malaysia is practising, the division of power between the federal government and the state government is clear according to the Ninth Schedule of Malaysian Constitution (Loh, 2010). The main power accorded to the federal government includes foreign affairs, finance, defence, security and more. For state governments in Malaysia, land, local administration, forestry and licensing are among the jurisdiction of the state government.

1.2.1 *History of Malaysia*

Historically, in the post-Sultanate era in Malaysia, it was colonised by four superpowers over five periods of time. After the fall of Malacca Sultanate in 1511, Malaya was

conquered in sequence by the Portuguese, Dutch, British, Japanese (World War II) and lastly by the British again (Loo 2009). Eventually, the British granted independence to the Federation of Malaya (which consists of 11 states in Peninsular Malaysia) on 31 August 1957 (Shennan 2002). Although there was a Japanese interruption, most of the British policies carried out in their first term of colonisation (in regards to this research, the migration of Chinese and Indian immigrants in Malaya) were not affected by the Japanese interruption. During the first term of British colonisation, the British had brought in immigrants from China and India to work in the labour industry in Malaya (Neo 2006). Chinese brought in were mainly concentrated in the mining industry, who later ventured into business as well. Due to this, we can see that during that time city areas were mostly populated by Chinese, compared to the other two ethnic groups. At the same time, Indian immigrants that were brought in were assigned to the plantation areas. Malays remained in the rural areas, focusing on agricultural. From here, we can see that this "divide-and-rule" policy implemented by the British was meant to segregate different ethnic groups so that they had very little space for communication among them (Munusamy 2012). With such policy, ethnic polarisation gets thicker and each group has to self-feed in order to survive (Abraham 1997). Such policy could give advantage to the ruler, in terms of ease of control over the colony, while at the same time it is tough for the local diverse society to unite as a single unit.

During the second term of British colonisation, they tried to introduce the Malayan Union (Neo 2006), a union that put all the 11 states under the same categorisation. Such suggestion was unpopular in the Malay groups for various reasons, for example the way citizenships were granted. The British suggested that citizenship be granted through the principle of 'jus soli', which meant a person who was born in Malaya could automatically gain citizenship (Miller 1965). This had been fiercely rejected by the Malays because, by implementing jus soli, it would open up citizenship widely. As Malay had an upper hand in dominating the majority of the total population, such policy would reduce that dominance in terms of population and hence, eradicate Malay position within the nation. The heavy presence of Chinese and Indian communities in Malaya too, was a concern for them, with such principles of citizenship being granted to those people considered to be foreign immigrants (Mauzy 2006). At the end of the day, the British had

agreed to retract Malayan Union and introduce the Federation of Malaya (Neo 2006). During this fiasco, too, it instilled the formation of the UMNO in uniting Malays to counter the British.

For the Federation of Malaya, some amendments had been made to cater to the will of the locals. The issue of citizenship had been addressed by changing the way citizenships were granted, from jus soli to jus sanguinis. The principle of jus sanguinis is to grant citizenship to the new-born of a citizen (Rodziana Mohamed Razali et.al 2015). This means that, in order to be a citizen, at least one of the parents of a new-born must be a citizen, and at the same time there were tightened citizenship requirements for existing Chinese and Indians. Such principles are still adhered to today. Furthermore, the British had acknowledged the "ownership" of Malay in Malaya by empowering them in the Constitution of Malaya. This includes recognising them as the 'son of the soil', the original founder of the land (Bakri Musa 1999). Therefore, the Malaysian Constitution grants certain special rights to the community (Neo 2006). For example, special privileges of Malays, Malay language as the official language, Islam as the official religion, and the Head of State must be a Malay Muslim (including state and federal level). The royalty system in Malaysia is unique compared to other places in the world. In Malaysia, nine of out 13 states are spearheaded by each royal family symbolically, as Malaysia practices a Constitutional monarchy. Out of this, nine Heads of State ("State" over here refers to literal state-level leadership), or locally known as "Sultan", elect among themselves a king to be Head of the Nation (literally translated) according to a set of rules and conventions. Even the head of government for particular states, Perak for instance, must be a Malay Muslim, quota in education, business and so on. In return, the immigrants, the Chinese and Indians, were then granted citizenship in Malaya (as formerly known until 1963 when the name Malaya changed to Malaysia) (Means 1972). This social contract has been practised from independence up until today (Ahmad Ali et.al. 2011). It performs on a basis of mutual understanding among elites of different ethnic groups. The validity of the social contract did not face any hindrance in the early independence period, as those who agreed upon it were the leaders of communities. However, successors may or may not agree with the spirit of this social contract (Holst 2012). Even for the people today, a person may accept the existence of such a social

contract, but refuse to accept it on the basis of inequality. This forms the basis of racial cards to be played, especially by the politicians during elections.

From the historical background of Malaysia, even though this research argues for de-ethnicisation, ethnic politics being practised did not cause bloody clashes between different ethnic group in Malaya or Malaysia over the years except for one instance. Before this unfortunate incidence, Lijphart's (1977) concept of consociationalism worked well up to the point where ethnic clashes on 13th May 1969 happened. However, for McGarry & O'Leary (2004), they see the traditional consociationalism theory as unable to maintain the stability of such a fragmented society. Such ethnic clashes happened, largely due to the 1969 General Election, which was held days before the incident. In that election, new opposition parties such as DAP and Gerakan managed to win many Chinese seats in Kuala Lumpur, while the Alliance Party (predecessor of BN) could not maintain a two- thirds majority in parliament for the first time (Rudner 1970). During the victory parade of Chinese elected representatives, there happened to be clashes between those parading the Chinese victory and some Malay people (Holst 2012). It happened in a Kuala Lumpur area where the opposition parties won their seats. When talking about ethnicity that wins the seats, it may be similar ethnic groups that will win those seats as, generally in Malaysian politics (especially "old politics") there is a tendency for main contesting parties, in filling candidates, coming from the same ethnic groups (Mat Jali Mohd Fuad 2011). This is because each party does look at the voter composition when filling in their candidate for large ethnicity marginal seats. Unless those seats have balanced ethnicity composition, or some other special circumstances, it will be the former premise that stands. Unfortunately, such election results in 1969 did occur and such clashes triggered a domino effect where other locations were also affected by it. Due to the critical situation at that time, Malaysia had declared a state of emergency through Head of State, the king (Yaakop 2011). With that emergency declaration, Parliament had ceased from proceedings while the daily life of ordinary people was largely affected, too. Although there are many versions of stories from different people, different interest groups and so on, the fact that bloody clashes did happened and the clashes involved Malay and Chinese communities could not be disputed. Only the reasons, processes and chronology is disputable.

Such incidents had taught Malaysia generally, and politicians specifically, of the fragility of ethnic relations at that time. Ever since pre-independence, up to the prior ethnic riots, although different ethnic groups did not have great inter-ethnic communication, and each of them was focusing more on their own part, there had not been bloody riots that claimed hundreds of lives and much properties. After the occurrence of the 1969 ethnic clash, as the nation was in emergency declaration, the National Operations Council was formed as a means of a caretaker government (Saravanamuttu 2016). This was to deal with the dire situation and to restore peace to the nation. Two main actions taken by the National Operation Council were implemented; the New Economy Policy (NEP) and formulation of "Rukunnegara" (a kind of pledge of allegiance). As the caretaker government felt that one of the reasons for such a clash was due to disparity among different ethnic groups in Malaysia, the Council introduced the NEP with a two-pronged strategy (Fakhrul Anwar & Wan Norhayate 2011). First, it was to restructure the society. As the society at the time was isolated among one another, with each particular ethnic group dominating particular fields, the first strategy was to restructure the society so that all different ethnic groups could be involved in different sectors (Samad 2009). The second strategy was to eradicate poverty. This was done regardless of ethnicity, although generally, Malay groups were among the poorest compared to Chinese at that time (Wicks 1971). Although these two strategies did seem to work, there was a lot of criticism against it, especially by non-Malays due to the favouritism towards Malay groups (Khairiah Salwa Mokhtar et.al 2013), while the proponent felt that such policy was fair and did not favour any ethnic group (Fakhrul Anwar & Wan Norhayate 2011).

The second significant effort from the National Operations Council was to formulate a national philosophy to reunite the people of Malaysia (Mujibu Abd Muis et.al. 2017). The five philosophies include: belief in God, loyalty to king and country, upholding of the Constitution, rule of law and good behaviour and morality. Such principles not only came in English versions as shown here, but also came in Malay, Chinese and Indian versions. Generally, public schools would recite this "Rukunnegara" in their weekly compulsory assembly (Gill et.al. 2012). Although these five principles do not seem to directly touch on inter-ethnic unity, no doubt they were one of the main

efforts taken by the National Operations Council at that time and were carried forward until today. If "similarity strategies" (as discussed in the Literature Review chapter) are applied in this situation, they may work at getting Malaysians to uphold the same "Rukennegara" and create a commonality among them. Similar to NEP as discussed above as another main effort taken by the Council, whether these two policies do contribute to bringing peace to the country is uncertain in regards to the direct linkage, but there were no major inter-ethnic clash re-occurring after the 13th May 1969 bloody clash incident.

1.3   PAST POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Different eras come with different political arrangements or landscapes. The is little doubt about the salience of ethnicity within Malaysian politics since early independence until today. There are times when ethnicity cleavage forms the contestation between different political parties. There are also times where other cleavage overtook ethnicity salience as a higher degree of political contestation among them. According to Wyatt (2009), he defines cleavage as political divides more than the social division within a society. Due to different characteristics within a society, it is not surprising that such differences may divide the society into different segments. However, such division, be it into a large or tiny number of community composition, it does not necessarily creates a cleavage among them without political contestation. Such description of cleavage is supported by Lipset, Rokkan (1967) in the sense cleavages can challenge the political position of status quo. They suggested for two important cleavage, namely territorial and functional. Territorial cleavage covers for most of the primordialism values, ideologies, cultures and so on while functional cleavage generally focuses on economy such as development, conflict between elites and workers, primary economy against manufacturing industries and alike. This may also due to the challenge towards the core of the power holder parties by the periphery opposition against incumbency (Lipset Rokkan 1967). However, cleavages within the political system at a particular time does not necessarily negate all other lesser degree of division within the society (Klesner 2005). In his research on Mexican political system, he sees that even though the two sets of two-

party-system run concurrently (Institutional Revolutionary Party-PRI versus National Action Party-PAN; PRI versus Party of Democratic Revolution PRD) in which intensifies the pro-regime versus anti-regime cleavage, this does not means that the old ideology propagated by PAN and PRD is totally abandoned. Even though PAN and PRI tried to project themselves into a catch-all-party direction in order to broaden their support base, they may not be able to achieve huge success by only moving towards the center but neglecting their original support base especially by the example of PAN's Presidential success. Therefore, sometimes a division within the society may not (yet) build a cleavage for political contestation within the system, but such divisions are not neglectable. At the same time, it is not uncommon for overlapping of cleavage and division to happen. Klesner (2005) argues that when the previous cleavages such as left-right, rural-urban and regionalism shift to proregime-antiregime cleavage, this former divisions may still exist within the proregime-antiregime cleavage. These cleavage/divisions are not mutually exclusive.

These definitions above well-explained on the shift of cleavages in Malaysian politics. Such shifting may be due to the changing demands of the masses towards the political system, or it could be due to the outbidding effort by political parties against their direct opponent. In this section I will discuss the four kinds of cleavage that existed in Malaysia, which are ethnic cleavage, class cleavage, religious cleavage and reform-of-politics cleavage. To Crouch (2001), almost all policy issues ranging from education, security, immigration, business licence and so on, are related to ethnicity, while Ufen (2012) argues that the religious cleavage between UMNO and PAS has emerged from the ethnicity cleavage, particularly during the 1980s and Mahathir's administration. Crouch and Ufen both have a point, however, I argue that Malaysia has gone through four stages of different cleavage, starting with ethnicity cleavage as the main contention during the independence era, until the occurrence of a racial riot in 1969, where the cleavage started to incline towards class cleavage. Religious cleavage took place from the 1970s up to the 1980s when the main political competition was between UMNO and PAS, convincing individuals that they were more Islamic than the other. In the latest development, contestation between political parties is not about identity contestation anymore, but starting (in fact, has already started) to develop towards a value-based cleavage. Each of

the political fronts is trying to prove their ability towards good governance, practice and universal values. Of these four, class cleavage and religious cleavage could co-exist with ethnic cleavage, which has been practised throughout these cleavages eras. The fourth kind of cleavage is a counter-ethnicity cleavage, where the success of reform-of-politics cleavage means the collapse of ethnicity cleavage as the former inclines towards eradicating ethnicity-based issues or propaganda.

1.3.1   Ethnicity cleavage

As acknowledged by Crouch (2001), Abdul Rashid (2009), Chin (2004) and many more scholars, contestation in Malaysian politics has often been based on ethnicity. Even Suhana (2013), in her latest argument, opines that political parties have often worked together along the ethnic line. Even though the modern politics of Malaysia seem to be moving away from ethnicity, this ambition is still at an embryonic stage. It is evidenced through the allocation of candidates according to the majority of ethnic voters for that particular seat (Maznah 2008). In general practice, a coalition party will nominate a candidate who is from the same ethnic group as the electorate in the seat (Ng et.al 2015). For example, if it is a Malay majority seat, generally it will be a Malay UMNO candidate against another Malay candidate as the challenger (there have been exceptional cases as well, particularly in this latest political landscape). Due to the seat allocation, the ethnicity cleavage takes the form of a proxy war against the other ethnic group. The DAP (Chinese-based opposition party) will fight the UMNO (Malay-based incumbent party) by contesting against the MCA (Chinese-based incumbent party). This is how the ethnicity issue is being played out within the political scene. Of course, the second way of battling is through direct challenge between different groups.

Lim (2002) also argues that ethnicity cleavage in Malaysia is strongly related to the developmental status for an area. In Malaysia, most of the rural areas are occupied by the Malays, while the Chinese are living mostly in the urban areas. Therefore, contestation of ethnicity cleavage is directly linked with the developmental status of an area. However, I argue that in statistical calculations he is right, but quite often ethnicity

will be valued higher in the developmental status of an area. For instance, the UMNO gain strongholds in most of the rural Malay areas, primarily because of ethnicity, while developmental status is secondary. This is why the UMNO failed to cross-cut the ethnicity boundary and failed to perform in the Chinese rural areas. Furthermore, with special privileges accorded to the Malay community as an indigenous people, it is impossible to disregard differences within the society. Chopra (1974), in his writings in the 1970s, argues that ethnicity becomes a cleavage in fighting for political powers due to the fact that the Malay community felt threatened by the minorities, and at the same time minorities felt dissatisfied with the privileges. However, Nagel (1994) is softer on that issue, even though he still thinks that the special privileges have caused dissatisfaction within the non-Malay community, making it difficult to combine them as 'one', but not in terms of violence or hardcore dissatisfaction. These communities can mix within the same 'pot', but they do not melt into 'one' in the same pot. The 'us-them' relationship does still exist, however, by looking at the new developmental trends, the young, particularly the educated, do not make special privileges an essential issue. They are confident in themselves competing with others, regardless of whether or not they are given handicapped privileges by the government. Therefore, this is how ethnicity cleavage starts to weaken in 21st Century politics in Malaysia.

Another factor that contributes to ethnicity cleavage is the education system. The existence of multiple streams of school means that students from different ethnic groups are separated from each other. This education system may creates antagonism within the school children (Samuel 2012). As education is the main source of nurture for the mindset of the people, students in vernacular schools may tend to mingle with people from the same ethnic group only (Sivapalan Selvadurai et.al 2015). If this phenomenon were to be carried out after their schooling, it may or may not then be translated into antagonism against people from other ethnic groups. Generally, politicians and political parties are not the decision-makers for the direction in which the party should go, but instead they decide the best way to gather support. If the community is shaped by way of an antagonism, the political institution will follow the same direction and hence, deepen the ethnicity cleavage so the political institution can take advantage of it. This is how

education becomes part of the medium for deciding the level of depth of ethnicity cleavage within the political system.

1.3.2 Class cleavage

After the racial riot in 1969, the government had implemented a new form of economic policy called New Economy Policy (NEP). Theoretically, NEP's two main objectives were to restructure society so that it would not become segregated according to ethnic group (such as Malay in agriculture, Chinese in business and Indians in plantations), and to eradicate poverty. However, Ben (2006) argues that the implementation of the policy restructured ethnicity and class. In practice, the main beneficiaries were the Malays who benefited from this policy when they were accorded various subsidies and policy support from the government. Yet, the policy did not manage to help the poor, but instead created a new cronyism-based Malay middle class (Tan 2015). The existence of such new middle class did not born from the natural cycle of the market/economy, but it is more to a political-inclined intervention of up-warding a particular lower class of people. Due to the selective positive discrimination towards a particular segments of the society especially in ethnicity terms, therefore, even when the contestation move towards rich versus poor, urban versus rural and alike, ethnicity influence is still strong. Therefore, as argued above, although immediately following the 1969 ethnic riot there was an obvious move away from ethnic cleavage towards class cleavage through economy policies, yet again the element of ethnicity was still heavily invested in during this era, due to the target group of the policy purposely or coincidentally falling into the same category of society as is the Malay society, although a smaller fraction of poor non-Malay groups did benefit slightly from it.

According to Milne (1977), Malaysian politics at that time was reluctant to veer more towards class cleavage (although comparatively, economy division showed just slightly more salience compared to ethnicity), even during the implementation period of NEP, in contrast to other case studies in Guyana. This is because, by changing direction in favour of class cleavage blanketly, multiple status quo benefits will be lost. For

instance, politicians from ethnic-based political parties (mainly from the BN) could not afford to have a zero ethnicity-based contestation as it would then reduce the importance of these ethnic-based parties. Furthermore, by favouring class vertically within different ethnic groups (meaning the political contestation within class cleavage is within the ethnic group. For example, there were clearer cleavage between elite Malays and inferior Malays; same goes to Chinese and Indians; but there were least over-arching between lower class of one ethnic group with elite from another different ethnic group), their followers would then have to approach elites from the same ethnic group when facing a problem. This is why internal bargaining through ethnicity approaches within the same coalition is better and more beneficial to them, rather than changing to a general class approach (Milne 1977). Even so, comparatively, public discourse on class was more popular than ethnicity as ethnicity became a subset to class.

Yet, at the same time, it is undeniable that during that period of time, from independence up until before the growth of new politics in the late 1990s, politics in Malaysia were mostly held and controlled by elite groups (Gomez 1996). This separation of elite and commoner through the class system provides the elite with a more secure position to remain in power, as their power could not be challenged easily by commoners and their supporters (Khairiah Salwa Mokhtar 2013). They are the ones that manipulate ethnicity issues to make people focus on ethnicity. However, behind the scenes, it is the elite who mislead their own community into supporting them with the hope of remaining strong for the community. They will also try to make sure that this vertical manipulation by each ethnic elite will not cut across each other (Brennan 1982). It means that there is a mutual understanding that the elite from a particular ethnic group will dominate the lower class of their ethnic groups, and not another ethnic group.

1.3.3 *Religious cleavage*

In Malaysia, a Malay must be a Muslim according to the definition of the Constitution. This ascribed identity will definitely have vast influence in politics, especially when Islam is always equated with being a Malay. The main religious cleavage competition of

Islam in Malaysia is between the UMNO and the PAS. The UMNO, being moderate on religious issues, has often been pressured into religious contention by the PAS, who are so-called more religious than the UMNO. Both are trying to claim authority and be the "religiously-correct" Islamic party (Ben 2006).

Depending on the location and era religion can be a non-issue, and yet a deciding dominator at the same time. For the case in Malaysia, the rise of Islamisation occurred in the 1970s to 1980s, when the Malays held strong political positions (Thayer 2008). Due to its strength, focus within the Malay community had moved away from inter-ethnic contestation towards intra-ethnic (Malay) competition. A selling point of the PAS is its image as a religious party, and at the height of Islamisation in Malaysia and the rest of the world, the UMNO itself had to move synchronically with the PAS in order to get more support from the Muslim community (Thayer 2008). Religion had moved from its peripheral position to a central point with a lot of Islamic pressure groups being founded at that time (Chin 2004). Many more religious extremist groups were founded and they would definitely have favoured the PAS, a religious party. Some of the religious extremists even had the intention of overthrowing the government through undemocratic means (Chin 2004). For security of the nation, and also for self-motivated political gains, the UMNO had positioned itself as more of a religious party than ever before. This is how the cleavage focus in Malaysia moved from common ethnicity cleavage towards religious cleavage. Even though the rise of Islamisation in the world had its impact on Islamisation in Malaysia, before being able to move the position of ethnicity and religion, the Malay Muslims themselves needed to position themselves in a strong position before intra-competition could take place. During that era, too, the implementation of an NEP economy policy that favoured the Malays and gave various advantages and handicap-based privileges to them, brought about hardship for the non-Malay community. Therefore, challenges coming from the non-Malay community were fewer and their focus was on being self-sustaining rather than requesting more.

1.3.4   *Reform-of-politics cleavage*

The latest form of cleavage that exists is status quo versus reform (Ufen 2012). As discussed in the ethnicity cleavage section, in order to eradicate ethnicity cleavage people must be willing to put aside identity differences. However, putting aside identity differences will create a vacuum to be filled. There was hardly any common ground among the Malaysian people until the late 1990s, when people started to hunger for reform. Elections are generally free in Malaysia, but not fair (Croissant 2002). Electoral rules are set by the ruling party (Croissant 2002). For this reason, a lot of reform movements, particularly the recent one regarding free and fair elections, have been founded. In parallel to the rise of Islamic pressure groups during the peak of Islamisation, the creation of these universal-value-based pressure groups has intensified the urge for status quo versus reform cleavage. Furthermore, the success of an opposition front in creating an alternative choice of governance makes it another option for the people to choose. The PAS and DAP have managed to come together and form a common reform front between them (Abdul Rashid 2009). However, according to Gomez (2012), the issue of ethnicity is still relevant even though the trajectory can already be seen moving towards a more non-ethnic-based debate. Extremist Malay political power is reducing for national unity to take charge (Suhana 2013). Since the 2008 General Election, factors in determining the winning side have diverged to everyday insecurity, leadership and internet campaigning, rather than ethnicity-based propaganda (Maznah 2008). According to Loh (2003), the spark for this new form of politics is also due to ethnic fragmentation. Not only can elites and commoners within the same ethnic groups be unified together, but contestation among elites from the same ethnic groups has also brought about this new form of politics. This is further intensified by the introduction of an alternative choice electoral system. Some push for social-economic change; some push for democratisation (Jayasuriya & Rodan 2007).

The interesting point about the reform cleavage is that there is a possibility for the contesting fronts to come to a common stance at the end of the day. Both fronts are still separated by different political parties, but their stance may be similar. This is because the status quo front is trying to make changes through transformation and by having healthier

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politics, such as less corruption, better welfare and so on, while the reform side is trying to make a more drastic change by having zero corruption, populist decisions on welfare and so on. This can be seen in their latest manifesto from the 2013 General Election, where a lot of their stances are principally similar, except in the way of implementation. In this new form of political cleavage too, the track records of the incumbent government and new governance by opposition parties could not avoid being compared. As the BN government is trying to improve their current governance to brush off their negative track record, PR government is trying to show their competency in ruling the whole nation as well. This is one of the points of contention in proving which side is more competent to rule and which can rule in a healthier way.

1.4   CURRENT POLITICAL CONFIGURATION

In current Malaysian politics, there are two main political divides that dominate the whole political landscape. BN, the incumbent government at the federal level, has been contested by PR since the 2008 General Election, where the BN started to feel the challenge (Berger 2010). Although these two "coalition parties" are standing at directly opposite stands, they do have many differences between them (Weiss 2013). Such differences may or may not have direct relation to ethnic politics (or de-ethnicised politics), it is useful to understand the structure of these two political coalitions before venturing deeper into the substance chapters. Furthermore, the structure itself could directly or indirectly influence the decision-making on the issue of ethnic politics or de-ethnicisation of politics in Malaysia. In this section, the discussion will focus on four areas which are the partnership of both the coalition and its registration; the nature of its parties; whether it is ethnic or non-ethnic-based; the supreme leadership of the coalition; the form of the working relationship between component parties.

1.4.1 Partnership and Registration

The BN is a registered coalition of political parties with the Registrar of Societies (Abdul Rashid Moten 2014). Therefore, in an election, all the component parties will be using the same symbol when displaying their party flag, contesting qualification, campaigning and so. While the PR is not yet an official registered coalition political party, this causes some issues to the component parties especially during by-elections. The Election Commission once ruled that only the parties that are contesting in an election can display their symbols. While the BN is using a common representation, the ruling does not affect them at all. For the PR, particularly in a by-election, only a component party that is contesting can display their affiliation. Their cooperation partners are not allowed to use their affiliation (Abdul Rashid Moten 2014). For instance, if the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) is contesting that seat, the Democratic Action Party (DAP) and People's Justice Party (PKR) are not allowed to display their party flags. This may cause some problems for them as the Chinese are associated with the DAP logo, while the Muslim community is more comfortable with the PAS logo. However, it is not a huge issue as the ruling is still negotiable and the practicalities very often over-rule the theoretical ruling. The PR, too, is strongly attached to their own political parties. There is no solid organisational chart for the PR, unlike the BN where they have an organisational chart for their leadership. The council that binds all three component parties within the PR together is the People's Alliance Leadership Council, where the council is considered as the highest body in making decisions for the whole coalition.

1.4.2 Membership of Barisan Nasional (BN)

The BN is one of the oldest political parties in Malaysia. It was first founded as the Alliance Party (Parti Perikatan), pre-independence, to contest in the Federal Legislation Council organised by the British. During the Federal Legislation Council election, the UMNO (United Malays National Organisation), a Malay-based political party, cooperated with the Chinese political party, namely the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) to form the Alliance Party (Smith 1960). This coalition was later expanded to include the third largest community in Malaya, the Indian community through Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), to compete in the first general election in 1955. After the racial

riot on 13 May 1969 (an incident where the Malay and Chinese clashed in a deathly confrontation, particularly in Kuala Lumpur, after the 1969 General Election where the opposition, mainly Chinese candidates, won a large number of seats), the Alliance Party was expanded further to include other opposition political parties to form the BN in a move to stabilise the political scenario in Malaysia (Heng 1996). The total number of component parties varies from time to time, as some parties join as part of the BN and some may tend to leave the coalition. This happens more frequently with local-based political parties in Sabah and Sarawak, rather than the peninsular-based political parties. The BN currently consists of 15 component parties (Amer Saifude 2009).

The most senior component member in the BN is the UMNO. The UMNO was first founded to fight against the Malayan Union (an administration system introduced by the British; Malay rulers lost their political power and granting citizenship was made easier to immigrants). Basically, the party is only open to Malay communities to be members. Prior to independence, the then-president of the UMNO, Onn Jaafar, suggested opening membership to non-Malays in a move to consolidate all ethnic groups into a party in order to convince the British of their ability to self-rule (stability assured with the participation of all ethnic groups) (Ishak Tadin 1960). However, his suggestion was not welcomed by other members as they felt that the UMNO should only be a party of Malays (Mahathir Mohamad 2008). Nevertheless, as explained above, the successive president did manage to bring all ethnic groups under a single umbrella through a coalition system instead of a single party system. In the Malaysian Constitution, Article 160, it states that to be Malay, he or she must fulfil three criteria: first, he or she must be a Muslim; second, he or she must speak the Malay language; third, he or she must practice Malay culture. This definition becomes blurred if interpreted literally; a Chinese individual who professes Islam, speaks Malay and practices Malay culture will qualify to be considered Malay. However, in reality, this is not the case, as the status of Malay is not normally granted as the Malay status tag with the special privileges mentioned above. Thus, an Indian-Muslim organisation whose members meet the three criteria even up until today have applications to the UMNO that have not yet been accepted. Generally, its members do fulfil the criteria above, but in Malaysia the commonly-defined slightly 'Malay' is different from the authority-defined.

The MCA is the second largest component party in the BN (Heng 1988). Generally, it has represented the interests of the Chinese community since independence. Conventionally, it will be allocated four ministers in the cabinet (from a total estimate of 25-35 ministers, depending on the prerogative of the Prime Minister at that time). Due to the nature of the MCA as a Chinese-based political party, it often relies on the Chinese interest and its independence contribution as a basis for their campaign. However, its influence in Penang state has been reduced since 1969, when the opposition party, Gerakan Party (who joined the BN soon after), took over control of Penang state. In the 2008 General Election, the MCA suffered one of its most terrible election outcomes, winning less than half of the seats it contested (which is devastating for a ruling party) and winning none of the seats in the Chinese majority state, Penang (Chin & Wong 2009).

The MIC is the third party that joined in the Alliance Party (former name of the BN at the time of joining) (Kernial Singh Sandhu 1969). The Indian-based political party, unlike the UMNO and MCA, seeks to garner support from other ethnic groups as well. Until this moment, none of the seats contested had the Indian community as the majority ethnic group. Therefore, even though it is an Indian-based party, all the seats that it contests are mixed seats. It is generally allocated with one minister and held by the president of the party until changes were made after the 2008 General Election, where the long-time president himself lost his seat in the election.

The Gerakan Party is a splinter from the MCA and joined the opposition fray in the 1969 General Election (Heng 1996). In that election, Gerakan achieved great success by capturing Penang state. After the racial riot incident and the expansion of the BN, Gerakan agreed to join and it was allocated the Chief Minister in Penang, even though its elected representatives are sometimes fewer than UMNO state assemblymen. However, in the 2008 General Election, Gerakan lost badly, winning no seats in Penang, neither parliamentary nor state seats.

1.4.3   *Membership of Pakatan Rakyat (PR)*

For the PR, similar cooperation was established as the Alternative Front, which consisted of the DAP, the National Justice Party (PKN, former name of PKR), the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) and the Malaysian People's Party (PRM), and faced the 1999 General Elections (Gomez 2004). However, the coalition did not last long as the DAP and PAS could not agree on the issue of Malaysia's status, whether it was a secular state (by DAP) or Islamic state (by PAS). After the successful results of the 2008 General Election, the DAP, PKR and PAS agreed to establish the People's Alliance to form a state government in Kedah, Penang, Kelantan, Selangor and Perak. Currently, PR consists of three component parties, which are DAP, PKR and PAS. The coalition's ambition is to capture the federal government.

The DAP is a splinter from the Singapore-based People's Action Party. Technically, it is a multi-racial political party and any Malaysian can be a member or hold a position as allowed by law (Lim 1991). However, in practice most, if not all, of its positions are held by Chinese. More frequently, the issues they are fighting for are those that affect the Chinese community, even though they fight for general universal values. It stands strongly for Malaysia as a secular state, as opposed to PAS's Islamic state idea. The DAP was successful in the 2008 General Election, where it managed to take over the ruling of Penang state and contributed to the formation of state government in Perak and Selangor.

The PKR is a multi-racial political party which mirrors the population of Malaysia. Its membership consists of all the main ethnic groups in Malaysia, and its organisational chart consists of leaders from different ethnic groups with a Malay as the highest leader, while non-Malays may hold the vice-presidency in the party. It started as a movement to fight for justice for the then-Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, and later evolved as a political party to contest in the 1999 General Election with Anwar Ibrahim's wife, Wan Azizah, as the president (Abbott 2000). With the release of Anwar Ibrahim, he took the leadership. Even though he is not officially holding a position, he is a de-facto leader for

the PKR and PR. He is also seen as the figure that keeps the DAP and PAS together on the issue of secular state versus Islamic state.

The PAS is an Islamic party in which members must profess Islam. Therefore, most of its members are Malays, with the exception of a small number. At the same time, it does have a non-Muslim section of supporters, which is called the PAS Supporters Club. The members of the club, until this moment, are not recognised as PAS members. They are only considered as affiliates of the PAS. However, in the 2013 General Election, the PAS fielded candidates from the club itself. PAS's main objective is to establish an Islamic state and implement Islamic values (Chin 2004). It did try to introduce Hudud Law in Kelantan, a state where 90-95% of its people are Malays, however, this did not materialise due to constitutional hindrance. In order to cooperate well with its component members, especially the DAP, PAS has lowered its tone on the establishment of an Islamic state as a compromise in seeking parliamentary power.

1.4.4   Supreme Leader

In the BN, conventionally, the president of the UMNO will assume the position of chairman of BN, which will make him the Prime Minister if the coalition wins. The leadership positions are clear in the BN, with conventional quotas being allocated to particular component parties (Mauzy 1988). For example, the position of Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and most of the state Chief Ministers will be from UMNO, four ministerial positions will be allocated to MCA, while MIC will get one ministerial and so. However, this formula is not fixed and varies according to the current situation.

The PR faces difficulties in selecting the highest leader among them, unlike BN where UMNO is obviously more senior compared to the other component parties. The PR opted to form a leadership council with the highest leader of each component party sitting together to decide a consensual stance among them (Tunku Mohar Mokhtar 2008). Unlike BN, PR does not have a clear leader who will become Prime Minister should the

PR win the election. Although DAP has conceded that it agrees to support Anwar Ibrahim from PKR as the Prime Minister should they win, PAS leadership and grassroots supporters are keen on having a PAS-Prime Minister.

1.4.5 Working Relationship

As described above, due to the large amount of power and popularity differences held among all the component parties in the BN, UMNO is the obvious leader of the coalition. Therefore, it is not surprising that the cooperation style in BN inclines towards domination of a single component party (Mauzy 1988). The decision by the Prime Minster-cum-BN Chairman should always be the reference point. This is one of the main reasons for the poor performance of BN in the 2008 General Election when leaders, especially those in the rank of top leadership (excluding those at the highest leadership) from UMNO, often portray the Malay-ness and superiority of Malay in speeches, which causes uneasiness among non-Malays.

In the PR there is no obvious leading component party, the strength of each component party is equal and they incline towards the cooperation of tolerance (Tunku Mohar Mokhtar 2008). Whenever an issue arises, none of the individuals or components can declare a statement on behalf of the whole coalition without first consulting each other. This causes some issues without conclusion, with the most obvious and unavoidable being the secular state versus Islamic state issue. The cooperation within PR is often labelled as a 'marriage of convenience' where they only stick together whenever there is an election. However, after the 2008 General Election, the need has arisen for all three parties to work more closely and cooperate more uniformly in PR-lead state governments.

1.4.6 Current Political Configuration to Ethnicity

The sub-sections above have explained the basic structure of both political fronts in the current political landscape. Below is a summary table of comparison:

Issues	National Front (BN)	People's Alliance
Name/Abbreviation	Barisan Nasional (BN)	Pakatan Rakyat (PR)
Partnership	Coalition Party	Close cooperation
Official registration of coalition membership?	Yes	No
Membership	15 parties	3 parties
Ethnic/non-ethnic-based	Both	Technically, all are non-ethnic-based
Supreme leader	President of UMNO	No highest leader
Working Relationship	Domination	Tolerance

Table 3: Comparison of Barisan National (BN) and Pakatan Rakyat (PR)

Formal registration as a coalition party is important when the sentiment of voters towards a particular component party within the same political front is indifferent from one another. In BN, they do not face such problems as they will all be voting for the BN logo (a non-ethnic-based party) instead of ethnic-based component parties. However, for PR, as currently they are not formally registered, they would technically have to go on their own, although they have their cooperation arrangement in action. However, when it comes to voting, should supporters of one component party need to vote for another component party (DAP and PAS are the best example in this scenario), can their supporters cross-voting support their component partner? If they can put aside their differences and political beliefs and vote for their component party, being formally or informally registered as a coalition party is no longer a big issue to deal with. Otherwise, if ethnicity (or religious) sentiment is still strong among them, and reluctant to cross-vote, then it will cause a big issue for the overall PR in winning seats. Therefore, the willingness to cross-vote within PR, although they are standing on their own party logo, could be an indicator of whether people, at least those opposition party supporters, are willing to let go of identity in their voting.

As the BN's main component parties are largely from ethnic-based parties, while PR is otherwise, the existence of a supreme leader is a linkable issue to deal with in the stance of (de-)ethnicised politics. In the case of BN, the UMNO president is the supreme leader of the coalition in addition to his role as Prime Minister, and it means that decisions made by the UMNO president, with the support from UMNO delegates, will have to be carried out through the coalition party of BN. Therefore, it may not seem encouraging that BN could technically be dominated by the UMNO but the positive is that it has a supreme leader to act as an adjudicator should any conflict exist between component parties. Contrarily, in PR, all three parties are technically non-ethnic-based. Therefore, it is justifiable for them to push against ethnic politics in Malaysia as such ethnic politics does not favour them. As they do not have a supreme leader among them, decision-making can be slower as consensus requires long discussion and compromise. At the same time, the positive side is that they do not have to subdue themselves to anybody as they are free to bring their party stance for PR deliberation.

Therefore, from this current political configuration, we can see that Malaysian politics has two different sets of party arrangements; party stance and party ambition. Although these are the current political configuration in Malaysia, this does not mean they could not be changed. In later chapters, this research will analyse whether the above political configuration does remain, technically and practically, or if it is moving towards a different configuration.

1.5   CONCLUSION

Society backgrounds necessitate the explanation of past political events while past political events drive the political landscape to current political configurations. As Malaysia is a diverse society, the diversity itself brings political arrangement and encouragement for political landscapes. Although Malay forms the majority ethnic group in Malaysia, the discussion above has shown that the significance of other minority ethnic groups, especially Chinese group, could not be ignored. This is because they form about a

quarter of the Malaysian population. Apart from overall ethnicity composition, how this composition is distributed to particular states is important as well. This is because, the way these ethnic compositions are distributed to different states will determine the political power of a particular ethnic group.

From independence to the present day, the politics of Malaysia has go through four phases of cleavage. The existence of these cleavages is due to the political development at the time. The transfer from ethnic cleavage to class cleavage is due to the economy policies post-ethnic riot, and whole new political trends emerged from class cleavage to religious cleavage is due to the competition between UMNO and PAS. Although class cleavage and religious cleavage seem to be stronger in that particular period of time, compared to their cleavage strength in other periods of time, this does not mean that ethnicity cleavage is not important or exists anymore. This is because these two, class and religious cleavage, are highly attached to ethnicity. Unlike the fourth phase of reform-of-politics cleavage, where it is mutual exclusive with ethnicity cleavage, class and religious cleavage could co-exist with ethnicity cleavage. That is why ethnicity cleavage could survive for decades until the existence of reform-of-politics cleavage, which is intended to eradicate ethnic politics.

These past historical events led to the creation of current political configurations. By comparing the political configuration today with the period of independence about half a decade ago, there exist some obvious differences. These political configurations would form a foundation for the newer development of the latest political landscape. As the political fronts are at least more equally balanced, in terms of their strength compared to the huge gap between BN and opposition parties, the later political development is to be given a more challenging space to both. Therefore, further chapters will be looking at whether ethnic politics could still survive or whether it could be overcome by the latest forms of political de-ethnicisation, or whether both ethnic cleavage and reform-of-politics cleavage are facing each other on equal strengths.

CHAPTER 2:

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Literature in a particular field can function by giving an insight into the type of research that has been carried out in the past (Cooper 1989). A competent review of this literature creates space to advance existing scholarships (Webster & Watson 2002). The same goes for the scholarship of ethnic politics (including de-ethnicisation of politics). However, the current available scholarships may or may not be sufficient in explaining a phenomenon that is taking place. In the specific field of how de-ethnicisation is taking place, there seems to be a vacuum in relation to the question. Even so, this does not negate those related scholarships with regards to the main research question.

In this research, the main interest is in how de-ethnicisation of Malaysian politics is taking place. In order to review previous literature on how this is happening, this chapter will start off by looking at how ethnic politics functions. Such discussion forms a prerequisite for the further discussion of de-ethnicisation. The term "de-" refers to the scenario where a particular phenomenon is negated. Therefore, in this chapter, the second section will look at how ethnic politics has been negated (leading to the de-ethnicisation of politics). Although there is substantial amount of scholarship in regards to de-ethnicisation, there is limited literature discussing a more specific scholarship of de-ethnicisation of politics.

Due to the limited literature on de-ethnicisation of politics, in this chapter the researcher intends to fill the gap for the scholarship in this field. Filling this gap is crucial in providing some principle insights before the research can attempt to answer (Bourner 1996) how de-ethnicisation of politics is taking place in Malaysia. For that reason, I invent three dimensional approaches in an attempt to answer the question of this research. Therefore, the subsequent section will focus on the discussion of party membership, party

directions and electoral strategies. Although there are many ways to discuss how a political system is being de-ethnicised I would like to narrow it down to three aspects. This because these three aspects are able to provide overall coverage of "physical", "action" and "result" components.

"Physical" refers to the fixed attributes of a political party. This includes written rules such as the party Constitution, and unwritten ideas such as the direction of the party, ambitions of the party and so on. "Action" refers to the execution of the "physical". For instance, even though a party Constitution may state that something is a fixed attribute, this rigidly fixed attribute may be loosened and be more accommodative and inclusionary of other "communities", instead of isolating to a single segment of society only. Another example is the action of using political rhetoric in getting messages to pass through. The third aspect is the "result". After placing in order the "physical" attribute and executing the "action", the political system should then look at the end "result", which are the electoral strategies. These electoral strategies can show how successfully the political parties and political rhetoric works, and it can also show how current work in political parties and their parties' direction can affect the electoral results in the future. Therefore, a combination of political parties, party direction and their electoral strategies can provide an overall scenario on how de-ethnicisation of politics works for democracies that practice ethnic politics as their main salience. This is because these three aspects could link the "ideals", "practicality" and "output" together in explaining de-ethnicisation of politics.

2.2   ETHNICISATION OF POLITICS

Ethnic politics is a form of politics where ethnicity shows more salience compared to other cleavages. This structure and membership, or in the form of the practice of "ethnicity-based" politics, such as rhetoric and electoral strategies. According to Cott (2003), he describes ethnic parties under three conditions; an organisation which is authorised to compete at local or national level, the majority of the leadership or membership are subscribed to a non-dominant ethnic group, and the nature of

programmes and demands are based on ethnicity and culture. Though his description is debatable in certain senses, especially on the issue of non-dominant ethnic groups, in general these descriptions are fit to describe what constitutes an ethnic party. Therefore, I would take the definition of ethnic party in my further argument as a party which is involved in election, and the party core, direction, stance, rhetoric and activity is based on ethnicity and culture, which relates to identity.

2.2.1 Ethnicity

Before venturing deeper into the discourse of ethnic politics, ethnic parties, ethnicisation of politics and so on, a lot of scholars are keen on analysing the definition of "ethnicity". The definition of "ethnicity" generally becomes a contestation between the schools of Constructivism and Primordialism. Primordialism argues ethnicity in the form of "fixed" characteristics and inheritance from the beginning of time, where it has not been altered or constructed by external parties towards the identity of the group. According to Geertz (1973), ethnicity of a person is "given" due to the connection of kinship; singular, endogenous and unchangeable. The ethnicity of a person is "fixed" since the day of birth, and the influx of outside influence would never change the attributes and ethnicity of a person. Thus, due to these "given" attributes, communities within an ethnic group will become tied together within the same atmosphere, sharing the same ancestry, history and hatred. However, Fenton (2003) opines that even though these characteristics may be viewed as "natural", they are actually being "moulded" socially or culturally. Therefore, the "naturalness" that primordialism insists on is no longer "natural".

At the same time constructivists, such as Chandra (2012), also oppose the idea that a person can only have singular ethnic identity. Alonso (2008) argues that ethnicity has been moving around, from historically defined 'ethnicity by birth' to 'ethnicity by choice'. They both argue that a person can have multiple ethnic identities, and these identities are interchangeable depending on the situation. This is further substantiated by Okamura (1981) when he applies his idea of a "situationalist approach", with the more salient ethnic identity being confirmed divides the community into smaller factions is

needed in order to achieve certain goals, for instance to compete for resources, the smaller factions of identity will be utilised. Hmong people in California will identify themselves as Blue Hmong and White Hmong when they are to compete for resources from the Californian government. However, when these people are travelling out of America they will no longer identify themselves as Blue Hmong and White Hmong, but instead identify themselves as American generally and will defend the policies of America together. Due to this reason, in shifting one's "ethnicity" from an older to a newer one there will be some common ground for the particular individual with the new ethnic group. This could be due to locality (regional or as a nation), language, religion, cultural practice and so on. Chandra (2012) also opines that in cases where ethnic identity is not a critical issue in social interactions between communities from different ethnic groups, to the extent that ethnic identity could have been "forgotten" in their daily life, it is an external party, for example colonialists or a ruling regime, that exaggerate the ethnic lines and cause the ethnic boundary to become more obvious. Although Malaysian's at large have not "forgotten" their ethnicity in their daily lives, at the same time they are less keen to have an identity crisis (Shamsul 1996). Identity crisis in Malaysia means that people are uncertain of their own identity. This usually happens when an individual possesses more than one identity, such as being ethnicity A plus ethnicity B, due to their parents' ethnicity, and they are in limbo about which side they incline towards. The reason such a scenario is highly unlikely for most common cases is because of a significant difference between different ethnic groups in Malaysia with regards to the special privileges accorded to the Malay ethnic group and aborigines (Nagata 1974, Kua 1985). Due to this situation, the government will be responsible for taking the burden of definition before anybody else (Shamsul 1996). Therefore, there cannot be identity crisis, particularly in legal terms, when it comes to drawing lines between ethnic groups accorded with special privileges and ethnic groups without special privileges.

The premise above is proven further by research from Meighoo (2008) in Trinidad and Tobago on the idea of commonality, as suggested above where different ethnic groups are speaking the same language, Creole. Their mixed person category reaches up to 20% of the overall population, a figure barely attained by any country in the world. Some countries do not even have this categorisation as the number is too small and

insignificant. Ethnicity even shows differences in terms of biological and ancestral inheritance, but in reality, there is not much difference between them. Those who are coming from mixed ethnicity will know at least something about another's culture, some even more proficiently than the other ethnic group themselves (plural acculturation).

At the same time, Chandra (2012) argues that it is a revolutionary process for change to take place, and sometimes even on a large scale, regardless of whether it is an individual conscious choice to change or purposely-constructed by an external force, including a ruling regime. She also substantiates it with examples of large percentages of change in countries such as America (native population grew by 50% in 1970, 80% in 1980), Bosnia (Muslims population increase by more than 75% between 1961 to 1971; Yugoslav decrease by 84%), United Kingdom (31% of Britain's identify themselves as English in 1992 and the percentage increased to 41% in less than 10 years) as well as many others. Such premise is paralleled with Weiner's unpublished writing of "Community Association of Indian Politics" (mentioned in Geertz 1973). In the writing, she argues that the census in India in 1951, with regards to the sudden drop in numbers of tribal people, is a "genocide by census redefinition". A significantly large population can be reduced to a mosquito-sized population, merely due to redefinition. In general, redefinition can happen in either way, by the individual involved themselves or by the enforcement of a ruling apparatus. Chandra (2012) shares the same idea when she suggests that an identity revolution may take an immediate, short period of time when external forces are being applied into it, or it may span over a longer period of time through gradual shift or construction of new identities. It has much to do with the existing power structure, where the status quo differentiates one ethnic group from the other (Brown 1996). From here, we can see the importance of ethnicity (or identity) of particular forces. Should the forces intend to push identity salience to a greater height, this will have a direct influence on the "identity" ("ethnicity") of the ruling regime. This forms the basic idea of how politics could be ethnicised.

However, at the same time we must also note that the more salient ethnic identity will prevail depending on the need of the situation. As Kasfir (1979) puts it, if identity

can be changed by an individual, and such change will lead to more power resources, it in turn leads more individuals to change. However, Barth (1969) argues that the ethnic identity of a person does not only rely upon self-identification (who I am), but also on collective ethnic attribution (who they say I am) at the same time. A particular ethnic group may divide itself into smaller factions, and identify themselves according to the identity of the smaller factions when they are competing for inter-faction resources. However, this effort will be redundant if individuals outside the ethnic groups do not have the same perspective as them. It means that self-identification will not be of any use if the collective ethnic attribution does not respond according to the self-identification.

2.2.2 *Ethnicity and Politics*

The definition for ethnicity may or may not be significant to the landscape of a political system. In a political system where the salience lies on a non-ethnic foundation, such arguments of ethnicity may not carry much meaning. However, in a political system where the salience lies on ethnicity and certain ethnic groups are attached with certain privileges or benefits, this definition would become a contestation point for both the mass and the political structure (Shamsul 1996). For instance, in the example of the Indian case above (Weiner's unpublished writing of "Community Association of Indian Politics" mentioned in Geertz 1973), the census is crucial in determining the status of the Hindi language as pro-Hindi groups are claiming that Hindi speakers make up more than half of the population, while anti-Hindi are claiming that the population is less than 30%. In other places, some ethnic groups are entitled to certain privileges and rights due to their ethnic status as aborigines, or due to the availability of handicaps accorded to them for their less competitiveness. Also, such identification may be used for the distribution of goods and resources according to identity. Horowitz (1993) argues that the eligibility of a unit (including individual, groups, associations and so on) to be distributed with material or non-material goods based on ethnicity will make the issue of identity a more precious one. Due to the valuable attachment of an ethnic identity, the political system would be surrounded with an ethnicity struggle. Ethnic groups with better position will continue to fight for their privileges to remain. For the less fortunate groups they will fight, either for the same as other groups or for their own privileges to be improved.

At the same time, a diverse society may not necessarily intend for differentiation between "you" and "me" from the idealist perspective. Even if there ought to be differentiation, why must there be a clash instead of living in harmony? For the Furnivall (1948) study in Burma, he views that different ethnic communities will generally meet at the market, conduct their buying and selling activity throughout the day, but will not mix in the sense of a non-purpose activity. This suggests that different communities tend to 'mix' but not to 'combine'. When this scenario occurs, those from different ethnic communities tend to live within their own sphere, instead in inter-penetrating into another's sphere. This is further substantiated by Simpson (2011), who suggests conflict could be closely linked to power distribution. This conflict will then result in cleavages that split political communities apart (Ufen 2012). The intensity of action, whether a bloody conflict or a gentlemanly contestation, will depend on the deepness of cleavage-memberships within the society (Zuckerman 1975). If there is no conflict, it will never differentiate between "this" and "that" group of people. All of them will be carrying the same "identity", or at least identity becomes a non-issue regardless of their physical attributes or ideological belief.

Though the definition of "ethnicity" may seem to be important in certain case studies, especially when the formation of an "identity" itself is questionable and ambiguous (Milne & Ratnam 1974), in the case of this research the definition is secondary as the "ethnicity" landscape in Malaysia is "fixed" (Nagata 1974). Academics may or may not agree with such line-drawing between one ethnic group and another, but as this research is about how ethnicity is affecting the politics in Malaysia, the definition used will be the "politically" defined one. This definition may be ambiguous or even inconsistent (David & Dealwis 2008), for instance, should a Chinese Muslim contest as a candidate for the PAS party (an Islamic party) the person can be considered as "Malay" even though it is not technically accurate, but at the same time it is not totally unacceptable due to the political landscape in Malaysia (Malay ethnic group is synonymous with Muslim and vice versa due to the political landscape). At the same time, should a Chinese Muslim contest as an MCA candidate (a Chinese-based party), this candidate will be put in the category of "Chinese". Furthermore, in practice for this research, my main categorisation will be between "Malay" ethnic group and "non-Malay"

ethnic group for analysis purposes. Therefore, definition and classification of ethnicity is important, but it is secondary in this particular research.

2.2.3 Ethnicity and Cleavages

Another dimension for Zuckerman (1975) to suggest is that a nation does not necessarily need to subscribe to a particular cleavage per se, for the rest of the time. As suggested by Zuckerman (1975), a nation tends to possess primordial cleavages at the lower stage of economic development, and inclines towards class cleavages or status quo versus reformation cleavages when the nation becomes more developed. This is because the people are more educated and have higher levels of awareness of whether they are being manipulated by identity differences or if there are other differences which separate political parties. His suggestion seems to work for Malaysian politics too, at the moment. As Malaysia is progressing towards a modern state, with the birth of a larger middle class, higher education levels, more awareness and exposure and so on, identity politics is mild compared to older politics. However, at the same time, although Zuckerman's premise seems to work in common sense within the scope of "modern" ideology, such capitalism where merits come first, but in practice, especially during the latest world political development events, the sense of nationalism in the UK General Election seems to be stronger compared to before (especially in Scotland), US presidential candidate Donald Trump touches a lot on identity issues such as those related to Muslims and Mexicans, Hong Kong's mass protest under the propaganda of defending their "identity" as well as many more examples. However, his notion should be noted as there are a lot of developing or under-developing countries that are adopting more liberal policies instead of conservative (and identity-related) policies, in order to ease their economic progress.

Up to this point, should it be agreed on that the premise of a diverse society tends to split itself into factions within the society (Ufen 2012), in this discussion on ethnicity the next step should be the role of "politics" in ethnicising (or de-ethnicising) the political system, be it on the physical level (as mentioned above, such as political party structure and membership) or on the practical level (such as rhetoric and electoral strategies).

There are multiple perspectives on how politics is being ethnicised directly or indirectly. Wantchekon (2003) is suggesting the idea of clientelism, where patrons tend to supply their clients with goods and resources in exchange for their support. This idea of private transfer of public goods is contested over the issue of "their clients". Although it is common practice that patronage-client relationships are usually built within the same identity group, this does not mean the whole identity group will receive benefits from the arrangement (Simpson 2011). Only a portion of the same identity group, who are the clients of the patron, can secure benefits. In the lens of Marxism, this is a form of class cleavage where only those elite (including clients) will get benefits from it. However, at the same time opponents are suggesting that such a scenario should be viewed through the lens of ethnicity, as only a particular ethnic group can secure benefits from the private transfer of goods. This does not necessarily have to do with class, as the whole group of clients are not necessarily coming from inheritance elites, but most, if not all, of them are coming from the same ethnic group as the patron. This is one way to "ethnicise" their actions and drive the political system into an "ethnicity-based" political structure, regardless of the genuine ethnicity in the structure (Wantchekon 2003). The argument above fits into the characteristics of Malaysian politics, where "ethnicity" is often used as an apparatus for convincing people to be more ethnicised. Only in the last few years has ethnicity started to blur (Osman & Abdul Salam Muhamad 2008), where another political front, the opposition, tries to bring Malaysian politics into another new dimension of non-ethnic politics (or multi-ethnic politics). There can be a clash, as suggested above, between ethnic cleavage and class cleavage. At the same time, it can also be seen as ethnic cleavage versus reform cleavage. It does not really matter much about class or reform, or any other types of cleavage, as ethnic cleavage has rooted very well in Malaysian "old politics" (Crouch 1996). The thing that matters the most is whether ethnic politics can survive, or whether the utilisation of ethnicity as a tool no longer works.

In a more positive sense of "ethnicising" the political system (or it could also be considered de-ethnicising to a certain extent), which eventually impacts directly onto its people, the aim is to commonalise the uncommonness (as will be discussed in the de-ethnicisation section of re-rooting the commonalities). Miguel (2004), in his research in Tanzania and Kenya, found out that one of the reasons for less ethnic salience in

Tanzania, as compared to Kenya, is that all of them, regardless of ethnicity, are speaking the same language of Swahili. Although to simply commonalise a native language for all ethnic groups does not necessarily mean unity or reduced inter-ethnic conflict, in comparison of both countries the action of "Swahili-sing" for the whole nation, especially for education, works very well in Tanzania. On the other hand, in Kenya, where they prioritise vernacular language instead of a common language for early education, ethnic groups tend to position themselves within the perimeter of their own ethnic group rather than pursuing inter-ethnic interactions. The research results above are also similar to the scenario in Malaysia, where a National Language (Malay language) is imposed onto all citizens regardless of ethnicity (Freedman 2001). At the same time, vernacular languages are allowed. Undeniably, languages do play an important role in ethnic relationships. However, the one that is more directly involved in ethnic politics will influence the formation of ethnic-based parties. Due to the formation of this ethnic-based party, ethnicity cards will be pushed further for political mileage (Crouch 1996), although at the same time, I would not negate the possibility of the opposite occurring.

Moving on in the "real politics" lens, power sharing is a common way of stabilising a democracy, although it is not necessarily utilised by all diverse countries. Lijphart (1977) has an idea of consociationalism democracy and, although it does not directly ethnicise politics of a nation, it inclines to act as a solution for a diverse and ready-made ethnicity-based political system. His model of consociationalism is to create an interaction between different ethnic (in the case of the Netherlands, there are different pillars and it can be adopted in other places as well by altering the "technicality") groups (more accurately, ethnic parties) into a single multi-ethnic grand coalition party. With that, even though each party is still representing their own ethnic group per se, through the coalition there is representation of all available ethnic groups (providing all ethnic groups join the coalition). Inter-ethnic interaction is now shifted from mass to elites. His second idea of consociationalism democracy is to grant veto power to each coalition partner. By doing so, each of them will have a say within the coalition and it would not backtrack to the original principle of democracy where only the majority rules. With veto power, even minority groups can have a say in the decision-making process. Thirdly, proportionate representation means that the percentage composition in all matters, for example cabinet

positions, legislation seats, civil service and so on, is reflective of the actual population. The fourth pillar of consociationalism democracy is to have segmental autonomy for particular segment of the community, which affects them directly. For instance, if all coalition partners are non-Christian except for one, the only Christian-related party should be allowed autonomy on matters related to Christianity.

One of Lijphart's main critics is Horowitz (1985, 2004), who feels that consociationalism does not work in the way Lijphart has suggested. Even if it does work, it will create another issue: intra-ethnic competition. This has also been described by Chandra (2005), as the ethnic outbidding would affect where all ethnic-based parties offer better promises to their targeted voters to compete with the direct (same ethnic) opponents. As politics is not necessarily about relative gains, in most occasions where zero-sum game is involved, it is about either lowering their own offer or crossing the line into their partners (different ethnic party) "territory". Neither options are good for them. This is why Horowitz (2004) proposes an Alternative Vote, through which politicians and their parties would need to secure the second rank vote if the first rank vote is casted according to ethnicity line. With that, it encourages "ethnicity" moderation rather than just elite interaction as in Lijphart's model. This contestation between Horowitz and Lijphart does not only create a space for discourse at the principle level, but also at the practical level of the political parties, the rhetoric of politicians and the electoral strategies.

In summary, ethnic politics explores how politics is being ethnicised. Although scholars such as Geertz (1973), Fenton (2003), Okamura (2003), Barth (1969) and others have their respective views on what constitutes ethnicity, as discussed above, the main contention is that such "ethnicity" has its role to play within a political system. This can be seen as scholars such as Zuckerman (1975) look at the development of ethnic politics from the perspective of the development of a nation, while Wantchekon (2003) and Miguel (2004) argue their case from the perspective of clientelism and commonality, respectively. Similar consideration goes to other scholars, as discussed above. From here, we can see that no matter how ethnicity is defined, be it naturally or constructively, such

ethnicity elements tend to be utilised in ethnicising the politics of a society in achieving respective objectives.

2.3   DE-ETHNICISATION OF POLITICS

For ethnic politics (or ethnicisation of politics) to work, it must at least have diverse nations and ethnicity salience to begin with. Similarly, for de-ethnicisation of politics to function, its prerequisite is to have ethnicised politics to begin with. De-ethnicisation does not necessarily mean employing a new dimension to directly engage with the topic, it inclines towards negating the existing characteristic of ethnic politics. Ethnicisation of politics is seen as an effort in ethnicising the political system.

Generally, the de-ethnicisation of politics is carried out in two dimensions. The first is by shifting the existing ethnicity cleavage to another new cleavage. Such 'new' cleavage can be an existing cleavage or a new cleavage that is created for shifting the attention away from ethnicity discourse. The feasibility of such a shift, which will be discussed below, is to lessen the degree of ethnic salience and try to move the discourse away from ethnicity. The second dimension is by re-rooting different ethnicities into similar characteristics among them. As will be discussed below, although different ethnic groups may carry different identities among them within a society, at the same time these ethnicities may possess similarities among them. Therefore, the strategy for this dimension is to pay more attention to the similarities between these different ethnic groups rather than to exposing their differences.

The first dimension of de-ethnicisation of politics is through the shifting of ethnic cleavage into other form of cleavage. Dunning & Harrison (2010), in their research in Mali found that, even though Mali is a diverse nation, it is practising cross-cleavage approaches. Ethnicity can be a factor, but is definitely weakened by another more salient cleavage, "cousinage". Since the Empire of Mali, the people of Mali have practised

family alliances based on patronym (surnames from the father's side). Even if the people of Mali originate from the same ethnic group, this does not make them more superior or promote a sense of "groupness" among them. This is one of the ways, as mentioned above, of shifting the ethnicity cleavage to another cleavage, which could also be the case in Malaysia, as explained above in the section on how ethnicity cleavage is being downplayed by non-ethnic-based parties and shifting the cleavage to a new one.

As discussed in the section above, ethnicisation of politics is heavily driven by political players, especially in the eyes of constructivists for the gain of power and resources. However, to de-ethnicise the current ethnicised political system, it can come from both directions within the political players themselves and also from the masses (due to higher education and awareness) as brought forward by Zuckerman (1975) above. According to Chandra (2012), an ethnic party does not retain its fundamental struggle (of ethnicity) all the time. It may do so if the scenario allows them to remain in power with such arrangements, but in cases where ethnic politics is no longer relevant or the relevance is reduced significantly, the party may need a fresh direction. The position of the party is flexible and could be compromised into transforming itself as a multi-ethnic or even non-ethnic party. After all, the objective of a political party is to gain power or to seek for political goals (Chandra 2012). This has been seen through a couple of Malaysian main political parties, even including the existing ethnic-based party where their direction is shifting to a new one, though not totally transforming from an ethnic-based party to a non-ethnic-based party.

In order to better compete with their opposition, political parties need to change their party orientation in order to have an upper hand (Wyatt 2010). Changing the nature of the political parties would then change the whole political system as the old political system, which comprised of ethnic-based parties, does not exist anymore. The creation of new cleavage (or new political commitment, a lighter magnitude of political cleavage) would then help to de-ethnicise the previously ethnicised politics. In that sense, Horowitz (1985) has suggested three levels of cooperation, namely coalition of convenience (lowest level of commitment), coalition of commitment, and coalition of alliance (highest level of

commitment). With this kind of inter-ethnic cooperation, the intensity of ethnic cards could be downplayed as the ethnic party is no longer responsible, only to itself, but also has to be answerable to their partners in the cooperation. This is an example of how de-ethnicisation of politics is triggered by political parties in order to seek fresh support and, at the same time, such triggers are pushed by the mass as voters (Milikowski 2000). Similar cases happen in Malaysia too. It is very common for the coalition party system when individual parties are solely (or with a huge majority) based on a single ethnic group. Though there are some exceptions, individual parties may need to cooperate with another individual party in order to hit a simple majority. Unlike some countries where alliances (or cooperation) are formed after a general election just to hit the number, the case in Malaysia, especially for the ruling party, is to form an alliance before going into an election.

As party systems are built around the cleavages or conflicts that differentiate one party from the other, ethnicisation of politics may work in scenarios where ethnicity is a main point of contention (Wyatt 2010). This is because, when there happens to be contention, ethnicity often triumphs over other cleavages or issues. However, this may not be the case when other elements overtake the weightage of ethnicity, shifting the ethnic cleavage as practised before to a new type of cleavage. Even in America, where they champion for racial equality, the identity of Obama does have some effect in securing votes. White voters do carry with them the 'fear of the other' factor entering Obama's pre-presidential election (Redlawsk et.al 2010). This is because Obama is still a "him" as compared to "us"; an unchangeable fact. De-ethnicising his identity is not impossible, as discussed by Chandra (2012) above through the lens of constructivism, but as Chandra (2012) agrees, it may take a long time. However, there is another way to "de-ethnicise" Obama and to shift the attention from his physical identity into his policies. Furthermore, this racial emotion may not be the main consideration when compared to his policies. The attention is then shifted from his racial identity to the policies he is promoting. Therefore, de-ethnicisation of politics could be pushed by other elements, such as hunger for reform against the ethnicity. This is one of the reasons why Malaysian "new politics" tends to focus less on ethnicity as the cleavage is slowly being taken over by other universalistic issues, such as governance, rights, separation of power and so on.

Horowitz (1990) also argues that the formation of multi-ethnic parties could change the track of competition, from inter-ethnic competition to intra-ethnic competition and hence, cultivate a new cleavage (or a new political commitment) to substitute ethnic cleavage politics. When inter-ethnic competition takes place (as happened in ethnicisation of politics), the focus will be on the issue of ethnicity as that is the core principle of each ethnic party. Therefore, there is no incentive for ethnic parties not to campaign under ethnicity labels, especially the majority ethnic groups where the ethnic card may guarantee them a good win. This will not be the case for multi-ethnic or non-ethnic parties. The latter is quite straightforward since no ethnicity issue is involved. The former is a bit trickier. In a multi-ethnic party (including alliance parties consisting of multiple singular ethnic parties), an ethnic party could no longer employ the strategy of ethnic outbidding as intense championing of their own ethnic welfare would harm their counterparts from other ethnic groups. It is a zero-sum game. Increase of one side means reduction of another. Therefore, rather than focusing on the ethnicity issue and running the risk of crossing the line, political parties tend to be encouraged to change their direction of politicking, shifting the previous ethnicity-based struggle to a more universal value-based struggle. With this, they can go all out without needing to be mindful of crossing a line they should adhere to. This is also agreed by Purdekova (2008), where she argues that the process of de-ethnicisation within a nation (in her focus field, Rwanda) would shift the loyalties from ethnic-based loyalty towards other sub-state loyalties.

The second dimension of the de-ethnicisation of politics is through the re-rooting of ethnic differences into similarities. For ethnicisation of politics to work well, it is crucial to create differences among a community. De-ethnicisation of politics could be done in a revert manner, where similarities are being highlighted instead of differences. Sussane (2006) suggests that to de-ethnicise a community, more commonalities within the group have to be emphasised. When the magnitude of commonality overtakes the magnitude of differences, they may no longer see themselves as different. With this, the security issue of one ethnic group fearing another as the basis of ethnicisation of politics may disappear. Without the feeling of fear or stereotyping towards one another (since

they are now seeing each other as being similar), then ethnic politics finds it tough to stand up in this situation.

Milikowski (2000) also suggests his "similarity strategy", where similarities between different ethnic groups are being used as counter-ethnicity when issues relating to ethnicity arise. For example, when a crime issue is related to a particular ethnic group, the ethnicity-related element could be avoided by portraying the crime as one not only committed by that particular ethnicity, but that other ethnic groups also have criminal records. Another example is religious extremism that is linked to a particular religious group. Attention could be shifted by saying that extremism only exists in a small fraction of the religious community, and other religious communities do have similar extremist factions. By applying this kind of "similarity strategy", it will be possible to negate the relatedness of ethnicity with the negative issue concerned, and at the same time convince the masses that ethnicity has nothing to do with the concerned issue.

These two dimensions of shifting ethnic cleavage to other non-ethnic cleavage and re-rooting for similarities may also be applied in the current Malaysian political landscape. Scholar such as Danieals (2005) suggests that, although opposition parties may have their own targeted ethnic group as their support base, such as the Malay community for PAS and Chinese community for DAP, by forming a political coalition among themselves, these parties no longer emphasise too much on the identity of the voters. This is an attempt by the opposition to shift their supporter's inclinations away from the old politics of ethnicity to new politics which emphasise universal values (Chin & Wong 2009). Although the element of ethnicity cannot be eliminated completely, these parties are trying to shift the discussion to a more universally valued discourse, such as corruption, justice, good governance and so on (Weiss 2006). On the other hand, some of the ethnic-based parties within the ruling party have been trying to open their space too, instead of confining themselves towards the ethnicity discourse. This will be discussed in detail in later chapters (on party s membership and party stance specifically).

At the same time, political parties trying to move themselves away from ethnicity discourse do attempt to search for commonalities (the second dimension of re-rooting) among the voters. The opposition coalition tried to emphasise commonalities among them, such as their identity as Malaysians instead of as Malay and Chinese Indian, struggling for a more just and clean government instead of a government based on ethnicity (Wong & Chin 2009). This is because supporters of PAS (Malay) and DAP (Chinese) might still be sceptic towards their allies (Daniels 2005). The Malay supporters of PAS fear the DAP's secular agenda, while Chinese supporters of DAP fear the PAS for their Islamic State agenda. Although these agendas may not necessarily be true, the sceptic perceptions within the Malay and Chinese communities do exist. By applying this strategy, the opposition coalition could divert away from these agendas and ethnicity discourse into a more generally acceptable struggle and the similarities among these supporters to acknowledge themselves as possessing similarities instead of just seeing differences among them.

From this section, we can see that de-ethnicisation is working on a two-dimensional approach. Such approaches are applicable in the Malaysian political landscape and other societies as well. In Malaysian politics specifically, as the wave of change starts to take place in 'new politics', it is rampantly common that political parties do take a different approach to engage with the community instead of using the 'old politics' of ethnicity. Although the discussion above focuses on opposition coalition, the two-dimensional approach does not confine itself to opposition coalition only, but is applicable for ethnic-based parties within the ruling party, BN (which will be analysed in detail in later chapters).

2.3.1 Bridging the Gap of Literatures

According to Bourner (1996), one of the reasons for literature reviews to be done is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of currently available scholarships and fill in the gaps thereafter. Each scholarship may have their own focus towards their subject interest. With many subject interests researched by various scholars, there may be either a lack of

linkage between one subject of interest and another, or there could also be missing parts, elements or perspectives which are not within their subject of interest (Afolabi 1992). Newer research is conducted with the intention of filling in the gaps within this literature (Bourner 1996).

From the literature above, we can see the two generally used approaches in de-ethnicising a society, namely shifting ethnic cleavage to other cleavages as suggested by Dunning & Harrison (2010), Wyatt (2010) and Redlawsk et.al (2010), or applying similarity strategies by Sussane (2006) and Milikowski (2000). Although these two approaches could be linked to the political scholarships principally, it hardly gives an insight on the mechanisms of applying these approaches. In the scope of a society which has already been ethnicised to begin with, as argued in the case of Lijphart (1977) and Horowitz (1985), political parties might be playing a more crucial role in executing these approaches. This is not to say that other subjects, such as government, mass, NGO and others, could not play their role, but comparatively, no matter how hard these subjects are attempting to de-ethnicise the political scenario of a society, it is the political parties that make the final call. The role of these other subject's incline towards exerting pressure on political parties. Due to this, as the political parties are made the main unit of analysis, the above literature guides a direction for where political parties should be heading to. Shifting the cleavage and re-rooting of the society could be included as part of the party efforts in changing the traditional ethnic politics that have been practised by some political parties in Malaysia. For other non-ethnic-based political parties in Malaysia, this could also be a catalyst for them to reaffirm their direction towards de-ethnicisation. Therefore, technically, the discussion of the direction of a political party should be a scope to be covered in further analysing de-ethnicisation in Malaysia.

However, such a scope could be shaky without the basic support of a political party structure and, even if such scope were to be executed, the result of it could still not be ascertained. Therefore, I would apply a three-dimensional approach in filling up the gap between existing literature. Since the basis of a political party is their membership, as the overall membership has a say in the political party position itself (Puhle 2003), before

moving into the scope of party direction it is necessary to first look at the party membership and how maintaining or changing the membership structure could help to push towards de-ethnicisation. Only then, the discussion within the scope of party direction comes in. Party direction may be an outline of how the party intends to drive their ideas on to their intended path (Robertson 1995). Various ambitious ideas could gain new image and new hope for a political party. Even if these principles and ideas could gain the support from the masses, political parties need to walk their talk by applying it into the electoral politics to show that they are delivering what they promise, and the party direction remains as an 'ideological' ambition without putting it into political contestation (Mozaffar 2003). Therefore, the mechanism for pushing Malaysian politics towards de-ethnicisation should include these three technical components, namely, party membership, party direction and electoral politics.

2.3.2   *Party Membership*

In a democratic society, political parties form one of the basic pillars for the flourishing of a democratic system within society (Puhle 2003). For Huckshorn (1984), he defines a political party as "an autonomous group of citizens with the purpose of making nominations and contesting elections in hope of gaining control over governmental power through the captures of public offices and the organisation of a government", while Burke (1889) defines it as "a body of men united, for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed". Going by these definitions, the foundation of a political party, first and foremost, is to have members before being able to execute any kind of actions or deliberations. This has shown the importance of political party members where they (refers to the leadership as well as they are elected representative of the other members) are the ones that decide the whole functionality of their party.

Becoming a member of a political party could be a two-way argument. It could be members who come together and form a political party due to the common belief that they all share. This could also be the formation of a political party based on the existence

of cleavages, and these cleavages would then attract memberships. For the former, Katz and Mair (1995) have mentioned about how mass parties are formed as a binding together of mass NGO movements into political parties. Parties such as the Labour Party in the UK are a form of mass party movement, where unions such as those representing worker's groups are grouped together, as opposed to the older version of political parties which focus on elite leadership and dominance. As for the latter, Robertson (1995) put forth that when a cleavage takes place, such as ethnic cleavage, it encourages the formation of political parties. That is why there are so many types of cleavage-based political parties, ranging from identity (including ethnicity, race, religion, language, culture and so on), to economy-based (such as working class versus elite, protectionism versus capitalism, subsidy versus market-orientated and so on), to comparison-based (ruling capability, governance, transparency, justice and so on) and many other types of cleavage, which encourage the formation of political parties. Whatever the reasoning, it comes down to the point of contribution of memberships in which these members determine the direction of a political party.

Therefore, generally going by this principle of the importance of membership, such political parties should cater for the common values that these members uphold. For example, a political party that allows only a particular ethnic group to be amongst its members should generally act in favour of that particular ethnic group, which effectively makes it an ethnic party. Contrarily, Chandra (2005) offers that even if it is an ethnic party, although it is championing for their target audience this does not mean that they can only represent their own ethnic group. Horowitz (1985) shares a similar stance when he argues that an ethnic party can represent more than a single ethnic group. Such inclusionary thinking does not automatically make such an ethnic party "multi-ethnic" as according to him, a "multi-ethnic" party should span across ethnic groups in conflict. Although both of them agree that an ethnic-based party can be inclusionary to other ethnic groups as well, the core of the party will still be based on their own ethnicity as that is their core value, support base and ideology of their party. Therefore, if adhering to Chandra (2005) and Horowitz (1985) premises, an exclusive ethnic membership does not necessarily mean that such a political party will serve that particular ethnic group only. Due to this, it is not a necessary need to change the membership system of that particular

party in order to serve a non-exclusive ethnic group. Yet at the same time, if a party is dominated by an ethnic group only, it may be tough for such political parties not to be exclusive only to their own targeted group, because at the end of the day the membership structure of the political party may mean exclusivity. Otherwise, the membership structure will be inclusionary

The scenario above is also one of the reasons for the Bulgarian Constitution, Article 11(4) to ban the establishment of political parties based on ethnicity, race or religious grounds for their formation (Smilov 2016). The justification to impose such a restriction for a democratic society which ideally should grant freedom of association, is to limit the inflammation due to identity. This is because each political party will promote their party based on the core values that they hold. When a political party is formed based on identity, naturally, identity will be their main selling-point as their starting model for them to bring it to a higher stage. This is contrary to the research done by Cotts (2003) in Latin America, where there is evidence of a surge in political participation by indigenous people-based political parties. In countries, such as Bolivia, Columbia, Ecuador and Venezuela, it is the changes of special indigenous constitutional rights and electoral law which lowered the entry requirement for these indigenous social movements to form political parties, unlike the Bulgaria base where tighter identity-based political parties are enforced. Hence, in the latter examples, it enhances the direct political participation for such groups of indigenous people.

Although the arguments above have shown the importance of membership within political parties, the membership numbers of political parties in European democracies are facing a decline (Katz et. al. 1992). Scarrow (2015) suggests that the changing of member's political participation could be due to the weakening of cleavages. This is because, without much direct "conflict" or "competition" with other segments of the society, the need for political parties may be reduced. For Katz (1990), he argued that such a decline is due to the lesser 'supply' and 'demand' within the current political scene as compared to the old days when, during that time, party membership could be one of the indicators in measuring a party's strength, but this is not the case anymore as the

number of memberships no longer functions as an indicator (Biezen et. al. 2012). Although European democracies have shown such a drastic drop in terms of party membership, other continents such as Asia do not have much literature proving similar trends, especially in the developing Asian nations.

The importance of membership in old day politics could be seen where the membership structure had been altered in order to cater for the needs of a larger pool of the community, while at the same time expanding their influence into other communities as well, instead of being inclusive to a specific group of people. For instance, in England and Wales, through the passing of the Reform Act 1832, local Conservatives had been trying to engage more closely with the new middle-class and recruit them as members (Whiteley, Seyd & Richardson 2002). This is because membership at that time did matter and it could show up as one of the indicator of a party's strength. Furthermore, with a more inclusionary policy, a wider variety of members is possible as compared to a single, specific group of members. This is why Conservatives needed to recruit as many members as possible (Whiteley, Seyd & Richardson 2002). Such similar principles are shared by Krouwel (2006) when he argues that, during the old days a lot of the political parties were controlled by the elite only. However, with the extension of universal suffrage, the membership structure did follow suit and changed in order to accommodate for a larger pool of new eligible voters (Krouwel 2006). Such changing of membership structure has much to do with the society evolution as well (Ignazi, Farrell & Rommele 2005). Previously, party membership was quite synonymous with one's identity as it could generally be said, although with some exceptional cases, that members from a particular party all came from the same segment of the society, be it the same religion, ethnicity, class or any other identity (Heidar 2006). For instance, a Catholic-raised family would generally live in a Catholic-dominated neighbourhood, attend Catholic school, read Catholic-related press, participate in Catholic-based organisations and at the end of the day, join Catholic parties (Beyme 1985). Such examples shown by Beyme (1985) above has characterised how rigid one's identity is towards their political affiliation. This could be one of the arguments for how a mass party functions, at least at the membership characteristic level. However, with the evolution of society as argued by Igniza, Farrell and Rommele (2005) above, in order for a mass party to expand their influence into other

segments of society, the core identity of the party, be it due to religion, class or ethnicity, has been diluted to cater for a wider scope of memberships (Puhle 2003).

Although mass parties could be seen as a further step towards reform, as compared to the older days of party membership structures which were dominated by the elite, such mass parties were highly linked to the civil societies such as NGO organisations and so on. Kirchheimer (1966) suggested the rise of catch-all parties, a type of party where all those ideologies are being diluted and they are being inclusive to any people within the society, including individuals with no organisation attached. Kirchheimer (1996) did re-emphasise again that political parties which transform themselves from a mass party to a catch-all party could attract more people towards it. This could be seen in the example of a Norwegian party, where programmes and debates of the party were becoming less ideologically-focused (Heidar & Svasand 2004). Even so, both of them do agree that although such dilution of ideological competition is taking place, the existence (or in a harsher term, 'importance') of left-right competition still could not be erased off absolutely (Heidar & Svasand 2004). Such argument has shown that, even with the evolution of society which leads to the evolution of political parties as well, cleavages or ideological competitions, although being compressed to a smaller magnitude of concern, at the same time this does not necessarily mean absolute abolition. Having similar thoughts, Puhle (2003) says that a catch-all party does not necessarily need to really reflect the overall composition of a society. Although it means to be as inclusive as possible, at the same time it is still likely to be influenced by its historical background and its traditions, such as identity inclination, ideological inclination and so on. At the end of the day, Sartori (1976) argues that it depends on the political parties as to which kind of alternatives they wish to provide the people with. Although there are pros and cons, with or without catch-all parties (or their principle of inclusionary), weighing the overall electoral support might be something of a concern to them.

Although catch-all parties are bland in terms of ideology (Krouwel 2003) and they seem to be able to cater for anybody without any restriction, Wolinetz (2002) suggests that these parties need to consider the gain and loss in terms of electoral support. This is

because the relationship between party heterogeneity and party-voters link (specific targeted party) is a negative relation (Krouwel 2006). This is due to the fact that, although a party is now able to be inclusive to anybody, at the same time it may or may not necessarily mean that old party members which were inclined towards a mass party could accept such a change. As May (1973) puts it, party members are comparatively more extreme than party office bearers. This is because, for party office bearers, they are not only required to fulfil the needs of their own party, but at the same time they are required to collaborate at a higher level, such as inter-party relationships, especially in a diverse society. Unlike party members, they could voice out their opinions, ideal thoughts, without needing to compromise much or consider the feasibility with non-own-party actors. At the same time, May (1973) also suggests that people that subscribe to party memberships are comparatively more radical than those who support the party but do not join it. This premise is supported by Scarrow & Gezgor (2010) when they argue that when party members are allowed to be elected as their highest office bearers, they tend to be more radical than ordinary party supporters. This again is supported by Widfeldt (1995) in his comparison of 39 political parties on a left-right scale. He found out that none of these cases shows that party members can be more moderate than party supporters. All these could be due to the authority that one has in determining who can lead the party (through their party vote). Therefore, for a party member to behave in such a manner or put such a hope onto the party leadership, it could be understandable. Furthermore, with the inclusion of other segments of the society, be it due to natural occurrence or "forced" adaptation to the political scenario at that time, inclusivity may be one of the options in countering, or at least lowering, the radicalism in facing their direct counterparts or to be in line with the latest political development, including the sentiments of the society.

2.3.3 Party Stance

A political party stance is generally based on the core value of the party. Such party stance sets the guidelines as to which direction the political party is heading in. Therefore, party stance forms the thoughts and mind of a political party. As discussed above, party membership generally reflects the kind of exclusivity or inclusivity a party wishes to adhere to. However, at the same time, such reflection does not necessarily ring true all the

time. Chandra (2005) argues that, even though a political party can be an ethnic party with a particular ethnicity as members only, this does not mean that the party will serve that particular ethnic group only. It depends on the stance that the party is taking, and such a stance is not necessarily rigid and is changeable according to the situation. Therefore, it means that even though a party subscribes to certain thoughts, and this thought is translated into membership criteria, it does not mean that the party would only serve a particularly exclusive group of people only. However, at the same time, since the particular group of people are forming the stronghold for that political party, the party is "forced" to adopt themselves exclusively to them only. Although it sounds contradictory, it does all depend on what kind of stance a political party wishes to take, and even if that party's stance is taken in the early days, pragmatism of politics and political parties could overturn the old stance and switch to a new stance if it can help the party.

As the party stance is generally dependent on the needs of their members and supporters, a change in the stance may happen if there is a change in the need of their party members, party supporters or external political scenario. Mair, Muller & Plasser (2004) argue that, when there is a change in the electoral, the party would need to make changes themselves internally in order for them to continue their relevance within mainstream politics. This is because the old core values or stance of the party may not be relevant to the latest development of the situation. For Robertson (1995), the formation of a political party is due to the cleavage that exists within the political scene. Therefore, unavoidably, such parties would have to rely on the cleavage factor in setting up their party's stance. However, with the development of the political scene, should this cleavage no longer be a salient cleavage, a party may not be able to hold support through this kind of cleavage. Webb (2004) gives an example on how the long-established class cleavage in the UK is being challenged by newer cleavage, such as the sectoral cleavage or centre-periphery cleavage. If the new cleavage is due to inter-class appeal, the Labour party would have to break it down in order for it to remain in power (Esping-Andersen 1985). This is to retain the importance of the Labour party as a mediator or fighter for their targeted group of supporters. Not only relevant to the Labour party, if the significance of a political party is no longer viable due to political developments, such parties may need to consider whether to remain in status quo or start changing their party stance by

becoming more inclusive. This is one of the reasons too, why Kirchheimer's (1996) idea of catch-all parties becomes a hotly discussed solution, being followed by Conservatives and the Labour party (Webb 2004). All this is based on the contention of whether depending on a current stance could survive them politically, or whether such an outdated stance may find it hard to garner support.

However, at the same time, even with the changes in the political scene, this may not necessarily trigger political parties to make changes. This is because political parties are sometimes reluctant to make changes, either because they are unaware of such change or they feel that such change is just a minor development, and not at the critical level to push for internal changes within the party (Mair, Muller & Plasser 2004). Katz & Mair (1995) suggest that strategically utilising the electoral rules, such as forming an alliance with another political party, could help to increase their chances of winning. With such strategies, a political party may not necessarily need to change their internal politics, if playing by the electoral rules could help them to win power. It depends on what kind of electoral rules the particular political system is practising. For example, in first-past-the-post electoral rules, a candidate does not necessarily need to win more than half of the total votes cast, but only needs to be the top scorer overall. Should the total votes of a losing candidate be more than the top scorer, forming an alliance (which mean to nominate a single candidate only) could increase the chances of winning, putting aside the issue of how those allied parties are going to align their stances. This can be seen through Webb's (2004) argument in the case of Britain where, during Tony Blair's era, there existed an alliance between Labour and the Liberal Democrats on Cabinet Committee on Constitutional Reform. This was believed to have helped them win in Wales and Scotland as their policy became more accommodative towards Scotland and Wales, such as by devolving more powers to them (Webb 2004). Changes not only happened to Labour and the Liberal Democrats; Conservatives also tried to adopt a more populist policy among the working class through a welfare and full employment programme (Webb 2004). Although the stronghold of the Conservatives does not lie in the working classes, such a change in party stance helped them to garner about a third of working class support (Webb 2004). This shows that, in order to remain in power, a political party needs to adopt a more flexible stance instead of holding on to the same

stance as in the early days of the party's formation. Another example by Hazan (2005) in his studies on Israeli politics, he sees that their politics prior to the 1967 war were based on social-economic cleavage where political parties are divided by the left-right spectrum. However, after the war, the social-economic cleavage seemed to incline more towards conflict-peace cleavage. Therefore, the rhetoric and stance taken by political parties before the war may not be compatible with the struggle they should sell to the public.

Although Katz & Crotty (2006) argue that parties are actually frequently in the cycle of internal changes, Mair, Muller & Plasser (2004) believe that some parties do not wish to make changes to their stance, even though they appreciate political developments in the scene are because political parties believe they are able to absorb the effects of political environment change into their party. They may wish to react to the environmental changes only when it shows steady decline. This is because changes that happen at a particular period of time do not mean that such newer political scenarios can be sustained for a long time. The political scenario may return to the old environment, should these newer scenarios not survive continuously. However, in the argument of Franklin et.al. (1992), in their comparison studies, they argue that voting is not cleavage-based anymore, but switches to being issue-based, where it is issue rather than identity attachment that influences their votes. This is supported by Hazan (2005), where he sees that the transition from cleavage-based politics to issues-based politics has a big difference in which the support that a party is getting from cleavage-based parties are largely fixed and stable, while for issue-based politics, the voters are generally movable depending on the issue and this creates a floating pool of voters. Lane & Ersson (2005) agree by arguing that such decline is due to the reduction in party identification, where supporters no longer attached themselves loyally and blindly to a particular party. Such psychological detachment may or may not mean that they still support the party, but with such detachment, at the very least it means that these voters are no longer stable supporters.

Although it is not surprising to see a clearer shift from an established cleavage to a newer cleavage, there are also instances where such shifts, even though they are seen as

viable, can still "feel" the existence of the old cleavage within the political system. This is because such shift does not cut off totally from one cleavage to another. Kristjansson (2005) argues it nicely in his study in Iceland, although left-right cleavage seems to be dissolved and all the four main political parties do not embrace it anymore, openly or officially, the "feel" of the existence of the left-right spectrum is still there. This is because not all old cleavage, even though they do not seem relevant in the latest political development, can be fully wiped off. However, at the same time, promoting or selling such cleavage to the public may not gain much direct mileage. Hopkin & Paolucci (1999) argue it from another perspective when they see political parties no longer making ideology their goal, but transforming it into a business-like entity, where it is not an organisation that has attached itself to certain social objectives, but instead use the public goods being produced to lead to the objectives they wish to achieve. Should a cleavage no be longer feasible to be utilised as a main contention point, promoting such cleavage may be redundant but, ironically, leaving it aside could not totally dismiss existence of it, although it is not being mentioned by political parties or their opponents.

Besides the stance that is to be taken by political parties in forming the "mind" and "thought" of that political party, the execution of it and the delivery of its messages for public consumption is another different dimension where a political party is changing. The traditional methods of disseminating their party information may need to undergo changes too. As suggested by Dalton & Wattenberg (2000), they opine that it is now the world of technology politics and the execution of the party stance should be done using technology way, too. This is in line with the idea of rhetorical competition in which Krebs & Jackson (2007) argue that politics is typically marked by rhetorical competition. Since the stance taken by political parties are different from previous ones, the means of delivery may or may not be the same as before. This is because cleavage politics may gain a psychology attachment but issue-based politics may have a lesser degree of such attachment (Lane & Ersson 2005). Furthermore, the targeted group may be different as the idea of inclusivity and exclusivity may not be the same as in a previous stance. It means that the background of the new targeted group may not be the same as previous targeted groups. Therefore, internal changes within political parties are not limited to stance (thought) changes per se, but also to the extent of execution methods.

2.3.4 Electoral Strategy

Party membership indicates the core group which the party generally represents, while the party stance provides a direction as to which way the political party should head. Both remain as an idea without the practice of it in elections (Mozaffar 2003). This is because electoral strategies will reflect how a party membership and stance are still relevant to the political scenario at that time. This is also one of the reasons why these three dimensions are selected for discussion. Politics, as mentioned at the beginning of the writing, argues that politics is a business of gaining power to capture government offices (Huckshorn 1984). Due to this reason, the ideal dream of political parties needs to be converted into real political power before they are able to practically implement it. Party membership and party stance function as an "input" of ideas, while electoral strategies work as an "output" on how the political party should conduct themselves in electoral politics.

As electoral politics is about a kind of competition between different contestants, Riker (1962) brings up the idea that the more information we have about the opponents, the higher the chances for an individual to win the competition. Therefore, mutual expectation of candidates towards the result of an election is to what extent they gather enough information of voting trends (Mozaffar 2003). Such information is crucial as it could influence the type of strategies a candidate or a political party plans to use. In a society where ethnic polarisation is high, with very little ethnic cross-cutting, voting inclination tends to follow the ethnicity line. In such a scenario, ethnicity-based issues might work better. This is mostly true when there is no other bigger cleavage or issue which can overrule such ethnic bonding principles. However, across lots of society, ethnic bloc voting may not be the case at all times. This is because the identity of those involved may be overlapping or have fluid identity (Madrid 2008). At the same time, even with obvious boundaries between one identity group and another, should other consideration factors such as class, left-right ideology and patronage cleavages be able to overrule ethnicity cleavage, ethnic voting bloc may not occur as well. Therefore, especially in new democracies where predictions are harder to make, unexpected electoral outcomes are no longer a strange event (Moser 2001). Even if a new dimension of non-ethnicity cleavage has occurred, from Mair, Muller & Plasser (2004) perspective, issue-

competition between different political parties under a newer political environment has slightly influenced the type of scope political parties would wish to contend. Although issue-competition cleavage may be a substitute for secondary salience for political scenarios, the way that an issue is presented is about factors where the level of support by political parties are determined. Riker (1986) argues that the presentation of an issue to attract support no longer lies with an issue raised per se, but is about how an issue is being represented. He argues that, although not all issues raised can work for the advantage of a political party, even if an issue can give them leverage, such issues need to be presented in "artistic creativity of the highest level" (Riker 1986). As the linkage between political party and voter is not a "fixed deposit" bond between them (or at least at a lesser magnitude), political parties would need to attract their attention to gain their trust and support. Such principles could be applied to other cleavages as well, such as the departing (or lesser salience) of ethnicity cleavage.

As for Western democracies, party loyalty is facing a declining trend as well (Mair, Muller & Plasser 2004). This is because the political environment has changed as compared to the previous one. There seems to be a trend of social de-alignment for the community, although not all, but a significance amount. In the past, party loyalty was stronger because there was a bond between political party and party supporters (including members). Due to this, it is not surprising that political parties are often being tag-lined according to their political support group. However, with a change of political loyalty, such social de-alignment has caused setbacks for political parties. As shown by Mair, Muller & Plasser (2004), Christians no longer confirm their votes for Christian parties, while blue-collar workers do not necessarily vote for a social democratic or communist party. They have either turned their backs and now vote for their traditional opponent, or vote for a new party altogether. Furthermore, with the changes happening to the social environment, the political environment is less intense regarding identity separation, although identity salience, with its reduced significance, still plays a role in the political landscape. Therefore, the idea of catch-all parties is being implemented by exclusive membership, and supporter, based parties.

Political parties would cooperate with other political parties in facing their head-on competitors (Mair, Muller & Plasser 2004). Electoral alliance will remain stable if those political cleavages between political parties remain stable (Carmines 1991). Should the political environment have changed to a level where such political cooperation is no longer helpful in the sense of the cleavage direction, where the political environment is heading, such political alliance (or cooperation) may not give them leverage in facing their traditional opponents as they themselves (including their opponent) would have to change in order to cater to the needs of the environment at that time.

Although the above has been discussed on the principle level of how political parties should (or have) change, two leading scholars, namely Lijphart (1968, 1977) and Horowitz (2004, 2006, 2007) have opposite views on what could be a better solution for changing the electoral system, in reducing ethnicity outbidding and preserving cross-identity peace within a divided society. With the scenario of electoral politics, where cross-cutting voting trends are in place, the magnitude of ethnicity in real politics may be secondary. However, in society where very few cross-cutting occurs, this is where the context of ethnicity is being exploited. Due to these reasons, scholars are trying to invent electoral systems that can deviate from extremism politics. Political parties, on the other hand, are trying to garner as much support as possible, especially in a "non-single-ethnic-winning-society", they would have to re-strategise their party direction to be more inclusive of other segments of the society, or at least to gain their votes during elections. Moving to the election system suggested by Lijphart and Horowitz, Lijphart is a founder of his consociationalism democracy concept. In multi-ethnic societies, especially those which have very strong attachments to their own ethnic group, Lijphart suggests prudent leadership cross-cutting among these ethnic groups (Lijphart 1968). Each ethnic group may pledge their loyalty to their ethnic leader without needing any cross-cutting on their part. It is the role of ethnic leaders to cross-cut at the inter-ethnic leadership context. He recommends for the formation of a grand coalition party, where different ethnic groups are gathered together within the coalition. With this, apart from the coalition party managing to sustain the support through their ethnic-based (or segmental-based) component party, the grand coalition as a whole would also be able to represent the whole diverse community. With this, the extreme ethnicity tone could have been reduced.

However, for Horowitz (2002, 2004, 2007), he is more keen for the Alternative Vote (AV) system rather than a First-Past-The Post (FPTP) election system. This is because, in the FPTP system, a candidate only needs to be secure among those contesting candidates, without necessarily needing to hit the simple majority rules. In seats where there are a majority percentage of a particular ethnicity, as long as the candidate is able to gain most of the votes from that particular ethnic group, he will be announced as the winner. Therefore, it intensifies ethnic outbidding as they do not even need the votes from other ethnic groups, as long as they can secure most of their own ethnic votes. Whereas in the AV, the candidates are forced to moderate their tones and the votes are transferable to other candidates. This means that candidates, even if they cannot be ranked as first choice by other ethnic voters, they also hope to rank second. Should the first rank candidate be eliminated, those votes will be transferred to the next candidate. Therefore, it will indirectly refrain candidates from being too extreme or negating any segment of the society, as every ranking of the votes means a lot to each candidate. Another scholar, Sartori (1986), in the discussion of the electoral system a country is practising, he opts for a proportionate representative system, where he sees such a system producing more new or small political parties. With the formation of such parties (assuming that they manage to win at least a single seat), this is going to bring impact towards existing political parties as their share of seats will be reduced due to the winning of new parties. Therefore, in order to gain back the voting inclination favours to their sides, they would need to re-strategise their party direction. Voting inclination in a low polarisation or fluid identity society is very volatile. Swing votes are not a surprise event for such scenarios as "shared commonality" is no longer a fixed support for political parties.

In summary, de-ethnicisation of politics explores how politics is being de-ethnicised. From the discussion above, proponents of shifting ethnic cleavage to other cleavages include Redlawsk et.al (2010), Wyatt (2010), Dunning & Harrison (2010), amongst others; proponents in applying similarity strategy include Milikowski (2000) and Sussane (2006), both proponents providing a starting point for arguing the case of de-ethnicisation of politics. Although both proponents are unable to explore deeper into how de-ethnicisation of politics can take place in a more technical term, especially in the Malaysian politics, three-dimensional de-ethnicisation of politics has been introduced.

These three dimensions, namely party membership, party stance and electoral strategy, could help to advance de-ethnicisation of politics in more specific terms, especially in Malaysian politics as a whole.

2.4   CONCLUSION

Ethnic politics is generally seen as political, with an emphasis or existence of ethnicity elements within the discourse of its political system. Chandra (2012), Cotts (2002), Furnivall (1948) discussed how political environments work in a society where there are more than one ethnic groups in the contestation of political power. In such contestation, although there are differences according to the country or political environment a society is facing, the salience of ethnicity in such political practice is inevitable. Although a lot of scholars are suggesting that divided society may create a divided political environment, there are scholars such as Meighoo (2008) and Miguel (2004) who have researched in Trinidad and Tobago, and Tanzania and Kenya, respectively, showing that even in a divided society, they can still find common ground for them to deviate their differences and focus more on their similarities. Their arguments lead to the scope of de-ethnicisation of politics, where the discussion above suggests two main methods in de-ethnicising a society. Firstly, it is by shifting a contentious issue that is usually linked to ethnicity salience, to a non-ethnicity-related argument where such contentious issues are not due to ethnicity, it can happen within a non-ethnicity discourse as well. Secondly, it is to find a commonality between different ethnicity groups in a single society. It is very rare that different ethnic groups within a society have absolute differences only between them. Such commonality can be due to the usage of a single language, the sharing of similar historical backgrounds and so on. With such a channel for them to reduce the intensity of ethnic-based politics, it could lead to the reduction of ethnicity salience within the political system of a society.

Although the literature does argue about ethnic politics at large and a limited amount of de-ethnicisation in politics, it is even rarer to have literature discussion on the

methods in which such trends of de-ethnicisation of politics do (or could) occur in a narrower mechanism. Due to this, three dimensions of the mechanism in which de-ethnicsation of politics is taking place (or can take place) is being discussed. Firstly, it is to have a look at the party membership structure of a political party. Scholars such as Chandra (2005), Cotts (2003), Horowitz (1985) and Robertson (1995) discussed how a political party can be considered as an ethnic-based party. Although they do have differences in their own definition, they do agree that a party with its membership coming from a particular identity group would emphasise their core values onto their supporters (although the magnitude of core values differs among them). Such membership, being either exclusive or inclusive, is an indicator of the readiness for a political party in de-ethnicising their own party. This is because a political party that is interested and inclined towards becoming more inclusive in its membership has indicated its readiness in taking away (or reducing) the emphasis of ethnic politics. From this point of view, it leads to the second dimension of party stance, in verifying whether such political parties are only becoming inclusive on the membership level or whether it does in fact try to revamp its traditional stance and direction.

The second dimension of de-ethnicisation of politics is by looking at the stances taken by political parties. Mair, Muller & Plasser (2004) do agree that political parties have to rejuvenate within their political parties in order to cater to the needs of the political environment at that time. This is because political environments may change over time. Should the flow of the society have changed and traditional politics no longer become less viable, political parties would either need to reaffirm their traditional values and continue to push for the traditional values to be reinstated, or they could also follow the flow and make internal changes to suit the environment. Webb (2004) and Esping-Andersen (1985) have shown that political parties in the UK could no longer remain with their traditional political practice, such as using the old cleavage (they could if necessary, but the challenge of remaining in traditional political practice might be tougher). They themselves have moved from one traditional cleavage, such as class cleavage, to a newer cleavage such as sectoral or centre-periphery cleavage. Even so, Kristjansson (2005) is right when he argues that, although there seems to be a shift in those cleavage contestations, such a shift is not absolute. In his case in Iceland, although political parties

rarely embrace left-right cleavage in the open, they do understand that such a shift is not absolute as left-right cleavage influence is still there and has to be taken into consideration as well in the political decision-making. Similarly, Hazan (2005) sees that politics nowadays is changing, but he is viewing it from the perspective of moving from cleavage-based politics to issue-based politics. Although the terminology and perspective mentioned might be different from other scholars, he does bring up the idea that political parties have started to embrace new forms of politics due to the pressure from political developments at that time.

The two dimensions above remain as idealistic discussion, without practically being put into action. Therefore, the third dimension of electoral strategies is to look at how the political parties walk their talk in the electoral competition as compared to their political rhetoric of both dimensions above. Mozaffar (2003) argues that the winning chances of a political party or a candidate depends on the level of information that they have gathered. Mair, Muller & Plasser (2004) acknowledge that old forms of political loyalty and bond may not work best for the current political environment; political parties may need to accept such premise and rejuvenate their party as mentioned in the party membership and party stance dimensions. Although the mechanism of how to place a candidate may be a bit too technical to be discussed, for generalisation each political system has their unique background and environment, it is inevitable that such electoral strategies, in principle, could serve as a guideline on which principles are the best for capturing support and votes. Although Lijphart (1968, 1977) and Horowitz (2004, 2006, 2007) suggestions on the electoral system (more accurately the method of electoral contest) may not be short-term strategies in winning an election, the principle between both suggestions on how to garner more political support (votes in elections) could be a guideline as to whether political parties should act in a more extreme exclusivity direction, or whether it should practice a more moderate inclusivity direction.

CHAPTER 3:

METHOD

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Methodology is the philosophy of explaining the occurrence of a particular phenomenon (Holden & Lynch 2004). It helps to explain issues such as why a particular phenomenon occurs, how it occurs, who causes it to occur and so on. For a single phenomenon, an explanation can come from various angles. At the same time, even when a particular scope of issues is raised, there can be different dimensions of perspective depending on the subjects that are focused on. Unlike natural sciences, where there are universal laws for affirming the research, social sciences do not possess such a law, and do not have the principle of reliability, validity, logical debate and so on, in supporting the research result (Porta & Keating 2008). For this reason, we are linked to two main types of research methods, namely qualitative and quantitative research. Each of these research methods has its own strengths and weaknesses. Although there is no absolute research method in determining the research design for a particular project, choosing one largely depends on what kind of research question that we intend to explore.

In this research, I have applied qualitative research methods for explaining the occurrence of my target phenomenon. This is because, for qualitative research, it is inclined towards 'a form of systematic empirical enquiry into meaning', as defined by Shank (2002). This means that with a set of available data, the data needs to be interpreted by a researcher before the intended message that is being put across can be understood. This fits with the main intention of addressing the phenomenon of de-ethnicisation of politics that is happening in Malaysia. In this research, I intend to find out more about the "meaning" side of how and why such a phenomenon is occurring, rather than finding out how many of a particular people react or are affected (or from the perspective of numbering of the phenomenon). Such a premise is supported by Lincoln (2000), in which he argues that qualitative research emphasises the interpretation of a data resource and principle arguments without assigning values as in quantitative research.

Even though qualitative research is not based on the rigidity of fixed values and comparing the data collection with an exact same input resource, it is, however, more flexible for gaining an in-depth understanding of the issue (Conger 1998). Due to this flexibility, researchers will be prepared for handling 'surprises'. For instance, in the event of the research obtaining unexpected input from a planned interview, the researcher is then able to alter the question design if the unexpected answer actually provides useful information (Jensen & Jankowski 1991). In quantitative research, most of the questions are fixed and the settings of the research design are more rigid compared with the qualitative method. The outcome of quantitative research may be too general or far from believability, because quantitative research requires a design in questioning that is repeatable, giving no space for unexpected answers. However, one of the hardest things to do in qualitative research is to make all the familiar things unfamiliar to you. For qualitative research, due to the interpretative approach that is being applied, nothing can be taken for granted as the researchers must be able to look beyond the usual understanding, even though the issue or incident looks familiar to you (Blumer 1976 , Berger 1966).

In line with the principle of selecting a qualitative research method for answering the research questions raised, the main collection of primary data is through interview with selected candidates. The candidates are selected based on their authority and capability in responding to the research questions asked (King 1994). Although interview is selected as the main method of data collection, it is useful to get secondary sources to strengthen the data obtained through primary sources (Mangal & Mangal 2013). The secondary sources can be provided by formal means, such as official documents and reports from newspaper election results, while examples of informal secondary sources include YouTube videos, commentary columns and informal explorative conversations. These secondary sources would be used as a catalyst in igniting a more in-depth discussion during the formal interview with candidates.

With all the aforementioned technical issues in obtaining the best available data, another issue that needs to be taken into consideration is the ethical issue (Kitchener &

Kitchener 2009). The ethical issues cover the complicated morality issues ranging from social, cultural and political contexts (King, Henderson & Stein 1999). The principle is largely tied to the Nuremberg Code, which outlines the integrity a researcher should uphold (Seidelman 1996). To a certain extent ethical issues may compromise the data obtained, such as an inability to obtain confidential data, the anonymity of the candidate and also on humanitarian grounds. However, such ethical practice needs to be adhered to. This is to protect the subjects in the interview, while at the same time obeying the legal aspect of the data obtained as well as the humanity aspect. According to Mero-Jaffe (2011), there is a need to create a balance of power in relations between the interviewers and interviewees. Although in this research interviewees are positioned at a weaker level, this does not exist in reality due to the political status they enjoy. However, at the same time, due to their political status, the level of sensitivity to those interviewed may be higher. Therefore, it is crucial to balance the power relations between these two parties in terms of the status they enjoy and the authority of delivering their messages in the research.

For this chapter, the discussion will be divided into four sections. The first section will discuss data sampling, and mainly focuses on how sampling is being conducted and why these samples are being selected. For the second section, the discussion will focus on how data is collected and why this data collection method is the most suitable means for obtaining the information needed. This is followed by the third section, which will explore data analysis. This is where the data obtained in section two will be processed and the gist of the information is extracted for meaningful analysis. The fourth section will discuss the ethical practice. In this section, the discussion will focus around the issues that are being practised and upheld while conducting the research, and the reasons why such ethical practice is needed. This final section will end with a conclusion section for the whole chapter.

3.2   DATA SAMPLING

The sample is the target group in which the research relies on for furthering the analysis. Depending on the type of research and the research questions that are being asked, it may lead to various kinds of sampling methods. However, these samples, in the end, must be justifiable in representing the whole population of the unit analysis (Babbie 2001). There are two types of sampling methods, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Bryman 2009). Although there are many kinds of probability sampling methods, all of them confirm to the principle that the samples are selected without the interference of a third party.

In this research, I have applied the second sampling method, which is non-probability sampling, when selecting the candidates. Unlike the probability sampling method, where all the population has an equal chance of being randomly selected (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003), this research is concerned with party politics and the main focus of analysis is political parties, therefore, not everybody will have the authority to have an opinion that is representative of the party. Therefore, the pool from which candidates can be selected is small in number. Furthermore, I have had to make sure that each camp within a political party could have their say in this research. Due to that, those samples selected are capable enough to speak on behalf of their party, and at the same time represent different sections of a political party. I have employed purposive sampling for my sampling methods, which is in line with the definition by Maxwell (1997) that 'purposive sampling is to choose particular persons, settings or events with the aim that such selection could provide research with information that is required.'

In this research, I have selected 18 candidates to be utilised, although the actual number of interviews that were conducted was 20. Although 18 may appear to be a small number, in fact it is a large percentage overall of the available pool. Patton (2002) argues that the sample size for purposive sampling is small, but it is selected carefully as an information provider, while at the same time providing in-depth information rather than surface or overview information per se. Furthermore, as the pool of political party elites is

small to begin with, 18 is not considered to be a small number, at least in terms of percentage from the total number of leadership which stands at double digits, depending on the leadership size of a political party. Although the sample size in qualitative research is much smaller compared to quantitative research, the researcher in qualitative research needs to be actively involved in the process of data collection (Wimmer & Dominick 1997). Therefore, numbering may be a concern, but the representativeness and saturation of information should come first, and again, this is how a qualitative research method contributes to the data collection (Miles & Huberman 1994).

From the beginning of the fieldwork plan, 18 candidates were selected. This number was chosen in order to give a balanced representation of both benches of the political fronts. As Malaysia has two main political fronts (Weiss 2013), each of the political fronts consist of nine candidates each. For PR, there are three component parties within it. Therefore, each of the component parties had three candidates. There were no issues with the allocation of candidates for PR, with each party being equally allocated three candidates. However, for BN, due to the fact that it consists of more than three component parties, should each of the component parties require representation by three candidates, the balancing of the allocated numbers simply would not work. Furthermore, some of the component parties are much smaller in size (in terms of membership, number of elected representatives, political power and so on) compared to the other component parties (Amer Saifude 2009). It would create a huge imbalance between numbers of candidates and political power within BN. Apart from this, some of the political parties, especially in terms of ethnicity or the mode of struggle, may also overlap with one another (Lee 2007). This makes the data collected redundant as mentioned in the paragraph above, and a larger number does not necessarily mean better quality of data. In order to solve this problem of balancing numbers between BN and PR, while at the same time maintaining the representativeness of the whole BN, three component parties are selected.

The most senior parties, which are UMNO and MCA, were selected. The selection of UMNO is indisputable as, regardless of whether they are agreeable or

disagreeable in the political or academic world, UMNO is the backbone of BN (Lee, 2007). The position of Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister are from UMNO (Case, 2010), and 11 out of 13 Chief Ministers at the state level are also from UMNO. Similarly, the distribution of cabinet positions, the size of its membership and so on, all come from UMNO. Therefore, UMNO is selected as a component party and is allocated with three candidates. Similar principles were applied to MCA due to its seniority within BN and its size (Lee, 2007). Furthermore, it is a Chinese-based party and is the largest non-Malay political party within BN in Peninsular Malaysia. Therefore, it is justifiable to include MCA as the second party, with three candidates allocated in this research. To determine the third component party to be allocated with the final three candidates, I have created a "hybrid" component party for the purpose. This is due to, firstly, MIC and Gerakan both being quite balanced from one perspective to the other. By traditional arrangement, such as seating of BN and government leadership, MIC has often been in front of Gerakan, however, Gerakan did hold the position of Chief Minister in Penang when BN was in power, in which MIC did not lead in any of the states. Therefore, due to these small differences, if there is any, between MIC and Gerakan, it may not carry much meaning to argue their seniority and give privileges as the third component party in BN (for this research purpose). Secondly, in this research, the segregation of ethnicity inclines towards Malay versus non-Malay. Therefore, even though MIC is an Indian-based party, this factor does not make it compulsory to allocate the final three candidates to MIC. Furthermore, Gerakan, as a multi-ethnic based party, do have Indian leaders within their party. Thirdly, there was infighting within MIC at the time the fieldwork was being conducted, to the extent that the whole committee line up in MIC, including its President, was in question and the legitimacy of the office bearers were brought to the court. Both camps were claiming their leaders to be the legitimate one. Due to this reason, most of the top leaderships were unable to be reached and, even if they had been reached, they would not be willing to be a candidate to prevent extra fuss, with the case residing in court at the time. However, one of its top leadership members was successfully convinced following multiple requests to accept the interview. Due to these three reasons, it is justifiable and feasible to create a third component as a "hybrid" party, providing BN candidates consisting of UMNO, MCA and "hybrid" parties, with each having three candidates.

As mentioned above, at the beginning of the fieldwork 18 candidates were in the original plan for conducting interviews. However, in the midst of conducting the interviews, two candidates seemed reluctant in giving their cooperation. One of the candidates declined to elaborate further or justify his ideas. For example, when asked about what "new politics" means to them, the response was "new politics means new politics lah (local accent)". The responses were more of a generic answer, rather than their willingness to further respond when questioned in-depth. In the case of the second candidate, they were willing to answer all the questions provided, however, their answers were very contradictory among themselves. For instance, when asked if Malaysia is moving towards de-ethnicisation, their response was positive. As a follow up for the question, when being asked about their opinion on what they think about their party colleagues (non-candidates) saying that Malaysia is moving towards ethnicisation of politics, their answer was positive as well. This is one of the many contradictory responses coming from them during the short interview. At the same time, they were also keen to give "no answer" when being posed with questions. For example, when being asked why some of their party leaders seem to be interested in championing ethnic politics, their response was just "macam itulah" (translated as "is like that"); short response that carry no meaningful information. Due to these reasons, these two candidates have been excluded and explains why 20 candidates were interviewed when the original plan was to interview 18 candidates. The final usage of all information is only from 18 candidates as well.

Out of these 18 candidates, three of them were party Presidents, two were Deputy Presidents, three were Vice Presidents, three were Secretary Generals, six had party leaderships (an Information Chief, a State Chairman, a Youth Chief, a Deputy Youth Chief, a director of their party research centre and a significant Member of Parliament) and one was a backroom adviser (political secretary to a top cabinet member of Malaysia). Below is Table 4, showing the party position of candidates:

Position	President	Deputy President	Vice President	Secretary General	Party Leadership	Backroom Adviser
Number	3	2	3	3	6	1

Table 4. Party position of candidates.

The three candidates allocated to each political party were divided between different segments within their parties. In Malaysia, it is not uncommon that, within a single political party, there are different camps for different reasons (Malike Brahim, Mohd. Fo'ad Sakdan. Muzliza Mohamad, 2013). This may be due to: conservatives versus liberal, old guard versus newbies, different patronage leader, clerical versus secular and so on. Therefore, if a political party was divided into three camps, each camp would be allocated with a candidate. Should a political party consist of two camps, each camp would get at least one candidate, with the remaining one being allocated to a more necessary division. The main reason for such narrow stratification is to make sure that as wide a range as possible, if not all, of the voices within a political party can be heard. Therefore, the data collected at the end of the fieldwork was justifiable to represent the whole party in general.

Starting with UMNO, the allocation of one candidate was given to a more ethnicity-inclined leader, while another candidate was from a less ethnicity-inclined (inclined towards multi-ethnicity) candidate. As UMNO is the backbone party of BN, and also the government, a backroom adviser to a very senior cabinet member was chosen. This is because, with the UMNO to certain extent, they do not only represent themselves, but also represent BN and the government. Therefore, with the inclusion of such a backroom adviser, it could enhance the data from the perspective of a political party and also from the perspective of a government.

MCA, in their last party election, saw a clear division between two main camps: one led by the current President Liow Tiong Lai (with the support of former President Ong Ka Ting), and another camp led by former President Chua Soi Lek (although he did

not contest himself). The result showed that Liow's camp managed to win most of the positions in the central committee line up, with Chua's camp only managing to gain minority wins in the election. Therefore, in this research, two candidates were allocated to Liow's camp while another candidate was from Chua's camp. It is justifiable for such an arrangement as, apart from a larger number in the line-up coming from Liow's camp, the highest office bearers of MCA, such as the President and Deputy President, are also from Liow's camp. This shows that the majority of the policy-making within MCA needs to have agreement from Liow's camp.

For the third component party within BN included in the research, the "hybrid" party, two of the candidate quota were allocated to Gerakan, while another candidate was from MIC. As discussed in the above section, the significance of this third party is much lower when compared to other component parties. As explained above for the reason why such a third component party is needed, the allocation of the candidate quota should not be a large issue to contend. Furthermore, the intention of trying to include the third and fourth biggest component parties for BN in Peninsular Malaysia has been achieved.

For PR, DAP is the only party out of the six political parties that gained allocation for candidates, having the least division within a party. At the central (national) level, there is not much division between them. There are no two or more big camps within Central DAP. Even so, these three candidates did possess different physical identities among them. This physical difference could be gender, age, ethnicity, years of experience in politics, level of party position held, elected or non-elected representative, level of aggressiveness in delivering message and so on. Due to the ethical reasons, I could not specify which physical identity was being used to select the candidates. This is because, by mentioning the exact criteria, it could make the candidate's identity more easily suspected (or at least easier). Nevertheless, the end selection of candidates for DAP was well represented for DAP as a party.

The next party to be discussed is PKR. In PKR, the division is mainly due to patronage factors, similar factors as MCA. In PKR, the two patronages are generally known as Anwar's camp (de facto leader of PKR who is now in jail but still acknowledged as the highest leader of PKR), and Azmin's camp (the current Deputy President of PKR and Chief Minister of Selangor). Therefore, the allocation of candidate quota is one candidate for each camp. The third candidate was selected based on the idea that the person is the least extreme (in terms of 'camp-ism'), while at the same time has authority enough to speak on behalf of the party and could contribute information for the research. In PKR, the allocation of candidates through division within the party is not a significant issue. This is because the division within PKR inclines towards patronage, rather than policy stance. For instance, unlike UMNO, a leader who is inclined towards ethnic politics and a leader who is inclined towards non-ethnic politics could bring a difference in terms of the party stance. However, for PKR, they do not have such an issue. Even in an extreme example of interviewing only a particular camp from PKR, the issue of having anyone unable to represent PKR does not arise as the information collected will be similar in terms of party stance. Therefore, in this research, where effort has been made to cover different camps within PKR, although it may not be absolute necessary, it does strengthen the case that the data collected is representative enough for PKR.

Finally, for PAS, it is an obvious division between the clerical camp and the professional camp (or progressive, as it is also known. To standardise any further discussion, the term "professional camp" will be used). For PAS, the clerical camp holds a higher position, such as the position of President, while professional camp holds the Deputy President position. Even so, the PAS President has shown through their actions of veto that for certain decisions made by the central committee, he alone is given such authority to decide for the benefit of the party. As the PAS President has shown such a great power in his position, therefore, for this interview one informant quota is allocated to the clerical camp, while another two are allocated to the professional camp. This is because, with such a great power, the words of the President (or his camp's follower) may be louder than the professional camp. Due to that, such arrangements of one plus two are being made.

In general, this research intend to "interview" political parties as political parties are the main focus in this research. Therefore, in order to be able to "interview" the political parties, informants must be somebody who is authority enough to speak on behalf of the party. From the table shown above, those informants that being interview are consisted of among the highest office bearers of a political parties. These leaders are among the most suitable candidate to be selected. Although the process of getting to them is never easy, such attempt is worth the time and effort for the kind of information being obtained through interview.

3.3   DATA COLLECTION

Interviewing is the main means of collecting data, with secondary sources being used to help in shaping the question session during the interview. As the method of interviewing in data collection is useful in terms of getting direct first-hand information from the candidates (Alshenqeeti 2014), it will, therefore, be my main method of data collection on the position and strategies of political parties regarding the latest political development in Malaysia. In general, research using the interview method is to search for factual and meaningful answers (Kvale 1996). It may be easy to obtain factual answers as they tend to be fixed, but it has never been easy to obtain meaningful answers. However, it is not all the time that meaningful answers are obtained, as mentioned in the data sampling section, where one of the candidates (who is removed from the useful data sampling) tends to provide answers with no "meaning". For the rest of the 18 candidates from whom information is being collected in this research, sometimes, when necessary, the researcher has to press further for meaningful answers to be elaborated, while at the same time, self-interpreting the meaningful answers given, particularly in political fields, where candidates tend to give 'good' and 'over-optimistic' answers instead of 'true' answers. In this instance, it is important to build a good relationship with the candidates to explore their 'real' experience (Devine 2002). However, with the ethical issues in mind, the relationship should not be constructed as a manipulation of the relationship to gain the data. Candidates must be informed of the on-going project and give their consent beforehand. It has often been a dilemma as to whether the candidates should be fully

informed of the whole project, as the awareness of the candidates may change to more natural settings of the conversation. However, no matter how it changes the settings, the ethical issues remain an important element in the professionalism of the interview.

Apart from the principle argument on why an interview method is useful and how it is suitable for this research as discussed above, the technicality of conducting the interview is crucial too. In this research, the interview questions have been formulated in a semi-structured open-ended form, as this form of questioning will open up space for the candidates to roam more freely with the questions, but at the same time limiting it to the relevance of the research (Bryman 2004, Silverman 2001). Unlike most of the quantitative research methods, such as surveys and questionnaires, where the methods prefer a generalisation, qualitative interview methods especially, which are applied in this research, are keen to look deeper into the reasons behind it (Kvale 1996). The data collected may not have had similar responses, but this is also a positive aspect where a wider scope of information could not be obtained (Rubin & Rubin 1995). Principally, there is no restriction on the type of responses collected during the interview, as long as they are useful to the research. Should the candidate divert too far from the original research scope, only then is the candidate brought back to the focused scope. Generally, the questions asked will attempt to answer the issue of de-ethnicisation in Malaysia, in which a more narrowed down question would be asked. At the same time, a candidate may not be giving the kind of responses we would wish to get (for example, 'beating around the bush' or being reluctant to reveal too much, having a thought that giving such answers might make them look bad, and many more reasons), and the researcher may pose some indirect questions to ease the emotion of candidates responding to it. There may be some questions that candidates might feel uncomfortable about giving direct answers to. Contrarily, a change of direction in questioning may give them comfort. Therefore, in this research, the comfort of the candidate is one of the issues to be considered in order to obtain optimum responses.

Apart from the verbal communication between the researcher and the candidate, another useful tip for obtaining better quality of data is through non-verbal

communication. Although non-verbal communication could not replace the importance of verbal communication, no doubt the former could help the latter in verifying certain facts and arguments from the candidates. Therefore, since this research is intended to be a face-to-face interview with the candidates, the advantage of it is that the research will have a chance to observe the physical reaction of the candidates. Observation is another critical element in interviews, as the interpretation from the physical signals of the candidates may strengthen or cast doubts on the given answers (Harrison 2001, Gering 2007). Triangulation and cross-verification within the collected interview is another good way of 'forcing' the answer from the candidates. For instance, the candidates who are from the same political party should have the same stance when they are answering on behalf of the party. Repetitive collection of data from candidates of the same party may strengthen the case if the answers are the same, and further investigation may be required if there is some contradiction between them. At the same time, the 'open', published information from the opposite party can be used to further pursue in-depth answers from the candidates. Again, ethical issues have to be in parallel with any actions taken for in-depth and triangulation of answers. Apart from the instant observation, it is also helpful to note down the conversation and physical action of the candidates too. This includes pauses during the interview, attempts to avoid questions, reaction towards questions and any other related natural reaction. As this natural reaction is unavoidable by an ordinary human (unless the candidate is very good at acting), it can help us in our interpretation of the interview source and certifies the trustworthiness of the answer in other resources through triangulation of all the data collected.

Apart from the main data collection method of interviewing which is applied in this research, the second data collection method, which is also a supportive method, is documentary analysis. Documentary analysis in this research does not confine itself to the conventional inclination towards paper-based documents. In this research, it includes modern "documents", such as social media and information from the internet (regardless of genuine facts or distorted facts). These documents are utilised as a source of exploratory means of widening the discussion with the candidate. As the issue concerned will be brought up with the candidate, the trustworthy level of the information obtained, especially through the internet, may be secondary. The primary concern is to raise the

issue and further analyse it (if such issues are related to the research). Apart from that, documentary analysis is also useful as a source of 'forcing' out in-depth answers and it is important in providing a wider scope of information. However, as Scott (1990) argues, these documents must fulfil four criteria. Firstly, the document must be in its original format to avoid any attempts to alter the content. Secondly, the document must be free of error and the document should have authority within its publication. Thirdly, the documents must be representative enough to discuss the whole scenario. Unavoidably in the political field, certain documents might incline towards particular institutions or figures. It is acceptable as long as the document is valid and it will then be the researcher's duty to interpret the document in relation to the author of the document. Lastly, the meaning within the document should be clear and comprehensive.

To be more specific, this documentary analysis will consist of two main groups of sources. First there are written political documents. Election manifestos will be the main source of analysis, where the pledges of political parties are being compared in two ways: single party comparison, where the election manifestos of parties are being compared to the manifesto of the election before this, and, secondly, by comparing the manifestos of the two political coalitions within the same General Election. The second source of documentary analysis will be the oral source. The main focus of data collection will be their political speeches in the campaigning period during a General Election. As political speeches in this form may be too much in terms of volume, a selection system will be used as a guideline in selecting the particular speeches to be analysed. The significant political speeches, where all the heavyweights give their speeches on the same stage, will definitely be considered as these speeches carry the authority of each political party in terms of their stance, pledge and direction. Secondly, as this research is about the trajectory of ethnic politics compared to non-ethnic politics, therefore, political speeches with different crowds will be considered. For instance, the political speeches given by a political party in a Malay-dominated and non-Malay-dominated crowd will be used as a comparison, to see whether there is any contradiction within their speeches where different pledges are being promised to different ethnic crowds. This will also determine if they are using a similar political pledge regardless of the ethnicity of the crowd. Similar

to the direction of interviews being conducted, this type of documentary analysis could provide an insight of information for the research.

Apart from this, another way of generating ideas when formulating questions for the interview session comes from informal communication with related stakeholders. Stakeholders in this scope is very wide, including but not limited to, activists, academics, political assistants (including those who work in political fields in various positions and titles), ordinary party members, political science (and any other related field) students and anybody else who have their opinion related (or slightly) related to this research. Such communications are held either in-plan (meaning they have an appointment and have in mind what to talk about) and impromptu (more towards leisure chit-chatting). Although the figure is not counted as this is just a mean of informal communication, the number could be around 50 or more. Although this way of generating ideas is less formal and not necessarily within the original plan, the contribution of this method could not be totally ignored. This is because such methods can often give unexpected but helpful information. For instance, during the private gathering session with former colleagues, some of the discussion could help to spark an idea on the formulation of interview questions. At the same time, as this is a private gathering, the conversation does not need to have legal repercussions for each statement. From there, the researcher could take the spirit of the issue and incorporate it into the interview session, either as a clarification of fact or as an example of popular opinion.

In short, in this research, the main method of data collection is through interview with the selected candidates. Such data collection methods are believed to be able to answer the research questions raised in the early part of this thesis. This is because, as this research intends to "interview" political parties as they are the main unit of analysis in this research, such "interviews" with them is then transferred to people who are able to speak on behalf of the party. The section on data sampling has explained which individuals are capable to do so. At the second level, due to the nature of this research, which focuses on qualitative in-depth responses, having interviews with candidates as explained above could achieve the objectives set. This is not to say that interview is the

only method, but it could be the best among all available options, including the issue of feasibility. For instance, conducting ethnography with the political community involved, or observation of participants with the leadership of political parties may also produce similar data. However, both have feasibility issues which are difficult to resolve. Firstly, getting directly involved with their leadership activities, such as meetings, discussions or even informal communication among them may be highly unlikely. This is because, in order to do so, personal connections with those leaders must be strong enough to enable them to provide such convenience to be part of them. Even assuming that a person has such strong connections with a political party (their leaders), it may not be possible for the same person to possess similar strengths at their competitor political parties. Secondly, logistics could be another issue that needs to be dealt with, especially with the time constraint. Therefore, by conducting interviews, researchers could communicate with both benches of the political front without (at least at a lower level) suspicion as a political spy, or candidates themselves feeling disheartened for contacting their opponent at the same time. Furthermore, by interviewing both benches of the political divide, it could strengthen the premise that the researcher himself is neutral and non-biased to any side, while at the same time obtaining in-depth data from both political coalitions.

3.4   DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the method of reproducing the collected raw data into more meaningful data. This data will then be analysed further for its content and usefulness of the information before being incorporated into formal writing. Generally, as according to Spencer et.al (2014), qualitative research data collection involves the process of labelling, organising and interpreting the information obtained. The ultimate goal of data analysis is to understand "whys" for a pattern to take place or a reoccurrence of an event to happen (Miles & Huberman 1994). This is because, for qualitative research, its main aim is to have a deeper understanding of phenomenon and incidences, unlike quantitative research that has a greater emphasis on values and may or may not be interested in finding a reason for the "whys" scope. For Seale (1999), values may not be a big factor within qualitative research analysis, although many of the researchers are keen to emphasise the

numbers in the analysis, such as numbers of people answering in particular ways and so on, which is unnecessary. Seale (1999) argues that, although some qualitative research does need to rely on values, such as content analysis to compare how many times a particular word appears in a text, other kinds of qualitative researches that over-emphasis with figures unnecessarily, will defeat the purpose of the qualitative research principle, which is to focus on in-depth discussion of phenomenon.

Apart from the interpretation from qualitative research, this kind of research can also be used for descriptive insights. According to Elliott and Timulak (2005), qualitative research can be either descriptive or interpretive. Descriptive research generally deals with 'what' issues. Where the interpretive research deals with thick descriptions (ethnography) or theory development (grounded theory), descriptive research deals with a rich and straightforward description of an event (Neergaard et al., 2009). Other qualitative approaches might aim at developing a concept or intertwining with existing theory, but a descriptive approach aims to provide information as close to the data sources as possible (for example, from the informant). It inclines to describe the experience of the informants (Matua, Van Der Wal 2015), which is in line with Bhattacherjee (2012) when he suggests careful observation of an event and documentation of the details of a phenomenon.

In this research, upon collecting data from interview, such data is transferred as text through transcription. In this case, such transcription is done manually. This is because, as the interview is conducted in Malaysia and both the candidates and the researcher are Malaysian, the factor of local culture which influences the way an interview proceeded is unavoidable. As Brown and Levinson (1978) argue, different cultures may view different gestures differently. These non-verbal communications with candidates were jotted down for the interpretation of the messages intended to be delivered by the candidates, be it explicitly or implicitly. This is supported by Burgoon et. al. (1996), when they argue that these non-verbal communications could provide further information for the later stage interpretation and analysis. Therefore, manual transcription is more appropriate as more non-verbal information could be derived for more

information. Furthermore, as the interview is supposed to be conducted in a particular language, in practice there are likely to be other languages that slip in. This may not (sometimes may) be to do with the issue of mastery of a language by the candidate, but simply due to the everyday practice by local Malaysians in slipping in other languages in their conversation (some can be as little as one word, while others can be more).

Although each language could have their own version of terminology for usage, sometimes borrowing certain terms from other languages can help to emphasise their ideas or delivery of their messages (Davidson 2009). As Gumperz (1982) puts forth, the linguistic phenomenon between the interviewers and interviewees could make both of them understand the actual meaning they are trying to deliver, instead of viewing the terminology used from a literal grammatical perspective. For instance, the word "rakyat" could simply be translated as "people" in the English language. However, the usage of "rakyat" and "people" might have different levels of concern and closeness. The word "rakyat" may sometimes make the candidate, or even the masses (which is why some politicians are keen to use it), feel more people-centric rather than the common term "people". Apart from that, due to the cultural background and identity of both candidate and researcher as mentioned above, candidates are keen to use language, slang and accent in delivering their ideas. Such terms may not have formal or standardised formulae, but they carry a commonly accepted position within Malaysian society. For instance, the terms "can lah" and "can loh" can simply mean "can" in proper English. However, with the locally used "lah" and "loh" following the word "can", it refers to a different level of "can" in the person's mind. Again, this has less to do with the language skill of a person. Due to the fact that interviews conducted are heavily influenced by local culture, manual transcription may be a better option in bringing out the message closer to the candidates' mind (delivering what they intend to mean rather than physical wordings).

When the transcription step is complete, it is followed by a translation process. In this fieldwork, the two main languages being used are English and Malay. This step intends to translate the Malay version of transcription into an English version. Such a translation step is needed to maintain the originality of the candidate's wording during the

interview (Poland 1995). This is because when quotations are being formed into the ideas brought forward by the candidate, such original wording is quoted in accompaniment with a translated version in English. Therefore, when translation is being conducted these wordings cannot be considered as the original wordings anymore. With such accompaniment, the meaning that is being brought out by the candidate could less be disputed.

      The third step of data analysis is to extract the information from the raw material. Dey (1993) sees this as a not-in-subsequence puzzle, and the process of cutting and extracting pieces of a puzzle into a meaning puzzle in sequence is needed. Generally, from the transcription, analysis is conducted by firstly deleting any irrelevant information. Very often, during the interview with politicians, they often like to attack their opponent in their response. Although some of these attacks are good as it can bring the debate to a higher level, very often those attacks incline towards blank attack. At the same time, some politicians are also keen on diverting the discussion to a far-fetched scope which is not needed (or not relevant) for this research. The step of deleting this information will make the following step easier. After deleting the unnecessary data, the next step is to start coding those leftover responses into different themes. Coding is a process of organising different sets of information and grouping them according to themes (Campbell et. al. 2013). In this research, coding is done manually towards three main themes, namely party membership, party stance and electoral strategies. Classification according to these three themes eases the analysis process for later chapters on how these three main dimensions of data can flourish the argument in its advancement in de-ethnicisation of politics. As put forth by Charmaz (1983), coding can ease the analytical work by grouping together events, statements or observations into categories. Even so, there are times when some interesting data collected from candidates cannot be fitted accurately into these three themes, but could be useful for further steps of deliberation and linkage to the themes. Therefore, the transcript is also coded into some minor themes such as party future, opponent's weakness, party (and party leaders) hard work and so on. Although responses are labelled with a theme (major and/or minor theme), such coding is not rigid. This is because the same response may be utilised in

more than one theme of writing. These themes will then be combined into different sections for the usage of different chapters in the thesis writing.

As this thesis consists of three substantive chapters, which focus on party membership, party stance and electoral politics, the process of data analysis above could help to divide the raw material obtained through interview into meaningful data for thesis writing. Such three steps are needed as the ability to give quotation towards making claims by the researcher could help to strengthen the claim made. Furthermore, such quotation by candidates who represent their respective political parties could further explain, on behalf of the party, the occurrences of phenomenon within the Malaysian political landscape.

3.5   ETHICAL PRACTICE

When conducting research, obtaining the best data set that can produce a high quality of writing may be an aim. However, certain ethical practices need to be adhered to, be it due to the constraint of law (in which breaking it may means criminal offences) or due to a humanitarian ground (not breaking the rules and law, but are inviting trouble, discomfort or other kind of negative ramification towards any party within the research). Bryman (2012) does not see much change in the main elements of ethical practice over previous decades. The main principle of protecting those involved in the research is given attention. Webster, Lewis and Brown (2014) are suggesting five main elements which researchers should practice. This includes the point that researchers should not make unreasonable demands from their participants, participation must be based on informed choice, participants are free from pressure in participating in it, participants should be informed of the possible harm that could have caused them and, lastly, the participants anonymity and confidentiality must be observed (Webster, Lewis & Brown 2014).

In this research, all the five ethical practices suggested above have been adhered to. Some of the suggestions have even been taken to a higher level, although it may not have been necessary. This is to give a higher sense of security for the candidate while the extra measures taken are worthy and feasible. In practice, during the fieldwork where interviews are being conducted, before the start of the interview candidates will be asked for permission to have the conversation recorded. Should there be, at any point during any part of the interview, any information that the candidate wishes to be 'off the record', such rights are respected. From all the interviews conducted, none of the candidates have actually demanded for that, except one. The mentioned candidate, although they did request our post-interview conversation to be 'off the record', such incidence may have lower connection with the thesis as a whole in terms of ethical practice. This is because, firstly, the post-interview conversation was not in recorded mode. Secondly, the issue discussed had less to do with the focus of the thesis. Therefore, this incident is less relevant, although such respect is still granted.

At the beginning of the interview recording, candidates will be verified with a question on whether they wish to participate in the interview voluntarily (Codi, Day & Backhouse 2000). All 20 candidates (including two whose interviews were not taken into the research for reasons explained previously) gave their positive response for voluntarily participating in the interview. Next, candidates were verbally presented with their three rights granted to them in the interview. Firstly, their identity will be protected through anonymity. For this right, none of the identities of the candidates will be exposed. Most of the interviews were conducted with only two persons present, which were the candidate and the researcher. In some instances, there was a third person present during the interview and this third person (of all third persons) is an assistant to the candidate. Secondly, candidates were granted the right to withdraw from the interview at any point. On this right, none of the candidates activated it and all the interviews were conducted smoothly through until the end with little trouble. The third right that was granted to them was that the conversation details would be protected at the highest level of confidentiality possible. For this right, the researcher even attempted to standardise the salutation of all candidates. According to protocol, candidates who have honorary titles such as 'Datuk', 'Datuk Seri', 'YB' and many more (similar to the title of 'Sir' and 'Honourable') are

supposed to be addressed as such. However, in these interviews all the candidates were asked for permission to be greeted as 'YB' (which is used for members of Parliament) as a standardised salutation as a means for a higher level of confidentiality. Although this may not be necessarily required by ethical practice, the researcher believed in doing anything extra as long as it could protect the candidates better, however insignificantly.

From the entire step-by-step process, as explained above, it could be seen that the researcher is taking all necessary steps in adhering to the ethical practice, sometimes even more than required, in order to provide better protection for the candidates. As this research is a one that involves human subjects, serious attention is given to the ethical practice issue so that, while the researcher could freely conduct his research and obtain the data he requires, at the same time, nobody is harmed or being put in a less comfortable position due to the research.

3.6   CONCLUSION

As discussed in the early part of this chapter, methodology is the philosophy of the conduct of a research. This is the part where the conduct of a research is being observed. Although this is not a substantive chapter to help answer those research questions raised, this is the chapter that formulates how the information that is being used in later substantive chapters are derived. Without proper planning of execution of research conduct, the validity and reliability of the research may be called into question. Therefore, this can be seen as the basis for building a deeper argumentation in later chapters.

In this chapter, four main issues have been addressed. Firstly, on the issue of sampling. Samples that are selected for any research will have a direct impact towards the kind of data obtained, and, thereafter, affect the conclusion of the research. The samples selected must possess the characteristics that are able to provide accurate answers for the research. For instance, in this research, the unit of analysis is focused on political parties.

Therefore, the selection of samples must be from individuals who are able to represent their party. Should the samples selected be ordinary members of a political party, they may provide what they think about their party, or even what the party is doing at the moment. However, they have no direct knowledge into a deeper level of information or what their party intends to do but is yet to execute. Worse still, these ordinary members have no direct leadership influence on the parties. Therefore, they are not suitable to speak on behalf of the party. This is an example of how the inaccurate selection of samples bring the direction of the research in the wrong direction.

Secondly, on the issue of data collection, it acts as a means of getting information. At this stage data is readily available. The question is how to harvest this data through a correct means without compromising the data. The process of data collation, which acts as an intermediary between readily data (candidate) and processed data (data analysis). Should the means of collecting data be inaccurate, the validity and reliability of the data may be contended. At the same time, during the process of data collection, should important data be missed during the process, the next steps of data analysis may not be able to function to the optimum. This is because the data obtained is limited. Should the data collected be a significant amount, it is not feasible or convenient as most of the data collected may be redundant or not useful. Therefore, for this step, it is crucial to make sure that the data collected is useful for its purpose in the next step.

The third issue concerns the data analysis step. After all the raw materials are collected, this raw material need to be converted into meaningful data. Such conversion could be done through extracting and interpreting the raw material obtained earlier. This is the step where all the processed data will be used for writing purposes. Should there be any blunder in this step, all the efforts done in step one (data sampling) and step two (data collection) will be redundant. As mentioned earlier, as this is the step where interpretation starts to take place, careful consideration and claims made must be supported by evidence from earlier parts. Without evidence to support them, such claim may become weak can be open to easier dispute. This will cause the whole research conclusion to collapse.

The final issue in this chapter is in regard to ethical practice. Violation of ethical practice may not have a direct negative impact towards the quality of the writing (in terms of substantive arguments), however, such violation may mean that subjects in the research, whether human or non-human, are not granted with respect. Furthermore, such violation may also cause uneasiness towards any subject that is involved in the research. Therefore, although ethical practice may not have a direct impact towards the substantive arguments of the research, based on humanitarian and legal grounds a gentleman's approach should be used while conducting the research. The end of any research does not justify a universally unexpected means.

CHAPTER 4:

PARTY MEMBERSHIP

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Party membership is the first-dimensional focus for the discussion on how Malaysian politics is being de-ethnicised. As discussed in the Introduction and Background chapters, the main political parties are either shaped as ethnic-based parties from the perspective of their admission eligibility or they are formed as non-ethnic-based parties which have failed to include significant inclusivity within themselves and are generally dominated by a single ethnic group. In both cases, to de-ethnicise the political landscape in Malaysia, it is good to begin by looking at party membership and review how these political parties deal with their party membership regarding de-ethnicisation, whether to maintain the status quo or re-ethnicise ethnic politics in Malaysia.

Questions of party membership are not a prominent concern in the scholarship on ethnic politics, but there are some sources that discuss party membership in different ways. Membership structure of parties impact how parties present themselves to voters,   though party leadership of course still tries to influence how the parties 'should' present themselves. Weiss' (2013) study on party competition in an electoral contest explores various factions within political parties, such as UMNO Women's wing with its responsibility for networking helping selected candidates to expand their connectivity with grassroots leaders and voters.   Similarly, PAS Women's wing accompanies candidates especially when they are doing house-to-house visits canvassing for votes. They believe that it will be easier for women to start a conversation with voters, whom might have less knowledge about the candidate. Apart from that, these women will also organise small prayers and discussion groups especially related to Islamic teaching enhance their existence within the community (Weiss 2014). All the communication with voters from both UMNO or PAS is shaped by the members who deliver it, and influences whether ethnicity, universality or some other issue will take prominence. This shows that the party membership structure will decide what kind of members a party incline to

receive and those members will contribute in a way which party wishes them to contribute. Therefore, party membership is an important human resource for political parties.

 In another article (2014), Weiss explains that rates of party membership are one of the highest in Asia, where 20% of the population declare party membership, while another 22% indicate they might join a party. Such a higher percentage, although not absolute, but it does indicate that having a bigger share in the membership market might give an easier path in garnering votes. This is because with a high tendency of Malaysians interested in becoming a party member, failure to admit those people as members would mean that opponent parties might absorb them in. In Malaysia, one of the crucial points of party membership is access to party media by law (Weiss 2014). This is because party membership will give legal permission for those people to access to certain party sources. For example, PAS and DAP owned newspapers can only be circulated among their members (Weis 2014). Therefore, in order to be able to get information from those party newspaper, becoming a party is the basic requirement by law. Whilst the law is not always strictly enforced, it does limit the ability of parties to expand their influence to other segments of the population, as their newspapers might not be able to reach them legally. Therefore, a less constraining membership structure may help them venture into other segments and in that way potentially give a hand in de-ethnicising their party. This is because when the party membership structure becomes more inclusive, a diverse pool of members will form their membership structure. With such diversity, it discourage the party discourse from concentrating on dominant segment of members only.

High percentages for party membership are also explored by Kartini Aboo Talib Khalid (2014), who argues that one of the reasons for voter turnout in the Malaysian General Election (85% for 2013 General Election) is that more people have become members of political parties, thus encouraging them to participate in politics and vote in elections. Political parties such as PKR and DAP become more effective in championing themselves as 'multi-racial' (in her words) parties (Kartini Aboo Talib Khalid 2014). When parties exhibit more of a multi-ethnic or non-ethnic spirit informing their

membership structure, as discussed above, the mobilisation of their members will also be able to help their party move nearer de-ethnicisation.

Kuhonta, Slater & Vu (2008) and Chin (2006) also (indirectly) consider party membership from the Muslim (Malay) and Chinese perspective. For the former, they argue that political parties arose from salient religious and ethnicity cleavage (Kuhonta, Slater & Vu 2008). When religion and ethnicity become contentious, the party would have to behave in a more religious (more 'Malay') way in order to get more support. In doing so, how they admit people as their members reflects on how the party can be more 'Malay' or more Islamic. With this kind of membership, elected leaders within the party will have no other choice than appeasing their members. Chin (2006) makes a similar argument with respect to party leadership in MCA. As the MCA Constitution (which I will discuss in depth in a later section) limits their members to those with Chinese descent, to win their party office, they have no choice but to raise issues of their members' interest. This can be seen where their party elections take up issues such as Chinese education, and even once debates whether MCA should or shouldn't buy control of a major Chinese press.

The case studies above show that party membership structure, to an extent, can tie down the hand of party leaders in order to satisfy their base. Another way party membership can shape the direction of the party is explored in the work of Low (2017). Instead of the membership structure determining the "ethnicity level" of political parties, Low (2017) shows how the People's Action Party (PAP) intended to replace MCA as the nationwide Chinese representative party. Prior to the establishment of Malaysia, MCA was seen as a Chinese representative party in Malaya. The same goes for PAP in Singapore. However, in the 1960s, PAP was trying to take over the role of MCA in Peninsular Malaysia to become the nationwide (Malaysia) Chinese representative political party. One of the factors that supported this claim was their party membership composition, which justified their action. Such an idea was also supported by Prasad (2016), whoargues that party membership describes the ethnic identity of the party. When a party is attached to an ethnic identity, the nature of the party would be moulded based on that 'ethnicity'. Looi

(2013) too sees that membership structure affects how political culture functions within a society, as the political system itself in Malaysia is built up mainly by the political parties.

From here, we can see that the structures of party membership, especially in terms of eligibility and the extent to which parties diversify themselves, can have an impact on the de-ethnicisation process of parties (or the other way around). Therefore, in this chapter, I will focus on whether these parties can make themselves inclusive, especially in terms of membership composition. More importantly, even if they are able to achieve this, can such a membership composition in political parties be taken as a measure of the success of de-ethnicisation? I will begin with a discussion of coalition parties, but then the discussion will quickly be narrowed to individual political parties and how these parties are trying (or not) to de-ethnicise or reaffirm inclusivity within their parties.

4.2 COALITION PARTY OF BARISAN NASIONAL AND PAKATAN RAKYAT

According to Huckshorn (1984), a political party is defined as "an autonomous group of citizens having the purpose of making nominations and contesting elections, in the hope of gaining control over governmental power through the captures of public offices and the organisation of a government". With the hope of winning an election, different types of political party systems may affect the outcome of electoral results. Depending on the political landscape of a nation, it is common for political parties to operate on their own without political cooperation or alliance with any other political parties, yet are able to gain electoral success. This can be seen in the case of the United States, where Republicans and Democrats work independently in the two-party-system (Vile, 2007). Another contrasting example is found in Hong Kong, where there are multiple small political parties functioning and winning legislative seats. These small parties will generally identify themselves on two main fronts, namely the pro-Beijing camp and the anti-Beijing camp (Li, 2011). Another example can be found in Singapore, where multiple political parties exist but only one political party (the all-time ruling party,

People's Action Party) is formidable leaving the remaining parties barely able to succeed (Mauzy & Milne, 2002). In the United Kingdom and Australia, political parties generally work alone. However, when the need arises, especially when there is no single political party that achieves a simple majority in the House of Commons, a coalition government may be formed with other political parties.

In the case of Malaysia, the 'old politics' of Malaysia falls into a category similar to Singapore. Although there are many existing political parties in Malaysia (and quite a number of them are able to win legislative seats, although the number of seats may not be large), only one political party is strong enough to form a government on their own electoral success (Chin, 2011). Each of the opposition parties sometimes works on their own and sometimes in a coalition (or on a cooperation) basis. However, none of these really pose a threat to the ruling regime (with the exception of the 1969 General Election, prior to the formation of BN and still under the ruling of BN's predecessor, Parti Perikatan). This is because the coalitions are unable to convince people of their ability to serve as an alternative choice of government. Furthermore, the 'old politics' of ethnicity has a strong influence on the whole political system, making it difficult to negate the position of BN's component parties, namely UMNO, MCA and MIC as the representative of Malays, Chinese and Indians, respectively. This is where ethnicity comes into play. Unlike the few examples above, Malaysian politics is not based purely on ability but also on their ability to convince people they are inclusive for all ethnic groups in Malaysia. As main political parties are generally ethnic-based or single-ethnic-dominated, in 'old politics', to show the inclusivity of their parties, a coalition party is the way to go. However, in 'new politics', most of the political parties seem to push for inclusivity on their own instead of relying fully on a coalition party formula. This is also an interest of this chapter, namely how these political parties de-ethnicised themselves without abandoning a coalition party system.

With the latest political developments, the coalition formed by the opposition seems to be more structured than before, at least with the formal cooperation of Pakatan Rakyat's government in certain states. This kind of political coalition is not uncommon. According to Riker (1962), pure rationalists are willing to enter into such coalition

arrangements to gain governmental office, provided the gain is higher than the cost that each individual political party has to pay for such a coalition. This is because in a coalition system each individual party may need to compromise some of their principles to make accommodation for the general good within the coalition. For instance, if a component party is too extreme in championing for their community's rights or material goods, to the extent that they take the share of another community, the component party representing the side-lined segment might face political backlash from their community. This not only harms the image of the overall coalition party but also risks political rejection by other communities. This is how coalition parties work in Malaysia, making them appear inclusive while making it accommodating to all ethnic groups. The difference between coalition parties in Malaysia is to what extent their component parties differ from each other (Riker, 1962). Should the component parties have a very similar stance, the degree of compromise will be reduced and the loss caused by such a coalition to the individual party is minimal. Such scenarios may represent a good deal. However, there are also instances where, although component parties have a commonality among them, there are also many differences that exist at the same time. Worse still, these differences can be contradictory. In such scenarios, risk calculations will be based on whether the gain or loss is higher, and whether it is worth joining such a coalition that may affect its original core support. For Bartolini (2005), the coalition potential will link to the governmental potential and how the individual parties can work (in the perspective of leading or merely following) together. Therefore, apart from the calculation in the 'process' of gaining office, the following actions of gaining office will also impact the individual party within the coalition. Due to this, it is not surprising that a coalition party can help an individual party gain more, but should the compromise be too large to the extent of losing its own ends, then it is a bad coalition for that particular coalition. Such scenarios used to occur in Malaysia, with one of the best examples happening to DAP during the 1999 General Election, where two DAP heavyweights, Karpal Singh and Lim Kit Siang, lost their respective parliamentary seats due to the cooperation with PAS at that time (during that time, PAS had not given up on the issue of forming an Islamic state). This is the first time that Lim Kit Siang had lost a parliamentary seat and what was worse was that it was in Penang, one of DAP's strongholds. However, such scenarios changed drastically when a new coalition of Pakatan Rakyat was formed (with a similar

composition to the previous coalition party) and the results seemed to work well, at least for DAP, which has increased its winning seats dramatically.

Narrowing it down to Malaysian politics in coalition partnerships, at present, Malaysian politics is dominated by two main political coalitions, which are the coalition party of BN and the coalition party of PR, as mentioned above. I argue that both coalitions are considered the same, although there are some political arguments that these two are not the same due to technicalities. One of the clearest differences between these two parties is that BN is a coalition party registered with the Registrar of Society as per the Societies Act 1966, while PR is an informal coalition party declared on its own. Although this may seem to have nothing to do with ethnicity, which is the focus of this paper, official recognition and registration is important during an election, especially a by-election. This is because the Election Commission has disallowed the use of non-contesting party's flags to fly (Bernama, 2010). Therefore, as BN is a registered coalition party, they will be using the BN banner during the election. PR, due to its position as a non-registered coalition party, will use its own party's banner to campaign during the by-election. It means that should a by-election involve UMNO and PAS, UMNO and its component parties can use the BN logo without any issue as it is their official registration for electoral purposes. Unlike PAS and other opposition parties, they can only display PAS symbol because PAS is the contesting party. DAP and PKR are seen to be outsiders by officials and have nothing to do with such a by-election. Therefore, they have no right to display their own party symbols. In 'old politics', where the political scenario placed a heavy emphasis on ethnicity and the 'identity' of the party, this will harm the chances of PAS winning in Chinese areas. The same would happen to DAP in Malay areas should they contest. Furthermore, the affiliation level may be different for PR component parties as those supporters of a particular component party in PR may have to vote for another component party should their supporting party not contest rather than casting their vote directly for PR. Unlike BN, the supporters of UMNO, for instance, are voting directly for BN (and not MCA, should a MCA candidate be contesting).

The second difference between BN and PR is that BN is a coalition comprised of ethnic-based parties (Gomez, 2007) – I refer only to the main component parties in Peninsular Malaysia, which are UMNO, MCA and MIC, although other smaller component parties are technically a 'multi-ethnic' party –, while PR is a coalition of PKR, DAP and PAS (in which PKR is the most 'genuine' multi-ethnic party, while DAP and PAS are technically 'multi-ethnic' parties dominated by Chinese and Malays respectively) (Selway, 2015). The difference between an ethnic-based component party and a multi-ethnic component party is that for an ethnic-based component party, the burden of shouldering the issues of other ethnic groups that are not their own is lesser than that of a multi-ethnic party. For instance, if Malay voters were to seek help with Malay-related issues from MCA, MCA could pass the issue to UMNO if it wished to do so as it is clearly a Chinese party (although the latter part of this thesis will touch on how MCA is beginning to engage with non-Chinese groups), but if the same issue were to happen to DAP, it would be unavoidable and they would have to engage with the issue directly as it is a multi-ethnic party. As per UMNO 2, the working mode within BN is such that each ethnic-based component party will take charge of their own community issues when asked how UMNO, as a Malay-based party, is going to win votes from the non-Malay community:

"We have to work with our partners. Because we based on the partnership... Inilah falsafah dari dulu (translated as 'this is our philosophy since before')" (UMNO 2)

UMNO 1 and UMNO 3 are also supporting such a view when they see BN as a multi-ethnic party, even though its component parties are ethnic-based.

"Barisan Nasional, pelbagai kaum, walaupun parti setiap satu mewakili etnik, tetapi kita pergi ke pilihan raya atas nama Barisan Nasional yang mewakili pelbagai kaum di dalam." (UMNO 1)

Translated as:

"Barisan Nasional, multi-ethnic, although each party is representing an ethnicity, but we go to election under the name of Barisan Nasional, which represents multi-ethnic within it." (UMNO 1)

"... Of course, the principle of the party is to fight for the Malays, for the Malay cause, for Islam, but all along it has been UMNO working with other component parties, Barisan Nasional, which also serves interest of other community as well." (UMNO 3)

Another point to be noted between BN and PR is the organisational structure of each coalition party. BN, as a registered coalition, must have a clear organisational structure for its coalition party. Although Article 8.3 in the constitution for BN states that the chairman and his deputy should be chosen by the members of Dewan Tertinggi (the Supreme Council, the highest body within BN), most of the positions are dominated by equivalent UMNO leaders, for instance, the position of chairman, deputy chairman, secretary general, treasurer general, youth chief, women's chief and executive secretary. This is because UMNO is the core of BN.

"Kerana ia merupakan tonggak kepada Barisan Nasional... Tetapi pada masa yang sama, Barisan Nasional terus dikuatkan kerana Pengerusi BN ialah Presiden UMNO, Presiden UMNO ialah Pengerusi BN..." (UMNO 1)

Translated as:

"Because it is the core for Barisan Nasional... But at the same time, Barisan Nasional continues to be strengthened because the chairman of BN is president of UMNO, president of UMNO is chairman of BN..." (UMNO 1).

As PR is not a registered coalition party, they would not need to formally set up an official organisational structure, even though they do have a Pakatan Rakyat Presidential Council. As a result, as found from fieldwork interviews, most candidates are accusing their political rivals from a negative angle. PR leaders prefer to call UMNO, MCA and MIC ethnic-based parties rather than looking at the overall structure of BN, which is more multi-ethnic in the sense that combining component parties will result in a multi-ethnic membership. At the same time, the BN leader is keen to view PR component parties as ethnic-based parties too, looking at the dominant groups of each party instead of accepting that they are gradually changing. Most of the candidates prefer to see themselves through a 'non-ethnicity' lens, as the term 'multi-ethnic' or 'non-ethnicity' seem to have a more positive connotation, parallel to the usage of the term 'democracy' in some of the least democratic countries, such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), where the term 'democracy' has a more positive connotation.

However, I argue that such differences may not be large or have a significant impact, although I do not deny that some of these differences may cause problems. This is because that even though these differences may be obvious at a paperwork level, in practice it does not always hold true, for instance, the restriction placed on a party flying their own flag when their component partners are contesting in a by-election. Even when restricted, their flags can often be seen during nomination and campaign periods. One of the main purposes of flying these symbols and logos is to show that the party is supporting their partner. As previously discussed, the bond between the supporters of a political party and the party's symbol may inherit that affection. For example, people may be keen to call their party 'Rocket' (their symbol) rather than DAP. These symbols may ignite the emotion of their supporters to a higher level of support. Although it may be removed by the Election Commission during the campaign period, the intended messages

have already been delivered. The effect of these physical symbols may not be very useful anymore. Apart from this, although PR does not have as structured an organisation as BN, they do have a de facto leader in Anwar Ibrahim. Should they win federal power, Anwar Ibrahim will be the prime minister. From here, we can see that one of the most important figures in an organisation is the highest leader. As there has been a consensus among PR component parties on this, there should not be any problem. Due to these reasons, I argue that BN and PR can be considered as the 'same' coalition party without many practical differences in that regard.

This writing will further explore individual component parties, namely UMNO, MCA, PKR, DAP and PAS, on a more specific level of their party membership, organisational structure and internal politics, and whether such discussion reflects on the ethnicity issue within the party.

4.3   INDIVIDUAL POLITICAL PARTIES

Each individual party has their own constitution and membership forming the prerequisite for a political party. Modern political parties are keen to have a large pool of membership for various reasons, including the dissemination of their party propaganda to a wider scope of people (Scarrow, 1991). With a large group of members, any problems regarding manpower is eased. As a political party, aside from the issue of manpower, parties also hope that their members can help to run and finance the party, recruit new members, have their voices heard within the party (and governmental policies) and have them anchored within civil society (Ware, 1996). This is because not all parties have self-generated income and so support from its members is crucial. However, having a large membership does not automatically translate into votes. For example, the Free Democratic Party in Germany does not have a large membership but it does have a significant share of the vote during election, and at the same time, it also has influence in national and land government (Poguntke & Boll, 1992). Although such examples can nullify the above premise, most of the political parties are still keen to have more members due to the benefits that overwhelm the negatives. Another example from a Dutch political party is

the Dutch Labour Party, with 80 per cent of its operational costs coming from its membership fees. This has shown how important it is to some political parties, if not all.

In Malaysia, the generic argument on what a political party is and how a political party should perform do still stand. However, there is one element which is crucial and requires attention: ethnicity. Although the role of ethnicity in 'new politics' does not seem to be as important as in 'old politics', since the formation of a substantive number of political parties were formed during the 'old politics' era, the element of ethnicity cannot be erased. There are political parties which explicitly portray the core struggle of their parties. These can be referred to as UMNO, MCA and PAS. These three parties are generally acceptable as ethnic-based parties (except for PAS; some will call it an Islamic party but due to the nature of its Malaysian background most of the Muslim are Malays). These can be viewed through their party constitution, party memberships and party office bearer. Even the name of the party gives the nature of the party. For this type of political party, not a great deal of ambiguity arises.

Another type of political party is the non-ethnic-based (multi-ethnic) party. Such parties are interesting in Malaysia. Parties such as PKR, which declares itself as a non-ethnic party and indeed, the party composition in terms of membership and office bearer are mixed, include multi-ethnic groups within the party. This does not cause many contentious issues. But for other parties, such as DAP, PGRM (Malaysian People's Movement Party, briefly discussed in an earlier chapter) and PPP (People's Progressive Party due to their small size, not previously discussed), these parties claim to be multi-ethnic and state as much in their party constitution. However, these parties are dominated by a particular ethnic group, i.e. DAP and PGRM are dominated by the Chinese while PPP is dominated by Indians.

With the above examples, we can see that in the discussion of the nature of a political party, especially in terms of the party membership, it is crucial to examine two things. First is to look at their constitution. Their constitution defines who is eligible to be

a member and thereby determines the party characteristic in terms of being ethnic-based or non-ethnic based. Even if a party's constitution mentions that it should perform as a multi-ethnic party, in reality, it is not always necessarily so. This leads on to the second issue to be explored, namely the actual composition of the party. These two elements of constitution and actual composition will be discussed in depth below for each political party.

However, the characteristic of a political party in Malaysia, whether it be ethnic-based or non-ethnic based, does not stop there; it carries some symbolic sentiments within it. As discussed in the Background chapter, at the time when 'old politics' flourished, the ethnicity of the political party and the politicians meant a great deal to voters. The ethnicity of a candidate and the 'ethnicity' of the political parties can either attract or reject voters. For example, in the past when DAP was not working with PAS, Chinese supporters of DAP were sceptical about PAS while PAS Malay supporters had a 'fear feeling' towards DAP. Such a scenario has been discussed in the Background chapter and is not uncommon. However, in the era of 'new politics', this phenomenon has seemingly changed. In the opposition coalition of PR, Malay and Chinese voters feel less insecure with DAP and PAS respectively. Aside from the factor of them working together, these parties did make changes to their parties, which will be discussed in depth below. Likewise, for other parties such as UMNO and MCA, changes have been made or are trying to be made to reposition themselves in the wave of de-ethnicisation. Therefore, in this chapter, I will explore what these political parties do to face the trend of de-ethnicisation of politics in Malaysia in terms of their membership structure. This section explores how each political party deals with their membership structure, whether it flows with de-ethnicisation or remains with ethnic-based politics.

4.3.1 UMNO

UMNO is regarded as a Malay-based party due to its restriction of memberships. According to Clause 4.2 in UMNO's constitution, "Ahli Biasa ialah warganegara Malaysia yang berbangsa Melayu atau Bumiputera yang berusia 18 tahun keatas" which

is translated as, "An Ordinary Member is a Malaysian citizen of Malay descent or Son of the Soil, who is aged 18 and above". 'Son of the Soil' refers to the aborigines of Malaysia. Although Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country, aborigines in Malaysia are enjoying certain special privileges over other ethnicities (Syed Husin Ali, 2008). Malay is one of the ethnic groups defined as aborigines (mainly in the Peninsular of Malaysia, the geographical research location), while the remainder are mainly other ethnic groups in Sabah and Sarawak (Syed Husin Ali, 2008). Even for the ethnic groups of Malay, Article 160 of the federal constitution defines what constitutes a Malay. There are four criteria that must be met, of which the first three are: a person must be a Muslim, they must speak the Malay language and they must practise the Malay culture. For the fourth criteria, there are two options: first, they must be a person who is born during independence in the Federation or in Singapore, or they must be a person who is born before independence, with his father or mother born in the Federation or in Singapore, or in Independence Day domiciles in the Federation or in Singapore. The second option for this criterion is being an offspring of such a person. Therefore, all members of UMNO must be Malays per UMNO constitution and have such characteristics as defined in the Federation constitution of Malaysia.

The above has explained how to qualify as an Ordinary Member for UMNO. A second type of membership for UMNO is by becoming an Associate Member. Clause 4.3 of UMNO's constitution explains what an Associate Member should be:

"sebuah pertubuhan politik yang bersetuju berkerjasama dengan UMNO dan menerima syarat-syarat yang ditetapkan oleh Majlis Tertinggi."

Translated as:

"a political body which agrees to cooperate with UMNO and accept conditions set by the Supreme Council."

This clause, however, is silent on the ethnicity of the members of the political body (Associate Member). For example, KIMMA (Parti Kongres India Muslim Malaysia or Malaysian Indian Muslim Congress) has been admitted as an Associate Member of UMNO in 2010 (UMNO Online, 2010). Its name shows the identity of the membership should consist of Indian Muslims. However, Muslims by birth (from a non-Malay ethnic group) or converted Muslims in Malaysia may be facing slight identity dilemmas as this group are often seen as Malay, although technically they are not. Such technicality is important procedurally as the definition of a person's identity could determine whether he or she can be admitted as an Ordinary Member and thereby hold a position within the party. However, in reality, such an identity definition for an Indian Muslim does not cause much trouble to UMNO as a whole. This is because firstly, it has been the norm that a small number of persons with such identities can be admitted, just as any other Malays. Secondly, there is not much noise on the issue and so does not require further clarification. Therefore, it is not surprising that a small number of people can assimilate themselves into another ethnic group and be admitted into UMNO. Even so, due to the small number of such persons, this research does not intend to discuss it in depth.

As UMNO is a Malay-based party, all office bearers will consist of Malays only. Even the slightly controversial Associate Member of KIMMA are only invited as observers and not decision-makers, nor do they have voting rights. Like it or not, candidates who contest in UMNO elections will have to face fully Malay voters. Winning in the party election is crucial to being appointed to a government office. Although this is not a must, and it used to be that a losing candidate was appointed to the government while a winning candidate was left out, an appointment to government was the prerogative of the prime minister. But those elected to the Supreme Council will certainly have the upper hand compared to those who are not on an equal playing field. Conventionally, the president of UMNO assumes the office of chairman of BN and thereafter prime minister:

"... Pengerusi BN ialah Presiden UMNO. Presiden UMNO ialah Pengerusi BN..." (UMNO 1)

Translated as:

"... Chairman of BN is President of UMNO. President of UMNO is Chairman of BN". (UMNO 1)

Therefore, within UMNO itself, it is not surprising that ethnic issues, especially those favourable to Malays, are often being played up. The ethnic tone has been kept low-key in recent years due to the negative effect on BN, especially during an election. This is because when UMNO overplayed the ethnicity card, its component partners found it difficult to prove to their respective voters that they were of equal status to UMNO, thereby causing non-UMNO component parties to lose and lose badly. In short, UMNO is ruled by Malays alone. Anything related to other ethnic groups will enter this paper when we talk about BN's level as described above. The response by UMNO 3 above summarises the position of UMNO as an ethnic-based party, but attention should also be paid to the fact that BN is a multi-ethnic coalition. Moderation is the way to go:

"... It is an ethnic-based party, yes, it is favourable, it is solidarity, ethnic solidarity is still there, and we can deliver votes, but not to the extreme. You have to manage. You have to see Barisan Nasional as a multi-ethnic coalition. If this ethnic sentiment become too strong, whether it is Malayness, or Chinese, whatever, it is not good." (UMNO 3)

4.3.2   MCA

MCA is the second most senior member within BN in the Peninsular of Malaysia, in terms of the formation date of the political cooperation with UMNO, leading to the

formation of an alliance party (predecessor to BN) and BN, the size of membership, the number of seats contested, the number of government offices and so on. Similarly to UMNO, by its very name, MCA can be understood to be a Chinese-based party. Its membership is only open to Chinese ethnic groups as stated in MCA constitution, Part III, Clause 9.1, which states that for a person to qualify as a member of MCA, "He is a Malaysian citizen of Chinese descent". Although technically, Clause 7 states the three types of membership for MCA, namely Ordinary Member, Life Member and Honorary Member, these are quite similar to one another when discussed with an ethnicity perspective. The only difference between an Ordinary Member and a Life Member is the membership fee, with an Honorary Member being essentially an Ordinary or Life Member appreciated for his/her contribution. The real difference comes with an Affiliate Member, which is just a suggestion and has not been formally executed. The deputy president of MCA sees that although it is a Chinese-based party, it is also crucial to engage with other communities to balance views within the party:

> "In time to come, we may have to consider affiliate members, associate members to engage with non-Chinese group so that we have a balanced view within the party." (MCA 1)

If the proposal of affiliate members could be executed, MCA could expand its outreach in line with the trend of including all communities instead of only the Chinese. However, at this time, we may or may not see MCA as serving all the communities of Malaysia, which is going to be discussed in the next chapter, but in terms of membership per se, membership in MCA is even more exclusive than in UMNO, as UMNO has its associate members. For MCA 3, MCA is not a party that serves only the Chinese community but all communities in Malaysia. MCA membership is as such by default rather than by design due to historical events:

> "First of all, you have to understand MCA party's constitution. Except the membership is only open for Chinese, all the other political struggles are for all

Malaysians. The party membership for Chinese is historical events, that is cannot changed, not that we cannot change in the future, but it has been there because of historical events." (MCA 3)

In terms of the organisational structure of MCA, its argument is very similar to that of UMNO. MCA, as a wholly Chinese members' party, will have a wholly Chinese leadership as well. This means that in an MCA party election, in order to win, a candidate's target group will be Chinese (members) voters. Winning in such an election is crucial in obtaining appointment to government offices. Again, it is not absolute as only the prime minister has absolute power, but traditionally, those in the top positions definitely have a better chance of being appointed. However, the ethnicity card is not being played as strongly in MCA as in UMNO. One quote from UMNO 2 on DAP fits in nicely here as well:

"Sebab for Chinese, apa yang dia nak pertahankan racist? Dia fight for equality..." (UMNO 2)

Translated as:

"Because for Chinese, why does he want to protect racists? He fights for equality." (UMNO 2)

UMNO 2 are trying to say there are differences between Malays and Chinese. Unlike Malays and UMNO, the Chinese can fight for their privileged position. Therefore, to fight for their special privileges accorded to them by the constitution, UMNO plays a role as it is a Malay-based party. Sometimes, due to the nature of the subject, UMNO would have to take an ethnically inclined route, but it will be a different case for the Chinese. As the Chinese do not have special privileges to begin with, there is no reason

for them to protect the racist Chinese, as becoming more racist would not help the Chinese community to gain. The Chinese would fight for equality to be on a par with the Malays. In other words, what the Malays are getting, the Chinese should get too. It indirectly implies the abolition of special privileges for Malays or that special privileges be accorded to all. Although the quotation above may not be understandable by the words alone, that is how the role of observation and interpretation works, as discussed in the Methods chapter. UMNO 2 is trying to describe the differences between UMNO and MCA in his own understanding.

However, this does not mean that MCA candidates or members could not fight for better Chinese welfare, playing more ethnic outbidding, playing the ethnicity card and so on. However, this is not the case in recent years where focus has been on universal values rather than tied to ethnicity. This is evident in the presidential speech given during the MCA General Assembly where no part of the speech touched on Chinese ethnicity. Therefore, the ethnicity card does not seem to work within the Chinese community. If the ethnicity card is so useful, then the Chinese community would not vote against MCA and leave a weak MCA with UMNO:

"I am talking about, when Chinese are angry towards UMNO, Barisan Nasional, what they can do is to vote out Barisan Nasional, but not UMNO,because majority of them do not vote in UMNO's seat. They can only vote in MCA areas." (MCA 3)

Therefore, in summary, for MCA, technically everything begins with membership, leadership and organisational structure being wholly in the hands of the Chinese. Nevertheless, the next chapter will discuss how MCA has repositioned itself and reached out to whole communities instead of serving only the Chinese community.

4.3.3 PKR

Among all the main political parties in Malaysia, PKR is one of the most 'genuine' multi-ethnic or non-ethnic political parties. Comparatively, it has the most diverse membership and leadership compared to other political parties which are dominated by a particular ethnic group, be it an ethnic-based party or a multi-ethnic-based party, a fact that is scarcely denied as these arguments can easily be substantiated by statistics. Unlike most of the main competitive political parties in Malaysia, PKR is a relatively new party, aged only about 16 years: "Keadilan has been for 16 years promoting multiracial politics." (PKR 3)

One of the most interesting issues is that the figure who sparked the formation of PKN and the development of PKR, Anwar Ibrahim, has never taken part in a PKR internal election. Officially, he has no legal position within PKR. However, people from all walks of life, be they politicians from both fronts, the media, civil society and so on, especially within the party itself, regard him as the de facto leader, the supreme leader or adviser for PKR, to name just a few of the usual titles accorded him. He was the opposition leader in Parliament, a position legally recognised, before being jailed on charges of sodomy, an incident that is being disputed by various organisations, groups and individuals. Another interesting fact regarding PKR is that in the 2013 General Election, it was the only party in Malaysia to have at least one elected representative, be that either a Member of Parliament or a State Assemblyman, in every state in Malaysia (Keadilan Rakat, 2015).

As a multi-ethnic or non-ethnic party, as claimed by some of its leaders (for the moment, I will use the general term 'multi-ethnic' to refer to PKR while the in-depth discussion on the actual terms will be explored in the next chapter), PKR has a diverse membership. This is due to no restrictions being placed on a person becoming a member of the PKR. According to Part III of PKR's constitution, Clause 6.2 states:

"Mana-mana warganegara Malaysia yang berusia lapan belas (18) tahun ke atas adalah layak menjadi Anggota Biasa."

Translated as:

"Any Malaysian citizen aged 18 and above is qualified to be an ordinary member."

Due to this, approximate membership statistics provided by both PKR 1 and PKR 2 are as follows:

"Malay constitutes about 50% Indian is the next largest which is 26%, 20 lah 20% (local accent). Then Chinese is about 18% and the balance is basically Sabah and Sarawak" (PKR 1),

"PKR only have 55% Malays. I don't count Sabah Sarawak as Malays... Chinese is small, about 10%, but we have a lot of Sabah Sarawak, we have a lot of Indians, we have about 20% Indians. But it is not a problem, we don't care about the ethnic background of anyone. The whole point about non-racial politics are those things are irrelevant..." (PKR 2).

Although there is some mismatch between both sets of data, it is not a major problem. As ethnicity is never an issue within PKR, less attention is paid towards these specific statistics. However, both leaders agree that Malays represent the largest percentage of membership (over 50 per cent), followed by Indians and lastly, Chinese, excluding those from Sabah and Sarawak. The actual ranking for the Malaysian population has Malay as the majority ethnic group, followed by Chinese and lastly,

Indians (referring to the Peninsular of Malaysia only as the research is limited to that area).

Unlike UMNO and MCA, where their leadership line-up is only by a single ethnic group due to their membership restriction, the leadership's position in PKR regarding ethnicity is flexible, because as a diverse party, anyone from any ethnic group has the possibility of occupying any position. Following the 2014 party election, the positions of president (won uncontested) and deputy president (contested only by Malay candidates) are held by Malay leaders. For the four slots of the vice-presidency, which is contested by 14 candidates, three are Malays while the fourth is Chinese. The positions of chief and deputy chief for both the youth and women's wings are also from the Malay ethnic group. However, for the 20 Central Committee seats, the composition is rather more balanced with the elected members consisting of Malays, Indians, Chinese and those from East Malaysia. Although at first glance, the leadership seems to favour Malays, a few of the informants do not regard that as an issue with ethnicity:

"... There is no ethnic issue. If there is ethnic issue, we must well put Chinese, three out of six must be Chinese... If you cannot win, cannot win la... As I said, election has nothing to do with ethnicity. Even if there is no Chinese in the top, so what, it doesn't say anything..." (PKR 2),

"PKR has never had anything to do with ethnicity" (PKR 1).

At the same time, the appointed members, such as for the position of another three vice-president, secretary general, treasurer general, information chief and chief coordinating secretary are coming from various ethnicities, including those from East Malaysia. In summary, although PKR seems to have more Malay leaders in its organisational structure than any other ethnic group, firstly, this could not be viewed directly through an ethnicity lens as explained by the two leaders above and secondly, even if people wanted to view it in such a way, PKR has also managed to show that non-

Malays are capable of being elected to the central committee, especially in the 20 Central Committee Members' seats.

4.3.4 DAP

DAP is technically a multi-ethnic party, as defined by its constitution in Clause III(2): "Any person of not less than 17 years of age and is a federal citizen who subscribes to the conditions of membership and is not a member of any political party or organisation ancillary or subsidiary thereto, whose aims and policies are incompatible with the aims and policies of the party, may become a member of the party". However, this technical eligibility does not translate into proportionate diverse membership as the party is heavily dominated by the Chinese ethnic group, be it as an ordinary member or as an organisation leader. This is mostly due to the historical background of DAP itself, as portrayed by two of the informants below:

> "DAP is a party that opens membership to everyone. But, of course, we have a situation of, maybe about 80 over percent being of ethnic Chinese. That is by design rather than by default. This is due to the history of DAP" (DAP 3).

> "Your background, you start from Chinese-based, or on urban based, and of course along the way you contest in urban areas, Chinese majority areas. It is very natural that your membership, your leadership and all that will be Chinese-based or non-Malay based. (DAP 2)

Previously, while BN still holds hegemonic influence, it is not easy for people to vote for opposition parties, let alone the Chinese. Therefore, DAP could barely survive, but at least have a better chance of survival, in the urban Chinese seats. Therefore, DAP 2 above is correct in his opinion on the nature of Chinese-based membership, even though that may not be the ideal intention.

However, the scenario after the 2008 General Election was different because opposition parties managed to break through and break a few records, something which had never been achieved by opposition parties before, i.e. having such a 'huge' (comparatively) victory. DAP would also be able to attract Malays to their cause; although this is not easy, it is no longer impossible. Efforts have been made to expand the membership, especially towards the less dominant group in DAP, the Malays. Although at the branch level a few are comprised of a Malay majority, including pure Malays, branches managed to be set up, but unfortunately, this does not last long due to the quality and intention of joining DAP.

"... I still remember after 2008, they were... my colleague, YB Teresa Kok, who formed a couple of all Malay branches. She was so happy, so excited, but the two branches disbanded quite soon, for the simple reason that she cannot meet their demand. They used to be UMNO people. Every time, from early of the year to end of the year, asking for money, all kind of things la." (DAP 1)

"...We actually have Malay branch... Malay members, some pure Malay members branch, but we also try not to encourage that much... They keep asking you for money... We will but we don't want to end up like PKR. Whenever come to election and by-election time, all these branches announce that they pull out and join BN, join UMNO. That is why we are a bit cautious, a bit slow, in forming pure Malay branches..." (DAP 2)

Such descriptions as provided by the two leaders above have shown they have recruited the wrong group, as the quality of these kinds of members are not truly subscribed to their political struggle but to monetary gain instead, an issue which DAP can hardly satisfy due to the low monetary facilities within the party itself. This has fitted nicely into the response below, where it is claimed that quality should always supersede

quantity. New members recruited should be the ones who are subscribed to the political ideology of the party instead of recruiting members just for the sake of increasing statistics.

"... So you don't want to attract the wrong member as well in the sense that they join because they get kicked out from other party or they really hate the party or whatever. We want those that really subscribe to your ideas that is why we also have this training session called Sekolah Demokrasi, specifically targeted to Malay speaking youth. And it is a political introduction programme where we explain to them what democracy is, is not so much about party but we explain what democracy is, what are the different political ideologies, and if they find that, after explaining, they can understand social democracy as an ideology, they can understand what DAP is trying to do and if they are genuinely interested in the party and they join, that is what we want" (DAP 3).

As for the leadership, the voting system in DAP is slightly different from the other parties. Central committee members for other political parties are voted by the delegates at the division level, which means that to be eligible to vote, a member must first get elected at the branch level as delegate to the division level, and at division level, he/she again needs to be elected as delegate to the central level before he/she can vote. This means that to be eligible to vote for a Central Committee member, members from other political parties would need to be elected twice: once at branch level and another at division level. However, for DAP, as all Ordinary Members are eligible to attend branch level elections, a member only needs to win enough support at the branch level to be promoted as Central Committee delegates. This shows that if a branch is comprised of pure Malays, there will definitely be Malay delegates at the central level.

Such a system demonstrates that the ethnicity of central level delegates can be diverse by default, but the Malay Member of Parliament from DAP would prefer not to analyse it in that dimension. He argues that ethnicity does not play a role there; it is

mainly due to the profile of the candidate himself. The issue is due to the unknown figure of newcomers.

"At the same abut 60-70 candidates for 20 posts. But only how many Malays? Even those how many Malays, they are not very well known. The problem actually is not so much about race, but the problem is that, you have only 20 seats for election. And out of the 20, you can easily count 10-15 who you will say are permanent one, in the sense that they are well known, they are established, so you know that definitely, people are going to vote for them. So, in actual fact, the really slots up for grab, is only about 5-8. So it is difficult for newcomers, actually the problem is difficult for newcomers to get in, more than it is difficult because of ethnic group." (DAP Malay Member of Parliament)

In summary, for DAP, the technical understanding of DAP may be different from the practical side. Technically, they are a multi-ethnic party, but the reality shows it to be otherwise. However, at the same time, such a composition of DAP may not be due to ethnicity itself but rather the reluctance of the non-dominant group in DAP, particularly Malays, to join the party, even though their political ideology is moving towards non-ethnicised (which will be elaborated upon in depth in the next chapter).

4.3.5 PAS

PAS is the second largest party in the Peninsular of Malaysia in terms of party membership, standing at 1.008 million members.

"PAS sudah capai ahli 1 juta 8 ribu orang di seluruh negara..." (PAS 1)

Translated as:

"PAS has achieved membership of one million and eight thousand for the whole nation..." (PAS 1)

PAS is not an ethnicity-driven party but a religion-based party. The interesting aspect regarding the relationship between Malay and Islam in Malaysia is that Malays must profess to be of the Islamic religion. Therefore, a Malay ethnic group is a subset for the Islamic religion in Malaysia. As PAS is a religion-based party, it is not surprising that they will set a restriction on membership. According to clauses 11(1)&(2)&(3) in the PAS constitution, a member must be a *warganegara Malaysian* (Malaysian citizens), *Beragama Islam* (profess Islamic religion) and *Aqil Baligh menurut Hukum Syara* (puberty according to Islamic Law). Its membership does not touch upon ethnicity at all, as PAS does not see ethnicity as an issue. To take this a step further, its president believes they have, in fact, broken down the wall that separates different ethnic groups and religions. This too has helped the party gain support from the non-Muslim community. To date, PAS Supporters' Club now has 20,000 members.

"Kita berjaya memecahkan tembok yang memisahkan kaum dan agama... Bukan Islam yang menjadi penyokong PAS dan bersedia menjadi ahli PAS, kita menubuhkan sayap Dewan Perhimpunan Penyokong. "(PAS 1)

Translated as:

"We managed to break the wall which separates ethnic and religion... Non-Muslim who used to be PAS supporters are ready to be PAS member, we form PAS Supporters' Club." (PAS 1)

"Kita telah berjaya mendapat sokongan daripada orang bukan Islam, Dewan Himpunan yang bersedia menerima undang-undang Hudud... Lebih kurang 20,000

ahli Dewan Himpunan. 20,000 mewakili semua kaum, Cina, India Kadazan, Iban. Mereka berada di tiap-tiap wilayah, tiap-tiap negeri dan daerah." (PAS 1)

Translated as:

"We managed to get support from the non-Muslim, PAS Supporter's Club ready to accept the Hudud Law... About 20, 000 members of PAS Supporters' Club. This 20,000 represent all ethnic groups, Chinese, Indians, Kadazan, Iban. They are all over in every territory, state and district." (PAS 1)

Similarly to UMNO and MCA in the sense of party leadership, PAS leadership positions are filled entirely by Malay Muslims. Even though the restriction is only limited to Muslims, regardless of ethnicity (unlike UMNO and MCA which put a full brake on it), in reality, the non-Malay community in the Peninsular of Malaysia is not big and is estimated to be approximately 25 per cent Chinese and 10 per cent Indian. From this not-so-big number of non-Malays, the percentage of this group of people to convert to Islam is tiny. From this tiny number, we would need to narrow down again to those who wish to join PAS. Therefore, even without data from PAS itself, there is a general understanding that such a group of people is small. The only one considered to have a slightly better profile in PAS is Annuar Tan Abdullah, a Chinese Muslim who is the Kelantan State Executive Councillor (akin to a cabinet minister at state level). Therefore, it is understandable that the line-up for PAS leadership is as such. Although PAS do not mind about the issue of ethnicity in Islamic teaching, similar to the political direction of PKR and DAP who intend to push for de-ethnicisation, PAS could not do much in technical terms, although its ideological principles are moving away from an ethnicity discourse, an issue that is irrelevant to them.

"We try to champion for all. That is why we try to introduce like Negara Kebajikan (Welfare State), PAS for ALL, Islam Rahmat (Mercy) For All," (PAS 2)

The PAS Supporters' Club, as briefly explained above, can be considered as PAS members but they do not have the right to vote. Their rights within the party are still very restricted. Interestingly, at the same time, PAS is putting up non-Muslims from the club to contest in the 2013 General Election (which will be discussed further in the third chapter). Therefore, in summary, PAS is a non-ethnic-based party that wishes to move away from ethnic politics, but at the same time and due to the nature of Islam being a core value of the party, it is a party comprised of near-to-total Malay members only.

4.4 DISCUSSSION AND COMPARISON

The coalition party system, which has been in place since the independence era (1957), seems to work well in Malaysia, not only for the ruling party, but for opposition parties who are following suit in forming a political alliance as an alternative for the people to choose as the government of the day. Marsh & Mitchell (1999) suggest that veto power among the members of a coalition can help to minimise the impact on a party. This is true but is not being implemented in either current coalition in Malaysia. BN is practising a 'compromising' principle in getting a solution which many do not agree with. BN is being seen as over-dominant within the BN coalition itself. It can be seen through various aspects including, but not limited to, the number of Parliamentary seats it has won, the number of ministerships it holds, the number of party members and so on. PR, on the other hand, although they do not have the veto concept, are practising an 'agree to disagree' principle. This means that the component parties within PR do not necessarily need to alter their own party's direction to achieve a single stance. Each party can have their own say, especially when it links to their own party's core value. On the one hand, such arrangements are good, but on the other, is akin to sweeping it under the carpet, such as the issue of Islamic State versus the secular state, which has never been resolved.

On the issue of MCA party membership, it is not easy, although not impossible, to amend their own party's constitution; MCA is taking practical steps to try and expand their affiliation to non-Chinese people through associate membership. With that, apart from being able to hear voices other than just the Chinese, MCA can play a more wholesome role for the general Malaysian community. Similarly to MCA, PAS is having problems with its supporters club, consisting of non-Muslims, being unable to become full members. This move is seen to be as expanding their base from a wholly Muslim community to be inclusive of everyone in Malaysia. For DAP, it might be slightly different. DAP's constitution is founded on the basis of multi-ethnicity. There is no constitutional restriction that forbids DAP from recruiting other ethnicities as their members. However, in practical terms, DAP is still being viewed as a Chinese-based party due to the dominance of the Chinese within the party, including the extremely high percentage of Chinese members and Chinese party leaders. Therefore, they are trying to rectify the situation by recruiting more Malays into their party, in which Malay members make up a very small percentage.

The three examples given above have shown that although the size of membership may not absolutely translate into votes, power or support, political parties are nevertheless keen to expand their grassroots base to a wider scope. Furthermore, these parties are trying to come out of their comfort zones and expand their influence into other ethnic groups in a 'catch-all-party' strategy. During the 'old politics' era, ethnicity was set as a pre-defined sector of society which each political party was trying to capture. However, with the 'catch-all- party' strategy forming part of the effort of the political parties in 'new politics' in Malaysia, Kirchheimer (1996) argues that a 'catch-all-party' may challenge the notion of political parties as being the representative of a pre-defined sector of society. With such an arrangement, individual parties can no longer declare themselves as being exclusively for a certain segment of society. They will need a more moderate policy to maintain such a stance. As Katz & Mair (1995) put it, such political parties are shifting the focus, focusing less on the issue of segmental representation while shifting the focus to the effectiveness of public policies. This may be a good move for political parties who intend to change their party's direction from a pre-defined segment

of the society which it intends to represent to become a party that represents all segments based on universal values, regardless of identity.

Making such big changes may result in being able to recruit more members, but as mentioned above, more members do not necessarily mean more votes. However, the ability to galvanise members for more political activism could give them a stronger bond with the respective party. This is because if membership registration could not be used as an indicator to show that such registration is a show of support (giving votes) but rather political activism for that party can show the support for the party. This is because if the members are merely sleeping members and are uninterested in involving themselves with political activism, the level of support for their party is in doubt. This is because a person may not go to that extent of political activism without having some kind of affection for the party (or at worst, the person does not have a hatred for the party) with the exemption of the benefits involved. This political activism, even when being performed by its members, should not be based on a benefit-cost principle but rather on the affection and loyalty that members have towards their own party (Whiteley & Seyd, 2002).

In general, a political party is led by a small group of leaders who may decide on the policies and direction of the party. Even so, party members, as stakeholders of the party, have the right to voice their opinions and even have a certain degree of influence towards those making policies (Katz & Mair, 1992). This appreciation, to a certain extent, acknowledges members as part of the leadership. Such a scenario may groom the affection of its members towards the party; at least, the party can be of a higher degree of confirmation that these members will vote for the party during the election. Even for a mass party, according to Beer (1969), apart from the idea that political parties are a prerequisite for democracy, he also argues the main purpose of such a political party is electoral success. Should the membership size of a political party be huge, the party could guarantee a high level of confirmation in which their own members will cast their votes for them. In a worst-case scenario, this means the party can get the biggest number of votes which will later translate into legislative power. It is not surprising to see that in Malaysia, especially in UMNO constituency where UMNO has a large membership

within that constituency, lost the seat. This is due to sabotage and protest votes coming from its members.

4.5   CONCLUSION

Are political parties able to make their parties more inclusive? The answer is Yes. From the discussion above, we can see the efforts taken by these political parties to make their membership more inclusive. In their effort of expanding their membership base to a wider segment of the society in Malaysia, the coalition party formed by the opposition may well serve as an alternative to the current government. The intention of the premise above is not to compare which coalition party can work better in terms of policy-making, but rather examine the ethnicity issue. As I argued before, although Malaysian politics is moving towards de-ethnicisation, ethnicity is still an important issue to deal with, although a lot of political actors, including political parties and politicians, are dodging it. As mentioned earlier, a drastic change may cause more harm than good. Therefore, with the formation of PR, a coalition that can represent all communities is Malaysia. On the more ethnicity-driven perspective, DAP may be seen as a Chinese-based party and PAS as a Malay-based party. But when these two parties combine with PKR, it will have a balanced ethnicity composition of Malays, Chinese and Indians (as PKR has quite a number of Indian members, even higher than the Chinese, while DAP itself also has quite a number of Indian members). On the lesser ethnicity-driven perspective, these three parties may be seen without an ethnicity lens (or with a multi-ethnicity lens) where ethnicity is not (and cannot) be an issue to be played with as it will affect the whole coalition. Therefore, ethnicity within PR could never be played as an issue due to firstly, the nature of their party's direction and stance in 'new politics' and secondly, the practically political effect where one ethnic gain can cause an ethnic loss.

Even for BN, MCA has shown their readiness for and, in fact, is moving towards the direction of de-ethnicisation where a lot of the programmes and activities are no longer exclusively for the Chinese. MCA have realised the importance of not relating

themselves exclusively to the Chinese community to the extent that they suggested direct membership into BN, which is different from now where people have to be a member of a component party within BN before being admitted as a member of BN. Assuming we are talking about the main component parties within BN only, it means a person must choose to admit into their own ethnicity party before they can be a member of the BN. This is the part where MCA feels that people nowadays may want to support BN, but not as a member of an ethnic-based party. UMNO is the less de-ethnicisation-driven party when compared to the other four (MCA, PKR, DAP and PAS). However, some UMNO members are shifting away from ethnic politics, at least at the official and public level. Although such a trend has been anticipated due to the strong command of support gained by UMNO, it is not surprising for them to react in such a way. However, this is not impossible as even the president of UMNO, cum prime minister of Malaysia, has launched his own version of 1Malaysia, which refers to the inclusivity of the Malaysian race instead of different ethnic groups.

Although it is argued that political parties can be considered as successfully making amendments to their party to make them more inclusive, does it mean that it can lead to de-ethnicisation of Malaysian politics? For this overall question, the answer is also positive. As we could not expect a drastic change overnight, especially in a politically conservative nation like Malaysia, extreme changes may not necessarily work better than taking one step at a time. There are many other factors that could drive or halt Malaysian politics from being de-ethnicised, such as party stance and electoral strategies, which are to be discussed in later chapters. In the party membership dimension specifically, we can see that political parties have made attempts to distance themselves from ethnic-based politics. We can see that as these political parties decline to offer more ethnic-based politics, they may encourage people to come together and push for de-ethnicisation. Although it is debatable whether it is the people who force political parties to change or that political parties make changes they force the people to accept, such issues are of lesser importance. This is due to the fact that de-ethnicisation is currently taking place and, in the dimension of party membership, is ably explored above on how most of the political parties are inclined towards the de-ethnicisation of politics.

CHAPTER 5:

PARTY STANCE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Party Membership, as discussed in the previous chapter, explores how political parties deal with their membership in the current flow of de-ethnicisation of politics. As party membership could form a foundation for distancing themselves from ethnic politics, it will be redundant if the direction of those political parties remains the same apart from getting more non-dominant new members. A new outlook for political parties is needed if they wish to distance themselves from the 'old politics' of politicking. Therefore, in this chapter, discussion surrounds the idea of how parties position their stance in dealing with the current political landscape. This new party stance could enhance the efforts of political parties in de-ethnicising politics even more.

There is a small but relevant scholarship on party stances on the Malaysian case. This scholarship takes a number of different approaches. Although they may not explicitly focus on party stances, their arguments do touch on whether the direction of political parties remains or changes through their party stances. These stances explain on how de-ethnicisation takes place in Malaysian politics. Rodan (2014) in his studies on political parties in Malaysia, sees that political parties in Malaysia have started to shift from ethnic politics to a more universal value based political discourse emphasising issues of economic development, rising material inequalities, abuse of power and so on. These findings are echoed by Loh (2007), who argues that the Malaysian political scene is placing greater emphasis on development than old school ethnic politics in Malaysia. He finds that developmentalism is taking the place of ethnicity in Malaysian politics. Although Loh (2013) stops short of labelling this de-ethnicisation, ideas concerning developmentalism are largely devoid of ethnic dimensions, and in this sense is dissimilar from Rodan's (2014) focus on good governance. Khoo (2012) thus argues that UMNO's grip on the Malay community has started to loosen. This is because the social world of

the Malay community has changed following four decades of urbanisation in Malaysia. Identity is no longer the first priority for part of Malay community when it comes to political discourse. Material development has closed the socio-cultural gap between Malays and non-Malay communities. Furthermore, when Malaysia has experienced economy crises, popular tolerance for political patronage reaches new lows(Case 2004). Therefore, this also reduces the relevance of ethnicity as patronage in Malaysia is closely tied to ethnicity, although cross-ethnic patronage does take some cases.

At the same time, Rodan (2014) also argues that even UMNO itself is trying to dilute its UMNO dominance image within BN by giving more leeway to other coalition parties. Hari Singh (1991) echoes this view with respect to the position of UMNO within BN. Although Hari Singh's research was published much earlier (1991), he saw even then that whilst ethnicity was contested between different parties, UMNO tried to take a more central position within BN while at the same time defending the rights of the Malay. This in fact has always been the principled approach of BN, but it has often been challenged in practical terms. Even DAP, which claims to be a multi-ethnic party, still devotes significant attention to Chinese related issues. This can be seen in Muhamad Fuzi Omar's (2008) research on the behaviour of DAP MPs where most of the issues they raised in the 1980s and into the 1990s surround ideas of Chinese education, university fairness in Malaysian university admission (where Chinese experience difficulty in admissions compared to their Malay counterparts with equal examination results). However, this has not been the case for 10th session of Parliament (1999) where DAP's focus (measured as in questions they raised in Parliament) has had far less emphasis on Chinese issues. From here, we can argue that not only UMNO is trying to moderate itself, DAP is also moving in a similar direction. Furthermore, the imprisonment of former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim also intensified cross-ethnic cooperation (Abbott 2009). Muslim NGOs and DAP (predominantly Chinese and being viewed as the Chinese party by the Muslim community) began to work together. This is echoed by Chandra Muzaffar (1998) where he argues that most NGOs in Malaysia do not have widespread membership, and the Anwar Ibrahim incident became the catalyst in uniting all these traditionally exclusive institutions under the same umbrella.

Although the political landscape seems to increasingly favour multi-ethnicity (or non-ethnicity), it can still be questioned that following the Anwar Ibrahim incident, it would have been reasonable to expect a change of government as well. Abbott 's(2009) response is that the incident is the result of the authoritarian practices of the ruling regime is to remain in power. Failing to overthrow BN does not mean that ethnicity still functions perfectly, but rather that the political system doesn't reflect the actual significance of ethnicity. In this vein, Rosyidah Muhamad (2015) argues that even though the internet is one of the factors which led to the success of opposition parties ('success' in the conventional Malaysian understanding as breaking the norm of electoral results such as winning more seats in Parliament or forming more state government, rather than directly assuming federal governmental power as the latter is too ambitious), but such success has largely due to the new stance taken by the opposition parties, distancing themselves from ethnic politics.

The scholars above have shown that political parties have shifted their party stance from ethnic-based discourse to a more universalistic direction. Basically, these arguments may be grouped into two main approaches, namely, 'shifting to a new cleavage' and 're-rooting for similarities' as largely discussed in previous chapters. By looking at their new party direction, it is justifiable to argue that political parties in Malaysia are moving towards de-ethnicisation of politics by de-ethnicising their party direction through their party stance.

Therefore, out of five political parties, some are inclined towards making self-alteration in order to remain in the political mainstream, while some feel that there is nothing wrong with their current political position and prefer to remain in the status quo. Political parties which are inclined towards de-ethnicisation of politics such as MCA, PKR, DAP and PAS are inclined towards making their party stance more inclusive, similar to the way they handle their membership, driving their party position away from ethnic politics. These can be seen through various events and efforts aiming for overall

Malaysians, rather than exclusively for a particular segment of the society and only propagating them intensively. However, for UMNO, some of its leaders feel that they are too are inclusive for overall Malaysians, rather than confining themselves to the Malay community only. In fact, they have been doing it all the time. Other UMNO leaders feel that under the BN system, each of the component parties are delegated with different communities, leading to the specialisation of work, this enables and provides overall coverage and representation for the whole of Malaysia.

In this chapter, I would look at two issues. The first issue to be explored is whether these political parties are moving towards a new direction post-2008 General Election. As the wave of 'new politics' is occurring, I am interested to see what kind of changes have political parties made. On the second issue, I would like to look at whether the stance taken by these political parties is inclined towards the de-ethnicisation of politics, or whether their party stance still remains with the 'old politics'.

5.2 DE-ETHNICISING MALAYSIAN POLITICS THROUGH PARTY ACTION AND DIRECTION

In order to move Malaysian politics towards the direction of de-ethnicisation, a political party is one of the crucial elements in determining the success or failure of it. This is because political parties are the ones that offer themselves for the people as an option to govern the nation. From that offer, voters will then have to choose on which positions taken by the various political parties is more favourable to them. In the Malaysian political scene, although there can be multiple clashes of positions between political parties, the main focus in this chapter and thesis surrounds the idea of either remaining with the ethnic politics or moving towards a new direction of the de-ethnicisation of politics.

According to Rabushka & Shepsle (1972), the moderation of ethnic issues can only be successful if ethnicity is not salient. They further their argument by stating that

should ethnicity become salient within a society, everything that happen will be defined in an ethnicity lens, making it harder to reduce the magnitude of ethnicity in such a society. These premises are good in looking at the latest developments of Malaysian politics, as if the former premise is occurring in Malaysia, this means that Malaysia has started to make a point in moving away from ethnic politics regardless of whether the magnitude is high or the process itself is just a very gradual move. This is because the intention of the writing is on whether Malaysian politics is moving away from ethnic politics rather than whether it has already successfully detached from ethnic politics. However, if the latter premise of ethnicity salience works in Malaysia, it may then remain that Malaysian politics is in the 'old politics' of ethnic politics. Should that happen, we should be able to see inflammatory and polarising rhetoric coming out of Malaysia (Horowitz 1985). There may be arguments of how ordinary people may react differently with political parties, such as having rally's based on ethnicity issues, re-looking at everything through the lens of ethnicity or even worse would be having ethnicity extremists (or extremism thinking) in the political scene. However, this would not be the interest of this writing. This is because such a group is unable to represent the whole of the population, unless their number is big enough to be considered as representative of Malaysia. Secondly, in a democratic society, political parties are the institutions in representing the people in governmental affairs. The one that forms the government is the political party and the one that determines who should be allowed to form the government is the people through the election. Therefore, the chain of delegation of power is from the people, through the election, to the political parties (through the candidates). Unless the role played by political parties in terms of political and government power is reduced drastically to the extent that civil movements may supersede them including winning an election, otherwise, at the moment, the focus will be on the actions taken by the political parties and these action be constructed as the will of whether to remain or move away from ethnic politics.

According to Mitchell, Evans & O'Leary (2009), they suggested two ways in looking at whether a 'majority-minority' structure is rigid or fluid. They argue firstly that this depends on the level of cross-cutting within the society itself. Should multidimensional cleavages be strong enough to divert ethnicity as the sole parameter in

pledging support, polarisation due to ethnicity may be reduced. This is because party loyalty is no longer based on blanket ethnic loyalty, but it may have shifted to other dimensions of party loyalty such as class loyalty, Left-Right loyalty and so on. Even if other cross-cutting cleavages do not exist or exist but are not strong enough to challenge the ethnicity cleavage, Mitchell, Evans & O'Leary (2009) second approach is to have a power sharing concept by different institutions. These over-arching cooperation, although may be ethnic-based to begin with, but with such over-arching relationship, the overall ethnic relationship will be closer as there would exist a working relationship between different ethnic groups. These two premises nicely fit into Malaysian politics. Starting with the second premise, this is the model that is being practised by the Malaysian incumbent party, BN (and its predecessor) since independence. Each ethnic group is represented and led by their own ethnic leaders. These leaders, through prudent leadership as suggested by Lijphart (1975), work together at the high levels of leaderships. Negotiation and bargaining happens in that level and the result is being brought to their own people through a top-down approach. Such a method seems to have worked well for decades until before the 2008 General Election. The failure of the BN in 2008 General Election and thereafter does not necessarily means that such a concept is not applicable anymore. It may mean so (such concept is not applicable) but at the same time, the failure of the BN can also be due to the application of such a concept rather than the fault of the concept itself. Anyway, the successful adoption of such a concept for decades could not deny the workable side of such a concept. Going back to the first premise of Mitchell, Evans & O'Leary (2009) who argue for multi-dimensional cleavage, such approach is the one being used successfully by the opposition bench. They managed to shift the cleavage of ethnicity to a non-ethnic cleavage of universal values such as justice, transparency, freedom and so on. The 2008 and 2013 General Election shows that ethnicity, although still remains as an element within the political system, the magnitude of importance of it has been reduced drastically. The position of ethnicity as the only and main contention in Malaysian politics does not hold water anymore. From here, we can see that although both suggestions by Mitchell, Evans and O'Leary (2009) have (had) been applied in Malaysian politics, the first premise of shifting to other cleavages seems to work better than the second premise of power sharing among ethnic groups, at the latest moment.

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However, caution should be taken as to whether inter-ethnic cooperation works well for an ethnic-based party. Horowitz (1985) questions on "how many parties an ethnic can afford without weakening its own itself in ethnic conflict". His questioning does have a point. In a cooperating relationship, including participation in an institution, each individual member would have to compromise in order to achieve overall goals. For instance, in a global institution such as the United Nations, European Union and so on, although each member states may receive benefits due to such participation, but at the same time, part of their 'sovereignty' may need to compromised in order to achieve the overall goals. If each member states could be firm on their own sovereignty without giving up anything, it may mean that the organisation is not strong enough to implement policies onto their member states. Such a loose working relationship may not sound good overall. On the other hand, if such a working relationship is good and tight, all member states would be willing to obey the organisations orders, meaning that such member states would need to compromise in a certain sense. Therefore, Horowitz (1985) does raise an interesting point. However, from another perspective, the questioning may not be an issue to begin with. Should ethnicity not be salient anymore (or much less), and the attention is shifted to other dimensions or cleavage, ethnicity does not pose an issue to begin with. This is because people no longer see themselves as 'you' and 'me' anymore, but rather as 'us'. If the discussion focuses on privilege issues held by certain ethnic groups, then ethnicity may be an issue. For instance, in Malaysia, Malays are accorded to certain rights and privileges due to the status as 'son of the soil' (refers to as the 'original' people of the place). These rights and privileges are crucial for them to be helped in certain manners such as quota allocation, financial support and so on. However, if without such handicaps, Malays, on their merits are able to achieve what they wish to achieve and be on the same par as other ethnic groups, such handicaps may be meaningless. Thus, negating the issue of ethnicity in Malaysian society. In the current political scene which pushes forward for de-ethnicisation, especially by the PR, they trust in the development of Malays and do not think that ethnicity should be a barrier in separating Malays from other ethnic groups. A similar scenario happened to BN, although at the same time, both of them were reluctant to suggest for such an abolishment. This is because such an issue is still considered as 'sensitive' in Malaysian society. Even

if they, such as the BN government, in a certain sense agree with abolishing the quota system, they are inclined towards introducing meritocracy as a new approach rather than suggesting for such an abolishment. Although the end results are very similar, but the usage of words remain a 'sensitive' issue in Malaysia. Therefore, it is the actions and directions taken by political parties that determines whether Malaysia is willing (or already) moving towards de-ethnicisation.

Although political parties have a large role to play with the process of de-ethnicisation of Malaysian politics, the questions that arise are whether political parties, especially truly ethnic-based parties are willing to adapt themselves to the new playing field. Ezrow et.al (2011), through their empirical analyses argue that in Western European democracies, the mainstream political parties have started to shift their position between Left and Right to accommodate the public opinion although a smaller number of political parties are still firmly holding to their party ideology. This is not surprising as the contestation between these mainstream political parties do need to rely on the support of the masses and public opinion is a good indicator in telling them what the public does not need at that particular time. Adam et.al (2009) further suggest that out of the two types of political parties, namely activist-dominated and leaders-dominated political parties, the former tends to adhere to what their support wishes to have, while the latter prefers to follow the wishes of the overall society. Even though these two types of political parties are shifting their party ideology and direction according to different segments of people, but the fact is that the ideology and direction of the parties are changeable even to the extent of becoming far away from their original ideology and direction if there happens to be the demand for their preferred-listened people. This has set a parallel for the case of ethnic-based parties in Malaysia. Although a political party may be founded on certain ideology, values, direction, beliefs and so on, these do not mean that such a foundation is fixed and not changeable. Politics, to a certain extent, is a game of dynamism where blanket obeying to fixed rules may land them in trouble if the political scenario requires them to make changes. Following on with the two scholars arguments above, although political parties are the ones that have the bigger role in determining how the Malaysian political scene should be shaped, but at the same time, the mass (voters) do have influence on political parties regarding their actions and

directions. Referring back to the same example of Malay special privileges as above, political parties do not dare to suggest for the abolishment because they adhere to the choice of the people, failing may cause them the loss of considerable support. Such a direction is inclined towards bottom-up. However, if there is a time when political parties feel that the 'sensitivity' and 'firmness' of the people regarding that issue is not that strong anymore, political parties may take the first step of suggesting it to be abolished. This approach is inclined towards top-down. At the current moment, de-ethnicisation of politics seems to be inclined towards top-down, especially after the 2008 General Election and this time with the support of the masses as well. Such premise is supported by Budge (1994) when he argues that political parties may shift political direction due to the past elections results. No doubt, results of the 2008 General Election does have a big impact towards the overall Malaysian political arrangement. Actually, such an approach had been tried by PKR predecessor (PKN) during the late 1990s (*Reformasi* (translated as 'reformarion') era) but it was not that successful.

Although the arguments above seem to favour more towards de-ethnicisation and fluidity of ethnicity within the Malaysian political society at this moment, there is another side of the story in negating fluidity of ethnicity, although this might not be the case in Malaysia. Paul Mitchell, Geoffrey Evans & Brendan O'Leary (2009) raise an example of Northern Ireland where fluidity of ethnicity is extremely low.

"the 2003 Northern Ireland Assembly election study (survey evidence) shows that only 1.4 per cent and zero per cent, respectively, of UUP and DUP voters were Catholic. In the nationalist party system, one per cent of Sinn Féin voters and 1.7 percent of SDLP voters were Protestant. Because very little 'normal' inter-bloc competition occurs, parties instead try to out mobilise each other rather than genuinely appeal for cross-community votes" (Paul Mitchell, Geoffrey Evans & Brendan O'Leary 2009).

Caspersen (2012) does agree that in a scenario where competition happens between political parties, there may be cases where floating voters are almost near to zero, fully depending on mobilising loyalty of supporters instead of venturing into other

segments of the society. Such a political scenario in Northern Ireland no doubt will encourage extreme ethnic outbidding due to the nature of it. Although such a scenario may seem to be the extreme opposite if compared to the current Malaysian political scenario, but such a scenario is not totally absent from the Malaysian political scene. During the time of 'old politics', it does make it difficult, although not impossible, for opposition parties to win mixed seats due to the nature of the lack of inter-ethnic support. Stigmatisation does exist against certain parties such as the Malay community towards DAP and the Chinese community towards PAS. However, with the latest political scenario, it shows that the rigidity and fluidity of ethnic cross-cutting is dynamic.

From the above discussion, we can see that political parties do play a major role in determining the direction of their respective parties. However, this shifting of direction would need a medium to be disseminated to its people. Generally, political actor disseminate their ideas through political speech; be it in the form of conventional speeches in rally and campaign or in the modernised form in social media and cyber world. Apart from the oral dissemination of information, manifesto is another way to disseminate their election pledge. However, for manifesto, the interesting part of it is the usefulness of its pledge. In some places especially mature democracy, manifesto pledge does carry weight and such misinformed or inability to fulfill might cause backfired. However, for developing democracy such as Malaysia, manifesto is a must during campaign period in telling voters what they intend to do should they win. However, in the events of failure to fulfil the manifesto pledges, it seems to be a common trend. Although political opponents might raise up such issue, but the impact could not be proven to be effective. Such occurrence do not only happen to the ruling party but also to the opposition coalition who won governmental rights in state level.

5.3   NEW POLITICAL PARTIES DIRECTION AND STANCE

The discussion above has shown that Malaysian politics, in general, inclines towards de-ethnicisation and a lot of its general actions and directions are showing that there is less

interest for ethnic politics. However, not all the individual parties are having the same direction, especially magnitude wise and due to the nature of technical constraints. For this part, five of the main political parties, namely UMNO, MCA, PKR, DAP and PAS will be discussed. For the opposition side, all the three component parties are being discussed as each of them have distinct characteristics from one another. For BN, UMNO is being picked due to the seniority of it within BN and acting as the backbone of BN. The reason for only MCA to be chosen is because firstly, it is the second most senior partner in Peninsular (in terms of seniority, memberships, Parliamentary seats and so on) and secondly, it is because the issues faced by the non-Malay community are similar to one another and the whole thesis prefers to discuss ethnicity in principle as 'Malay' versus 'non-Malay'.

Such trend of shifting their party stance is not a hot issue to be debated up to the point in 2008 General Election where opposition parties manage to break the dominant of BN in Malaysia politics. Although such magnitude of success may not be considered a success in matured democracies, but in developing democracies, breaking through the dominance of ruling party may be considered a success. Due to the political parties started to re-position themselves and many of them have started to steer the direction of the party. According to (CMS6), opposition parties, ever since they have started to work together with one another, each of them especially DAP and PAS has lessen their slogan of secular state or Islamic state as compared to before. Due to that reason, the middle ground for them to bind themselves together is by using universal value issues, such as justice, clean, good governance and so on. The stance by these opposition parties have moved away together a non-ethnicity discourse along their campaigns. On the other hand, for ruling party BN, most of the component members especially MCA, as the most senior non-Malay party, have started to steer their direction towards accommodating for wider segment of the society instead of their own Chinese community. (CMS7) sees such trend of shifting their direction as one of the effort to de-ethnicising Malaysian politics by putting ethnicity discourse below the priority list. Unlike before, most of the issues raised up and actions taken are likely to be linked to ethnicity directly or indirectly. (CMS8) does agree that one of the factor that can push Malaysian politics towards the direction of de-ethnicisation is by shifting their party stance because such move needs political will

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from the party. Therefore, on this particular issue of party stance, most of the main political parties seem to be moving away from ethnic politics, be it due to their own willingness, or being 'forced' to depart from ethnicity discourse which is becoming less popular in the current political settings.

5.3.1   UMNO

UMNO, as discussed in Background Chapter, is one of the oldest political parties in Malaysia. Apart from its age, UMNO has often being viewed as a dominant party within its coalition, BN (CMS1). Due to the structure of UMNO, UMNO is being viewed as an Malay-ethnic party (CMS 2). This premise is strengthen by is party Constitution Clause 3 which states that "UMNO is a political party which fight to carry the national ambition of the Malay in order to maintain the honour and dignity of the race, religion and nation".

> "UMNO adalah sebuah parti politik yang berjuang mendukung cita-cita kebangsaan Melayu demi mengekalkan maruh dan martabat bangsa, agama dan negara" (UMNO Constitution original version).

Although the UMNO Constitution technically moulds UMNO in such a Malay-based party shape, as discussed above by Ezrow et.al (2011) and Adam et.al (2009), such a definition is not rigid and interchangeable. From the beginning of the Malaysian electoral system being implemented even before independence, UMNO had formed an alliance with other political parties, with MCA as the first partner. With such alliance and later on as a coalition party, UMNO claims that they are actually functioning as a multi-ethnic party through BN structure. Due to this, an over-emphasis of the Malay agenda may parallel with the UMNO but definitely not a wish from BN. A balanced position between UMNO and BN is crucial in maintaining its influence within its own party and at the same time, not affecting its relationship with its component party. This is the concern of Horowitz (1985) as discussed above on whether an ethnic party which

converts to inter-ethnic cooperation can actually bring harm to itself. However, as a safeguard towards the coalition, component parties cannot and should not be over extreme in the struggle for their own community. In fact, BN should act as a multi-ethnic party and collaborate with one another through prudent leadership as suggested by Lijphart (1975).

"You have to see Barisan Nasional as a multi-ethnic coalition. If this ethnic sentiment become too strong, whether it is Malayness, or Chinese, whatever, it is not good." (UMNO 3)

This is because if any one of the parties becomes too extreme in its process of upholding the welfare of their own community, such a working relationship between different ethnic-based component parties could not work.

"Doesn't work that way... If UMNO becomes too racist, if MCA becomes too racist, if MIC becomes too racist, we cannot work together." (UMNO 3)

In moderation politics for a diverse society as in Malaysia, extremist politics will bring terrible harms to the overall society. This is supported by (CMS3) who suggest that UMNO is a moderate party. This is due to the nature of BN as a coalition of a multi ethnic-based party. Although at times, leaders of UMNO might behave in a more extreme way in demanding for the rights of the Malays community, but such demand has a limit within it. As UMNO leaders do realise that even if they manage to win big support from Malay community, they will still need support from other community as well due to the nature of BN arrangement. Otherwise, even if UMNO can win handsomely but its component parties lose terribly, BN as a whole would not get much advantage from that. Furthermore, for a nation with diverse composition, the sensitivity level on certain issues might be higher as compared to homogenous nations. Not only that even at the practical level of electoral support, an extreme ethnic position taken may not favour the electorate

support as well. In Malaysia, there are a significant number of seats which we considered as "mixed seat", meaning the voters ethnicity composition comprises of a substantial amount of voters from various ethnic groups. In such situations, extreme positions taken may sway voters from other ethnic groups away from their party.

"We have to make things certain level of moderation, otherwise, ok you can be so racist... but you still have to maintain certain level of support, for example, 20% of Chinese support, you are gone... The threshold is very low... especially mixed seat. So that's why, UMNO has been very careful, even though we say, we put the Malays, yes, but doesn't mean that we abandon the other community, serving the legitimate interest." (UMNO 3)

That is why, the highest leader of UMNO, who is also BN chairman and eventually Prime Minister of Malaysia, introduce the concept of 1Malaysia. It is a concept where all Malaysian should be seen as one instead of as Malay, Chinese, Indian and others. Therefore, in most of his speeches (which is practised by other BN leaders as well), they emphasis the concept of 1Malaysia a lot. Garnering support from multi segments of the society is important and therefore, political actor has to balance themselves between fighting for the well beings of its community while at the same time, looking after other communities. Cross-ethnic voting is much possible should the candidate is able to convince other communities of their ability to take care of all.

This is the opposite from the example of Mitchell, Evans & O'Leary (2009) on the Northern Ireland Assembly election where ethnic fluidity can be near to zero. But that is not the case for Malaysia. It might have to do with the single member constituency electoral system too where it is very common that voters would have to choose one of the candidates (as the candidates are from the same ethnic group) whom are from the different ethnic groups than the voters. Unless a particular party can win almost all the votes by their own ethnic community; let's say in a Malay majority seat, UMNO can win almost all the Malay votes, then without the support from the non-Malay community,

UMNO is still going to win such seat. However, in reality, this is not the case. In most of the seats it contested, it face challenges from other political parties such as PAS and PKR and these parties are going to sway away some of the Malay votes even though they might not be able to win more Malay votes compared to UMNO. This is when the significance of non-Malay votes comes into play. Therefore, as argued above, UMNO could not cross the line of being too extreme, unless it is willing to go all out on its own and leave its component partners behind.

By not taking an extreme stance in their own component party, it does not mean that its party is no longer an ethnic-based party. Although none of the three informants denied that UMNO is a Malay-based party, but they denied that UMNO will serve for the Malays only. To them, UMNO did in fact serve other communities but each of them have different views on how UMNO serves other communities directly or indirectly. For the UMNO 2, the mode of operation in BN is that each component party works within their core community and the next step is for these component parties to work among themselves. This is similar to the concept raised by Arend Lijphart, where a component party works within their own base and the leadership of each component party cooperate overarching through prudent leadership in achieving the objectives of serving the overall communities.

"We have to work with our partners. Because we based on the partnership... Inilah falsafah dari dulu (translated as "This is our philosophy since last time"). (UMNO 2)

UMNO 3 also argues that although UMNO is serving the Malay community, but this does not mean that UMNO is neglecting the interests of other communities or not serving other communities as the way to serve the Malay community. He is right on this by Chandra's (2012) definition on an ethnic party. An ethnic party does not necessarily mean that it only serves their own ethnic community (Chandra 2012). Due to this,

UMNO works within the framework of BN in which the BN framework guarantees a service to all communities in Malaysia.

"... Of course the principle of the party is to fight for the Malays, for the Malay course, for Islam. but it has been all along UMNO works with other component party, Barisan Nasional which also serves interest of other community as well. When you talk about UMNO as a Malay-based party, it cannot be seen as the tactical to serving legitimate interests and rights of that community because UMNO works within the framework of Barisan Nasional. (UMNO 3)

UMNO 1, too, believes that the masses prefer to be served by their own community's leader. In practical terms, such a modus operandi is more feasible where each ethnic is having their own group and these groups will then be united together. As suggested by Geertz (1973), people from the same ethnic group share certain connections, kinship and feel singularity among them. Due to this, UMNO 1 sees that such a method is more practical as compared to the ideal idea of opposition parties where at the end, their ideal idea falls back to the similar approach taken by BN.

"Etnik yang tertentu tentunya inginkan berkumpulan, itu yang dibuat dalam BN, kemudian kumpulan, kumpulan, kumpulan, kita satukan, ia lebih praktikal daripada apa yang cuba dibuat oleh pembangkang. Secara ideanya hebat, tetapi secara praktikalnya, masih mengikut corak yang sama." (UMNO 1)

Translated as

"Certain ethnic groups prefer to be in their group, this is what we do in BN, from group, group, group, we combine then. This is more practical than what the

opposition is trying to do. Their ideal is great, but in terms of practicality, they are still following the same mould." (UMNO1)

However, at the same time, he tends to use work "rakyat" (translated as people) rather than in the domain of ethnicity in the working operation of the government. He believes that the struggle of the Prime Minister in his leadership is for the wellbeing of the people rather than bringing ethnicity into the picture.

" Saya beranggapan, selagi kita berpaksi kepada rakyat, bukan bangsa, kita tidak salah. Perdana Menteri kini berjaya meletakkan rakyat sebagai   paksi   perjuangan... Perkataan yang sesuai sekarang ialah rakyat". (UMNO 1)

Translated as

"I believe that as long as we put people as priority and not race, we are not wrong. Prime Minister did successfully priorities people as the main struggle... The word suitable to use now is people" (UMNO 1)

Informants such as the UMNO 2 and UMNO 3 see that BN is more multi-ethnic than the opposition parties. They prefer to discuss about BN rather than UMNO alone as they believe that BN is a coalition which can cover the interests of all communities, making it a multi-ethnic party.

"Barisan Nasional, pelbagai kaum, walaupun parti setiap satu mewakili etnik, tetapi kita pergi ke pilihan raya atas nama Barisan Nasional yang mewakili pelbagai kaum di dalam. Dan saya kira Barisan Nasional lebih etnik daripada tiga parti pembangkang." (UMNO 2)

Translated as

"Barisan Nasional, multi ethnicities, although each party represent an ethnic group, but we go into election under the name of Barisan Nasional which represent all ethnic groups within it. And I believe Barisan Nasional has more ethnics than three opposition parties." (UMNO 2)

"Because to certain extent, you can see the, new interest in the so call politics which is more multi-racial, so called multi racial, even though you have to define multi-racial as Barisan Nasional has been multi-racial from the very beginning. So there is nothing new with that (UMNO 3)

The sharing of power by the component parties of different ethnic groups as suggested by Mitchell, Evans & O'Leary (2009) seems to work over here in BN. UMNO 1 substantiates that legislators and executives are formed by BN and not UMNO when we look into the composition of the executive cabinet which consists of all ethnic groups; the composition of Members of Parliament where all ethnic groups are involved under the name of BN. Such a manifestation shows that BN is in fact championing all ethnic groups.

" Komposisi kabinet pelbagai kaum, komposisi Ahli Parlimen BN pun pelbagai kaum... Ini manifestasi kita berjuang untuk semua kaum." (UMNO 1)

Translated as

> "Composition for cabinet is multi ethnics, composition for BN Member of
> Parliament is also   multi ethnics... We fight this manifestation for all ethnic
> group". (UMNO 1)

Similarly, for the UMNO 3, BN has been practising multi-ethnicity for a long
while since this model has already been in the Malaysian political system. The newer
concept of 1Malaysia, which the current Prime Minister introduced, has shown that BN is
in fact more towards multi-ethnicities than an "already-multi-ethnicities" BN.

> "... 1Malaysia concept, to show that we are more multi-racial than before, even
> though previously BN is the model for multi-racial politics in this country..."
> (UMNO 3)

5.3.2   MCA

MCA, similar to UMNO, is a Chinese-based party by virtue of their party Constitution.
This is because its Constitution states that for a person to be eligible to be a member, the
person must be of Chinese descent. During the independence era up to pre-2008 General
Election with a few exceptions in the middle, MCA was generally considered as a
representative party for the Chinese. However, it may or may not be the case that the
MCA only serves for the interests of the Chinese community. MCA prefers the
moderation way as suggested by Rabushka & Shepsle (1972) where extreme or
exclusionary stances are not part of MCA ways in practice. For instance, MCA 1 argues
that even though technically they are a Chinese-based party, that does not mean that they
only serve for the Chinese community.

> "Since when MCA becomes racist or ethnic-based? Ya, we are ethnic based. We
> are communal-based. But communal based does not means that we only serve for
> our community. From day one, we only have 11% Chinese voters when we

collaborated with UMNO to go for the election. At that time, we contested in 29% of the total seat. Which means, from day one, MCA has been labelled as a party that has to serve beyond your party." (MCA 1)

At the same time MCA 1 does agree that the practical services provided by them is slightly different from their Constitution. They serve any other communities as well apart from their core Chinese community. Although this is not entirely surprising as Ezrow et.al (2011) suggest that the stance or direction taken by a party during the formation time does not necessarily mean that it would be fully followed in the future. Amendments made towards the old direction are not uncommon. Furthermore, from what we can see in their party Presidential speeches in these few years, the emphasis of 'Chinese' is lesser as compared to 'old politics' era. In their 2016 Annual General Assembly, the Presidential speech did not mentioned above 'Chinese'. Instead his speeches is full of 'Malaysian' instead. This premise is supported by MCA 3 when he suggests that although MCA is exclusive for Chinese, but the struggles that they have gone through are for all Malaysians.

"First of all, you have to understand MCA party's Constitution. Except the membership is only open for Chinese, all the other political struggles are for all Malaysians." (MCA 3).

Furthermore, MCA is inclined towards all issues rather than looking at them from the lens of ethnicity. Salience or not of ethnicity is not the main consideration of the MCA. They prefer to look at issues from other dimensions of commonality (which Mitchell, Evans & O'Leary 2009 describe as multi-dimensional cleavages) such as having the same interest in Chinese vernacular education. For instance, when education issues arise, they will defend and help all Malaysians regardless of their ethnicity. This can be proven by the fact that they are receiving numerous applications from the non-Chinese community.

"So, MCA can protect and fight for everyone, not only the Chinese. For instance, the while when we talking about education issue, we are not limited to help Chinese only. We receive application appear from Malays, from Indians, from Sabah and Sarawak. So, it doesn't limit to one race." (MCA 3)

The responses from these two top leaders who are capable of representing MCA as a whole (MCA 1) and MCA youth communities (MCA 3) by virtue of their position have shown that MCA acknowledges the written Constitution which requires them to remain as a Chinese-based party but at the same time, their services are opened to all Malaysians. This kind of situation is not that difficult to be accepted as apart from the explanation by both leaders above, the MCA Constitution (Aims and Objects) also does not emphasise on "Chineseness" in each and every of their "Aims and Objects", unlike UMNO where most, if not all, of their "Principles and Objectives" (originally written as "Asas dan Tujuan") are highly related to "Malayness".

Another critical issue within the Chinese community is their Chinese education. For this, although the MCA is doing its best to preserve such vernacular education, but the leaders do not feel that by doing so, it can or should be interpreted as defending the "Chinese people" education (on this issue, I differentiate between "Chinese people" education which mean education that is for Chinese only and "Chinese medium" education, as to avoid confusion). They believe that by defending "Chinese medium" education, such education could not only be utilised by the "Chinese people" but also by non-Chinese ethnicity students.

"The Chinese education is not for Chinese alone. We have 15% non-Chinese. Some school we have 99% non-Chinese. You cannot call them as Chinese education only for Chinese. Anyone can learn Chinese from Malaysia system. And in our primary schools, vernacular schools, there is no reasons that we

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stop these people from learning Chinese or Mandarin. So, in this regards, MCA is very vocal. We want to make sure that Chinese vernacular school is here to stay. That is the core value for MCA to behave." (MCA 1)

Such a view is supported by MCA 3 where it is suggested that they see education as part of the universal value. Access to education is one of the universal values in which it is blind-folded on skin colours. Furthermore, it states that as "Chinese people" are part of the "rakyat" (means people in Malay). Therefore, defending the rights to access to "Chinese medium" education is actually defending Malaysian "rakyat".

" When we talk about securing the rights of the Chinese, be it in politics, social or economy, it is always protecting the rights of the rakyat (means people or citizens in Malay) as Chinese is part of the rakyat. So, nothing wrong when we fight for the recognition UEC, protecting the Chinese school. It is part of the right of the people. Not that we protecting the rights of the the Chinese, we become the racist party. I do not acknowledge that." (MCA 3)

UEC or Unified Examination Certificate is another type of education system in Malaysia where the medium of teaching is in Mandarin. Although UEC is a recognised qualification for a lot of the world elite universities including Harvard for instance, but the government is reluctant to recognise its qualification into the government system such as admission into public university, admission into civil service and so on.

"We think wise for the government to recognise UEC to harvest all the talents that we have produce. It is not so much on racial issue. A Malay can enter into independent school and get UEC. There are Malay student, Indian students getting UEC. It is not a race issue. (MCA 3).

The response above once again strengthens the premise by MCA leaders that MCA is fighting for "Chinese medium" education and not "Chinese people" education. Even if Chinese are the ones that are keen on "Chinese medium" education, MCA 1 sees nothing wrong with it as it is part of the universal values which suggest the need for access to education.

"Let me tell you. Access to education universal value. If I want to let the Chinese to learn the mother tongue, what's wrong with that. Nothing. MCA until today, we treat this as our responsibility". (MCA 1)

From here, we can see that MCA is a Chinese-based party, but that does not mean that the MCA will only defend Chinese related issues. Although those issues are somehow related to the Chinese community. This is parallel to the definition of an ethnic party by Chandra (2012) where an ethnic party does not necessarily mean that the party is inclusive to certain segment of the society only. As long as an issue is based on universal values then that should be granted to the people, MCA will defend such an issue. MCA 1, also gives an example on how by defending the party's core value, they faced criticisms from UMNO, their component partner.

"Even UMNO, our component party, they say how can you gang up with DAP and whack us on racist remarks. I say, whether you say it or whoever say it, our reaction will be the same. I don't care, I cannot say because you are UMNO, I spare you, don't whack you. We have to do the same because we believe in universal value. So, I think that is the core value of MCA now." (MCA 1).

This opinion is supported by MCA 3 too when he agrees with MCA 1 that the political landscape nowadays has already been moving towards universal values, rather than 'old politics' of ethnicity and religion.

"When I define new politics, it means something that is more common across race and religion. For instance, more for the common interest, protecting the environment, freedom of speech, human right, which cut across not only race and religion, but also gender. This very much different from the old politics of Malaysia which more focus on development and distribution among race. And of course on religion matters.". (MCA 3).

In fact, BN is actually implementing a catch-all strategy as suggested by Kirchheimer (1996), where an ethnic party becomes inclusionary and intends to cover all other segments of the society as well including their non-core community. He believes that BN actually has those core values of taking care of all Malaysians. The problem is those core values, such as the ones discussed are not adopted practically and are being distorted. Therefore, apart from needing to have MCA revert back to its core values, BN as a whole would also have to take the same course of action, not propagating based on primordialism or identity per say, if it wishes to gain back support.

"We already have a set of very good political ideology. What MCA need to do is to go back to the core value. The core value of looking after all Malaysians. And we should use the good platform of Barisan Nasional as part of the ruling party to get UMNO to come back to the core value of Barisan Nasional, of taking care of everybody. If we can do that, then the formulae of Barisan Nasional can review and preview, then we will get back the support. (MCA 3).

Instead, he suggests that BN as a whole, could take similar steps to MCA as discussed in the previous chapter, on opening up membership (in BN case, direct membership into BN instead of having to be a member of a component party). By doing so, having a single multi-ethnic party could lessen ethnicity-based issues rather than each ethnicity having a party to represent them.

" We actually, we have the trump card with us, which is still the Barisan Nasional, comprises of all ethnicity, multi-racial, multi-religion and multi-region, including Sabah and Sarawak. It already, Barisan Nasional already representing and represented all walks of lives. Is just that now we are doing the political works individually... hardly discuss sensitive issues which we should... decide based on Barisan Nasional spirit. To meet up with new trend of lesser racial politics, the Barisan Nasional should as combine and form a Barisan Nasional party... a good solution for this country if we can form a political party of multi racial called Barisan Nasional." (MCA 3)

From the discussion above, we can see that MCA, in their latest development, prefer to steer their direction towards multi-ethnic instead of confining themselves to their own ethnic groups (Chinese only). This evident when (CMS 3) argues that MCA nowadays may not be the same as MCA previously, in terms of the working scope. Although previously, MCA may seem to serve Chinese community more, but after 2008 General Election, MCA seems to move towards the direction of serving all. This is agreeable by (CMS4) who argues that although MCA may not fully ready the amend their Constitution, but they have started to take steps, making their party stance, direction and service cater to a wider range of communities.

5.3.3 DAP

DAP, unlike UMNO and MCA, is a multi-ethnic party by definition of their Constitution. However, this technical definition does not seem to work well with many people due to the composition of the party as discussed in the earlier chapter. This has much to do with the historical background in DAP where their main core supporters have been Chinese and in Chinese areas only. Due to that historical background, therefore it is not surprising for DAP to be constructed in such a manner in practical terms. Furthermore, during that time, there have been no alternatives except for mainstream media and these are controlled by BN. Due to that reason, DAP is forced to champion only fringe issues instead of centre stage issues. These fringe issues, which affect only a particular segment

of the population, ends up with DAP appealing to this segment of the population as this segment is their supporting group. With such a trend continuing for a long period of time, eventually, and over time DAP has become to be portrayed as a Chinese-based party.

"...the fact that in the old days especially, you have no access to main stream media, no access to main stream information, and you will basically push to the fringe. You   being pushed to the fringe and you end up championing fringe issues and then you, of course, appeal to certain segment of population lah, so, because of that, that is what DAP has ended up like that. But I think there has been now, in the last 8 years also, 8 to 10 years, a big push for   DAP   to mainstream itself." (DAP 3)

This premise is supported by DAP 2 where she argues due to the starting point of DAP which is Chinese and urban areas, naturally the party will be structured as such. It is not that such structure is to be maintained rigidly, but it takes time to change the party structure into something like the original core values of the party. Such a premise is parallel to the arguments of Adam et.al (2009) where he opines that a political party may shift their political direction or stance should their supporters require them to do so. Due to the constraints above and most of their supporters being Chinese in Chinese constituencies, it is not surprising that DAP during that time has shifted their attention to the Chinese community as influenced by their supporters.

"What choice do you have. Your background, you start from Chinese based, or on urban based, and of course along the way you contest in urban areas, Chinese majority areas. Is very natural that your membership, your leadership and all that will be Chinese based or non Malay based. It takes time to enter into other areas or racial community." (DAP 2)

Besides the two leaders above, DAP 1, also opines that DAP is a multi-racial party to begin with. However, due to political repression and demonisation through the media by BN using politics of race, DAP is often seen as a Chinese chauvinist party. Due to that reason, fluidity in ethnicity becomes lower than as other segments of the society, especially the Malays, feel fear of DAP. Although they do not apply the heavy inflammatory and polarisation rhetoric in their strategy as suggested by Horowitz (1985), their position of being demonised has much to do with the 'fear' factor. Actually, by comparing the statement of this leader and from those MCA leaders above, there are a lot of similarities where they are fighting for universal value issues regardless of who it affects. However, due to the media control, DAP is often characterised as a Chinese based party whenever it brings up issues affecting the Chinese community (even though those issues are non-ethnic based issues and may affect other communities as well at the same time).

"DAP, we formed in 1966 with multi racial framework and as you are aware, my party has been promoting multiracialism all these years, but the politics of race has been promoted in this country by the ruling elites and also by the main stream media controlled by Barisan Nasional. DAP, we have been fighting for every race, but we have always been blamed for being Chinese chauvinist. Because we... raised a lot of issues affecting the Chinese community because the Chinese community is facing a lot of discriminatory policies, especially in education, culture, and also economy and civil services and so on. Of course, we also, have been championing for Malay interests, for Indian interests, but the problem is that, they have been, we were not able to highlight most of this issues because of the deterrence or the blocks... We have never been able to disseminate our messages effectively, efficiently and widely." (DAP 1)

He says that they always cite the case of Lim Guan Eng, where he was jailed for defending an underage Malay girl, suspected of being raped by a then Chief Minister of Malacca state. This shows that DAP is not a Chinese-based party per say. If DAP is a Chinese-based party, its leader would not have defended that young girl to that extent of

sacrificing themselves. This comes from the idea of rhetoric competition as suggested by (Krebs & Jackson 2007) where DAP failed to convince people to accept their sayings rather than the statements by their opponents. As rhetoric is an art of convincing people, failure to master such a skill will put a political party in a disadvantageous position. DAP 1 furthers his arguments by saying that they are having good relationships with Malay Unionist leaders as their party elected representative. This shows that DAP is in fact not a Chinese chauvinist party, but nevertheless has been portrayed as such by the media.

"We have been championing, that's why we always cite the example of Lim Guan Eng, victimised, because she was fighting for a Malay girl who was raped by, you know what happen la... In fact we have our, we have good relationship with some of the Malay Unionists, that's why we have our former Member of Parliament, Ahmad Nor, who is from the Cuepacs, government, civil servant union President as our member as well as Member of Parliament and so on. As I said la, I admitted that, DAP has been demonised for too long by BN that we are a part of a Chinese chauvinist... (DAP 1)

However, such historical background does not seem to have a lesser weight in the post-2008 General Election era. They are more acceptable by the Malay community as compared to the old days, although the level of acceptance is still not that high. Such a scenario is totally different from UMNO and MCA by Chandra (2012) definition. Chandra's (2012) argument that an ethnic party does not necessarily serve only their own core segment of the society, fits nicely into explaining why it is justifiable for UMNO and MCA to call themselves an ethnic party but at the same time be inclusionary. However, for DAP which is a multi-ethnic party technically, it should be easier to apply inclusionary practices as compared to UMNO and MCA, but things happen the other way.

"We are better today and we are more acceptable to the Malay community nowadays because of the social media, because of our alliance with PAS and PKR, because of Pakatan Rakyat, because of a more open society, because of... (DAP 1)

At the same time, much work has to be done in order to move DAP forward, in order to fulfil the goal of becoming a real multi-ethnic party. DAP is trying to show to the public, especially the Malays about their capability and at the same time, reach out to them. They tried to apply Kirchheimer's (1996) concept of the catch-all strategy and practically able to be inclusionary to other segments of the society as well apart from their core Chinese supporters.

"UMNO, PKR and PAS, why should I join DAP. We have to do more constructive work lo, including to play a more active role in Parliament and State Assembly, to produce more political materials, reading materials, activate... we have this RocketKini, Malay version..." (DAP 1).

Reaching out to them would also mean the dissemination of information to the people. As discussed above, one of the reasons why DAP can hardly get support from the Malay community is due to the blockage of information to the Malay mass. In the new political scenario, information dissemination becomes easier and hence, provides them a chance to explain to the masses about the rationale behind their actions.

"A lot of the occasion, in Parliament, in State Assembly, like in civil service, we told the government because of unfair policy, because of unfair promotional system, many non-Malays are not interest... We have been on the forefront like APs, we have always been on the forefront. I don't think Malays doesn't like the way we spoke against this because they are also (victim), only UMNO-Puteras and those cronies are benefiting, ordinary Malays are not benefiting. They know. That's why with wider dissemination of all these knowledge, it will change their mind."(DAP 1).

At the same time, DAP 1 also suggests that apart from that, mindset change is crucial in re-correcting the distorted image of DAP. According to Gramsci (2011), hegemony is an apparatus to shape the mind of the people to the mould that the ruling regime wishes to have. Hegemony is not easy to be formed. Once the bond is formed, it is not easy to break. The principle is applied over here where DAP is trying to change the mindset of the people, but they should bear in mind that such mindset change is not a policy or action that can see results instantly. Mentality construction might need quite a long time. Even so, this mindset change is necessary if the old mindset of Chinese fearing PAS and Malays fearing DAP regardless of issues and based merely on stereotype and emotion is still occurring. Such a view is supported by DAP 3 where he agrees that a political party should not only act on what people want them to do, but instead offer better solutions and suggestions, in which he calls as pushing the boundary. Politicians have the responsibility of telling people what are the right things to do and convince them on moving towards that direction.

"I would term it as public education. Is also the mindset, we want to bring our ground to mindset change, meaning that, in our election campaign, we, even DAP win, doesn't win much. We have to ensure that PAS will win, PAS will get the Chinese support, Indian support, and PKR will win also, our ground support. Our DAP's ground will be Chinese in urban area, mainly Chinese, so we have to persuade them to support PAS. How to support them to support PAS Malay candidate, unless we lead them to mindset change, two coalition system, de-ethnicisation or whatever you call it. This is something that we are pushing the country towards the direction." (DAP 2)

"I think as a party, as a political movement, as a political party, we have to keep pushing the boundary. You cannot say what would people accept (continue the sentence immediately), ya on one hand, you need to know what people can accept, but you must also always be pushing the limit of what the people can accept and telling and educating the people and saying this is what you need to accept because we need to make change, we need to bring the country forward, we need

to be progressive, I know this is a bit of a strange idea for you but you should consider it (you refers to the voters). As our responsibility as leaders, to push new ideas..." (DAP 3)

As these views show on how DAP is trying to bring back their original core value of multiculturalism and universal values, the DAP 3 is right when he suggests that apart from their ideological ambition, there is a necessity to show to the public, especially the Malay community that they too, can offer Malay leaders to the public. Even though the intention has less to do with ethnicity, but showing such an image which is important in order to portray a new image of DAP. This is because politics is not only about facts but also about convincing people about the genuine facts. This is parallel to the ideas suggested by Snow and Benford (1988) that rhetoric is how the leaders of the people wish to deliver their messages so that it can be accepted easily by the targeted group of people. This is where the idea of perception comes in. In the judiciary system, one of the famous mottos is that "not only must justice be done, it must also be seen to be done". A similar principle applies in the current matter. DAP must give the perception that DAP is an inclusionary party in addition to the practical work of inclusion.

"...at the end of the day I think what we need to show, there must be Malay leadership as well. Because at the end of the day you will see, you say only, you got no Malays, cannot also. As must as you know... perception is everything is politics, you know that. Perception is everything. As much as whatever we want to do, we also need to put up the perception to show the perception, we do have Malay leaders. And Malay leaders have a future for example. That is important... "(DAP 3)

5.3.4 PKR

Out of all the currently active political parties in Malaysia, comparatively, PKR is the most "genuine" multi-ethnic party at the moment. Although the term "multi-ethnic" and

"non-ethnic" does present a huge difference academically, however, in Malaysian politics, both are synonyms to each other. This is because when a politician talks about "multi-ethnic", he is also expected to be able view issues colour-blind instead of making his position inclusionary of all colours. At the same time, when a politician discusses "non-ethnic", a reasonable balance of ethnicity composition is also expected as it is hardly acceptable when an ethnic group over dominate a particular issue, even though colour-blindly (which academics might also not see as a problem with that kind of scenario), the perception at the moment might not give that "correct" expression.

The PKR 1 and PKR 2 insists that their party is not an ethnic party, nor a multi-ethnic party. It has nothing to do with ethnicity. In any decision that they make, they do not put ethnicity into consideration. Their intention inclines towards building a non-ethnic kind of politics. Everybody stands an equal chance regardless of their identity. With that premise in hand, PKR is trying to adopt the concept of shifting to other dimensions of cleavage as suggested by Mitchell, Evans & O'Leary (2009). For other politicians, they might try not to be single-ethnic, but for PKR, according to him (PKR 1), he is trying to take PKR totally out from the ethnicity lens.

"PKR has never has anything to do with ethnicity." (PKR 1)

" ...The voters can be racist. That is a separate issue but what we are doing is, to select candidate, move away from the ethnic concern... to the extent, we may not be, thinking 100% only winning is the only consideration. The consideration is to ensure we can build a non-ethnic politics." (PKR 2)

The focus of a decision made within PKR will be on the capability. If a person is not from a particular segment of the community then they can perform a better job than a person coming from the same segment of the community, the former gets the job. If at the moment, a leader from the same targeted community can provide a better consultation

as compared to leaders coming from outside the community, he gets the job. However, if there were to be a better consultant coming from outside the community, but yet able to provide better services than those coming from within the targeted community, the favour would fall into the outsider. This is because PKR would never want to use identity as the parameter in making a decision. Capability triumphs over identity (including identity).

...."in the future, let's say, if all the East Malaysians and West Malaysians are very sensitive about Sarawak, Sabah, then we may not need that. So you put whoever, if all our Malays, understand about Indian problem and Chinese problems, we may not need even a Chinese Vice President... We will just talk about issues. We are not concern about representation. We are concern about making sure whoever in power makes policies that are acceptable to everybody. That is whole philosophy of non racial politics." (PKR 2)

The statement especially by the PKR 2 reflects that apart from power gaining, PKR is also considering issues on the principle basis, which is to build a non-ethnic politics in Malaysia. Although it is not an easy job and it will not be overnight, but that principle forms the basis of PKR foundation. The PKR 2 also suggest an idea of how a diverse and heavily influenced by ethnic politics country like Malaysia can move into non-ethnic politics. The reason for Malaysian politics being stuck within the ethnicity parameter is because the political system itself is having an ethnic-based party (UMNO, MCA, MIC) even though the leaders of these parties are seeing themselves as multi-ethnic under BN instead of single-ethnic. By dismantling such a political system and bringing a non-ethnic politics into the system to fill in the vacuum, with time this will help in changing the social attitudes of the masses, it is possible that such an ethnicity-influenced political system can turn into a non-ethnicity related political system. Such an extreme stance towards non-ethnicity is even a level higher than the suggestion of Mitchell, Evans & O'Leary (2009), both as a form of shifting to other dimension of cleavage to avoid ethnicity cleavage and also to perform power sharing concept in the event of failure of ethnicity fluidity.

Such an ideal concept by the PKR 1 sounds good theoretically. However, as social attitude which is a mindset shift may not take a short period of time, and it may even take a generation as the DAP 3 mentioned on 13 May 1969 racial hostility baggage. Therefore, PKR 2 is suggesting for a first step physical change, which is the dismantling of the political structure on ethnicity (and I see it as winning election and making BN as weak as possible to a stage where they could no longer insulate ethnic politics easily into the system).

"It is the progressive multi-ethnic party at the moment unless someone else comes out. But realistically, that is as far as Malaysian politics can go at the moment. We have move carefully until we achieve the target. Then, when, if Barisan Nasional is dismantled, it also means that racial political party is dismantled. Racial political party dismantled, will lead to institution racial politics to dismantled. Then you come to the social attitude, will come to a longer time. Like what, you see the steps, first, you have the system which is like America, the slavery, the Blacks are slaves. First, You dismantle the slavery, you make it a system which is non racial. Then from there, want to move to a non racial society, it takes a longer time, Obama takes another, 100 over years to achieve , to be accepted as President. The first step dismantling the political structure based on ethnicity, ethnic politics has to be done first. (PKR 2).

Such a view on putting principle above winning consideration is shared by the party's PKR 3 where he believes there is a long term report card. Each and every action will be accounted for in the future. Therefore, if winning an election but neglecting a principle is to be done, the surviving period for the winning election might be for that particular election only, or perhaps can be longer, but without assurance. However, vice versa, defending a principle can last for a very long period of time as the action of defending a principle would not fade easily.

"Politics is not, to me la, is not a sprint run, is a marathon. Ever step that you is counted for future steps. You can sprint and win Teluk Intan easily, probably by putting a Chinese candidate, but is a matter of principle whether what kind of investment you are going to put. Every move that you are going to do is a calculated move and an investment for the near future. .. We should have that kind of (principle), even when PAS initially started of putting a woman candidate, the very first time of putting woman to contest, you see now how many woman are there is Parliament under PAS ticket. So I think these are the things that, barriers that we have to break in order to bring change. If you ask me, is all political calculation, is all matter of gaining more in the future... (PKR 3).

This is agreed by PKR 2 where he believes that it is their job to educate the public and face the challenges, even though their principled decisions might cost them heavily. As a formed party, the main agenda should not be winning elections only, but should also be about bringing their ideology and convincing people to accept it. From this point, we can see that PKR is a party that does not fulfil the criteria put forth by Adam et.al (2009) where a political party's direction is based on the wishes of their supporters or general public. Instead, PKR is taking a high level top-down approach in 'forcing' down their idea. 'Forcing' down an idea in a democratic society, especially in a society where political awareness is not low, may not be a good idea. This form of top-down approach is inclined towards autocratic forms of ruling. However, due to the intelligence delivering down their idea, which is positive to begin with, and with the great rhetorical skills, it does not seem to face extreme opposition from the masses, This is in line with Krebs & Jackson (2007) suggestion that politics is a rhetorical competition. The ability to deliver a party's propaganda, even though it may be fresh and a new idea, alienating the conventional propaganda, would reduce chances of success as shown by PKR.

"Then that's our job to educate them. We don't want to take then simple way out... We also take the difficult path because our job is to reform, not just to win seat. If our job is just to win seat, we go along with what the public think is right..." (PKR 2).

5.3.5 PAS

Out of all the parties that have being discussed above, PAS is an interesting party for the reason that the full membership is not based on ethnicity, but on religion. Even so, it too admits non-Muslims into one of their wings (which has been discussed in earlier chapters) at the same time. Although PAS is one of the oldest political parties in Malaysia, one of its obvious shifts in terms of values was in 2008 as mentioned by the PAS 3. Previously, PAS had strong ties with "conservative" Islam in the hope of building an Islamic State in Malaysia. Its propaganda mostly surrounded the idea of Islamic agenda. However, in 2008, there could be seen a clear trajectory from the older direction that they were taking to a newer direction of universal values within Islam which were more universally recognised values being pushed forward. According to the PAS 3, in fact, those values such as good governance, against corruption, accountability, transparency and so on are within the teachings of Islam. It is just that those values seldom are contextualised in the Islamic way. From here, we can also see the shift from Islamic state agenda to a benevolent state (sometimes in Malaysia also referred to as welfare state). This is not uncommon as Budge (1994) did suggest that a political party may shift their political direction by looking at the past election results. It is these past results that give political parties a clue on whether their actions in the past during the elections can bring favours or harms to them. In the past, PAS could hardly get the support from the non-Muslim community.

"What I am saying is, it is only in 2008... PAS cautiously broke away from its Islamic agenda per say and evolving into what we call serious transformation ending in us presenting in 2008 an agenda and better... a tagline called PAS For All and almost like relinquishing Islamic state into a benevolent state. That's how we transform ourselves to enlarge our support based from merely Muslim, who are the hardcore, Malay Muslim, now extending and enlarging our support base to embrace others and that's where PAS For All comes... Not only universal value, we champion good governance, against corruption, accountability, transparency all these universal... Of course that is very much Islamic, people don't realise that. These are actually very Islamic issue, is just not universal...in 2008, that renewal,

I wouldn't say repackaging, I would say is a clear shift in political messaging , a transformation of ideas, seeing Islam.. (PAS 3)

Apart from that, the PAS trajectory can also be seen clearly when they started to confront taboo issues which previously they were trying to avoid. It is no longer a rural based or regional based party but has taken a more national centric stage, capturing seats all around Malaysia and in both rural and urban (including mixed seats).

"PAS is able to contextualise and reposition itself as a more national centric party. That is significant, as an Islamic party, that is really significant. I would see, or rather I would hope that it will truly evolve in time and PAS would really become a kind of I would say as modern Islamic party, that is the right word... What does that mean is that PAS, as an Islamic party, bona fide from its inception is able to now able to come face to face with challenges which were once upon a time like a taboo to them. Right now as you could see, PAS Supporters Club, 100% non-Malay, non-Muslim...". (PAS 3)

Although PAS, similar to DAP, it often being portrayed negatively by BN-controlled media, PAS 1 says in fact, the party policy does not cover or benefit Muslims only, but all Malaysians. He gives examples on non-Muslims being given equal treatment as the Muslim community including in the issue of giving out land to non-Muslims, education scholarships and so on during their rule in Kelantan and Terengganu. This is because in Islamic teaching, even in a diverse society, no repression or unequal treatment should be accorded to the non-Muslim community. However, as argued by Gramsci (2011), hegemony in the way of mindset controlling does not really differentiate between truth and perception. Furthermore, in politics, once a perception is formed, such a perception is not easy to be overturned. Similar to the DAP case, PAS was facing the 'fear factor' from the non-Muslim community before the 2008 General Election.

"Kita telah berjaya memerintah Kelantan sebanyak dua kali... Semasa pemerintahan kita di Terengganu... kita berjaya menunjukkan adil untuk semua, termasuklah minoriti bukan Islam di Terengganu, diberi tanah, diberi hak pendidikan dan seumpamanya. Di Kelantan, sebagai contoh, seorang pemimpin MCA membuat kenyataan dia dapat biasiswa daripada kenyataan Kelantan walaupun dia Cina..." (PAS 1)

Translated as

"We managed to rule Kelantan twice... During our rule in Terengganu... We successfully shown fairness to all, including non-Muslim minority in Terengganu, given land, given education right and alike. In Kelantan, for example, one MCA leader made a statement that he received scholarship from Kelantan although he is a Chinese..." (PAS 1)

Such a view is shared by its PAS 2 when he says that PAS nowadays is trying to champion for all Malaysians by introducing taglines such as "Benevolent state", "PAS for all", "Islam Mercy" and so on. PAS, similar to other political parties, is trying to come out from their comfort zone and turn themselves into an inclusionary party as suggested by Kirchheimer (1996) in the catch-all concept. Due to that, all those taglines above are to show that although PAS is adopting Islamic teachings, but at the same time it does not side-line the non-Muslim community. These propaganda are introduced to reduce the fear of the non-Muslim community towards PAS due to the media influx of negative perception towards PAS.

"We try to champion for all. That is why we try to introduce Negara Kebajikan, PAS for all, Islam Rahmat, so these types of propagation." (PAS 2)

Although some might argue that all these changes are very minimal as PAS is still attached with Islam. Simply, even the word Islam is existing all over, be it during their campaign rally, their propaganda, and speeches and so on. However, one needs to acknowledge that nevertheless it is still an Islamic party to begin with. Furthermore, as the PAS 3 puts it, for an ideological-based party to take such a step in shifting from their core conservative approach to a modernised (or liberal) approach, such a small step is in fact a huge trajectory for PAS. Furthermore, PAS is gradually letting go its grip on the notion of an Islamic State and pushing further for a benevolent state, which is crucial in expanding its base to non-Muslims.

" For an ideological party to break away from doctrines and so called principles and ethosand to the extent of dogmas is rather difficult. You can have more liberal, pragmatic parties doing all sort of things without much consideration, shifting... is easier for them to do such those kind of things. But for ideological party like PAS, particularly religious-based party, it is in fact really unprecedented, and it has taken a lot... for them to come to that kind of position. You may think it is a small step, but is a small to a very big change in embracing a new what I call as plural politics, ability to embrace national demands and challenges that once upon a time we just sort of steer away from it. In this sense, I think it is significant. " (PAS 3)

PAS 1 has also agreed that it is important to bring now the message of Islam to a wider mass as they have the responsibility of disseminating the concept of Islam and fairness towards all as mentioned within the al-Quran.

"Kita mempunyai tanggungjawab untuk menyampaikan mesej Islam rahmat untuk semua dan adil untuk semua. kerana Al-Quran mengajar kita kita perlu..." (PAS 1)

From here, we can see that both the camps within PAS, the cleric and the professionals are working hand-in-hand in presenting a new outlook for PAS. Also,

similar to DAP and PKR who push for universal values and educating the public through confronting with sensitive issues, PAS is also playing its part in educating people for a cleaner government. Those who are poor should be given assistance while those welfare benefits or opportunities should not be misused under the name of "Malay". Previously, questioning UMNO action of awarding contracts to Malays was a taboo and sensitive issue to confront with. However, PAS is also stepping further in educating the public on those issues on how those contracts are awarded to UMNO Putera (it is a term to refer to Malay's who have ties with UMNO, particularly to those who get benefits from UMNO) instead of ordinary Malay's.

> "...to support the Malays because they are still poor, they are still left behind in business, yes, we have to support. But at the same time, like now we call UMNOPutera, all the contract they give to UMNO, although they not run the business, not run the project, they also give to the Chinese, Alibaba..." (PAS 2)

5.4   CONCLUSION

From the beginning of this chapter, there were two main questions to be addressed, in this chapter the questions to answer were whether political parties are moving towards a new direction post-2008 General Election. Secondly, whether Malaysian politics, from this party direction, stance and perception is moving towards de-ethnicisation.

For the first question, the answer is positive. At least four and a half of the political parties above, if not the total of five agree that their political party is shifting towards a new direction. For MCA, even though they are a Chinese-based party, but they are getting more inclusionary nowadays. For DAP, from practically being seen as a Chinese party, it is getting more active in portraying their image as a 'multi-ethnic' party, while a similar case is with that of PAS where it is trying to impress more non-Muslims into their fold. For PKR, they do not only practise non-ethnic politics, but in fact, this has

been the case since its inception. For UMNO, part of the informants feel that UMNO itself might need a change as it is a better idea if they can reform themselves into a more inclusionary party while another part of the informants do not feel that it is necessary as the model of BN is to have inter-arching interaction at the leadership level instead of covering the whole community by an individual ethnic based-party. With 4.5 out of 5 political parties being inclined towards de-ethnicisation of politics, thus, it is justifiable to argue that political parties in Malaysia are making changes to their parties to accommodate with the new political flow since the latest political landscape.

On the second issue, the answer is positive as well. Malaysian politics as a whole, led by political parties in the construction of political system is moving towards the direction of de-ethnicisation. It is a rather one way process than a two-way process. All the four political parties, namely MCA, PKR, DAP and PAS agree that Malaysian politics nowadays is moving away from ethnic politics. The practice of 'old politics' is less viable with the latest development. For this reason too, that is why they are keen to reform their own party and shift their political party direction wherever is necessary. A slightly isolated party is UMNO, their members are split in terms of whether to agree or disagree with de-ethnicisation of Malaysian politics at the moment. The reason I argue that it is a one-way process instead of a two-way process is because, part of the UMNO members agree to the trend of de-ethnicisation of Malaysian politics while the other half of them, even though they could not be convinced of the existence of de-ethnicisation, but at least they do not think that Malaysia politics is moving backwards to an even more extreme form of ethnic politics. For these reasons, with a large majority of informants in agreement, as well as the political shifts in attitude, it is justifiable to argue that Malaysian politics is moving towards de-ethnicisation at the current political trend.

CHAPTER 6:

ELECOTRAL STRATEGIES

6.1   INTRODUCTION

As previous chapters have shown Malaysian politics is gradually moving towards the direction of de-ethnicisation of politics through various measures such as the opening up of party membership, changing party stances to more liberal and inclusive directions and so on. However, this discussion can only show that those political parties do have the ambitions to make changes. It does not necessarily equate to the notion that they do have the courage to take the first step into their ambitious political rejuvenation in real politics, which is election (political power). Even if they do have the courage to make practical changes such as de-ethnicise their election candidates, it does not necessarily mean that voters are open to such a new idea. Therefore, in this chapter, I would analyse the trend and the practicality side of Malaysian politics. Two main issues will be addressed in this chapter. Firstly, it is on whether voters themselves are showing the readiness to accept non-ethnic politics in Malaysia. To answer this question, I would look at the voting trend through the ethnicity perspective, which is whether voters can accept their representative as somebody coming from other ethnic groups. The second issue to be addressed is on whether political parties have taken new measures in de-ethnicising their real politics strategy. For this issue, I would be looking at whether political parties are ready to nominate candidates coming from the minority groups within their party to contest. This readiness is important because unlike political rhetoric from previous chapters which may cost a political party's image should they not follow through on their talk, in real politics (elections candidature), nominating a candidate away from the conventional practice is a big gamble to them. Should they lose, it is going to cost them a real political loss, which is political power.

Although the ethnicity perspective is crucial in determining whether the Malaysian politics is moving towards de-ethnicisation, the political system itself, especially the electorate system does have a direct impact towards the winning strategy. It is a package for both electorate strategies and effort to push for de-ethnicisation of politics. This is because even if their ambition is to encourage for a non-ethnicity based politics, they would need to be sure that their ambition can be executed practically. Therefore, one of the measures taken by them is to form a coalition party while at the same time, make their party more inclusive to all. Furthermore, due to lacking of literatures on how a coalition party can drive to de-ethnicisation or how coalition party decides who to contest where and how many, therefore, for this chapter, I would look at whether a coalition party system is a feasible method and how this coalition party can help them to win the real power; election. This is because should the coalition system fail to gain power or the coalition itself fail to be inclusive of all, de-ethnicisation will be a harder step to achieve.

6.2   COALITION PARTY IN MALAYSIA

A coalition government forming after an election is not uncommon due to the inability of a single political party to form a majority government. This kind of working relationship comes after an election, and ironically, they contested again one another during the election (Strauss 2003). Furthermore, such kind of coalition government will be accorded their office portfolio according to their seats contribution (Magone 2000). This is not surprising as well when a government period ends, these coalition governments will split back into their political party and contest again one another. However, there are another type of coalition party which is formed before an election. There are coalition parties which are formed prior to election and present themselves as a potential coalition government should they win the election. This type of coalition government is the kind of political cooperation that works in Malaysia at the moment. Pre-election coalition present themselves in a single 'identity' to their voters for consideration. As these parties are ready to form the government should they win the majority of seats, the coalition party itself has already had a commonality in hand (Gandhi, Reuter 2013). As suggested

by Benoit (2001), such a coalition party must fulfil at least three of the following criteria; present a joint candidature list for the election, not to contest one another should parties not be in a joint list, support one another 'strategically' in a multi-round election (such as withdrawal in a particular round). This is one of the reasons why I argue that Malaysian politics, if going to move towards de-ethnicisation through the coalition model, the electorate strategy is important in two-ways; such a coalition will compel all the component parties to work together, even if they are an ethnic-based party on their own, they cannot show their salience too obviously or take too an extreme of a stance in catering for the needs of their own community only. This is because they need the votes from people out of their own comfort zone. Therefore, this encourages for a more moderate and inclusive policy. On the other way round, due to the inclusivity support (votes from all segments of the society), this will give them an incentive not to behave in an extreme manner, which in the end will bring them towards moderation as well. Therefore, even though coalition systems may not link directly to the issue of de-ethnicisation, but such a coalition system, in practical terms will determine to a certain extent whether de-ethnicisation of politics can work, based on the current political scenario. Unless each of the component parties manages to gain wholesome support from all segments of the society, coalition party cooperation may be viewed in another dimension, but not for the current support trend.

Forming a coalition party may be useful to gain more support and further enhance their chances of governmental offices. This is because component parties within the same coalition will be able to expand their support from the supporters of their component partners apart from their own (Duverger 1954). However, this mathematical calculation may not be true all the time. Support for a component party may be withdrawn should their component partner within the coalition not be a preference of the voters. Should this scenario happen, a coalition party is actually a liability to them. This is the concern raised by Gschwend and Hooghe (2008) that coalition with ideologically strange partnerships may harm their reputation for future elections. Apart from that, Carroll, Cox (2007) also argue that whether participation in a coalition party can be a good investment. Should such participation occur it can provide at least to a certain benefits for them, such as higher (percentage of) votes gained, higher chances of forming

the government due to net mathematical addition of one plus one equal to two without getting harm or liability and so on, then such a coalition is a good idea. Otherwise, the liability borne will be more than the benefits received. Therefore, Christiansen, Nielsen, Pedersen (2004) argue that in order to get the optimum benefits from the coalition party formation, component parties need to send out a clear message that they indeed can work together.

Another reason for forming a pre-election coalition is better than forming it post-election is because voters would have more information about them (Golder 2006). This is because forming a coalition after an election may have lots of uncertainty such as whether they incoming policies are consistent with one another, whether those component parties are compatible to one another and so on. With such a formation, it shows that they are ready to govern should they win as the process of forming such a coalition is attached with their negotiation during the process. Due to this, voters may have more confidence in voting for them rather than not having enough information and keep on guessing the potential future should a not yet formed coalition party win the election. Therefore, it is not a surprise that when Ibenskas (2015) says that pre-electoral coalition will change the election outcome. Factors leading to their choice of party to vote for may change, especially for those fence-sitters. However, in Malaysian politics, the opposition parties during the 2008 election had yet to form a formal coalition themselves (even until now it is not formalised yet in terms of not yet formally registering as a coalition party with the Registrar of Society, but at least after 2008 General Election results, they have started to form all kinds of necessary organisation needs, such as name, council, spelling out working relationships between component parties and so on). At that time, they were applying the second method suggested by Benoit, which was to abstain from contesting against one another (although there are some exceptional seats, which I considered as isolated cases).

A coalition party, according to Ferrara, Herron (2005), is a necessity for smaller parties in a first-past-the-post electoral system as these parties are facing extremely though challenges to win seats. Unlike proportionate representatives, their percentage of

shares may be converted into a small amount of seats, first-past-the-post system will negate the votes obtained even though it is 49.99%, a high percentage of votes so long as their opponent gets a single vote more. Therefore, in order for a small party to win, they need to combine themselves into a coalition party (Golder 2005). In real politics in Malaysia, that is a factor too that encourages for the formation of a coalition party in Malaysia. As discussed in previous chapters, although DAP and PAS may not be a rigidly ethnic-based party, however, the image portrayed onto them is as such. This case is made worse when the issue of split votes for opposition occurs in a multi-cornered fight. Therefore, this is crucial to combine these opposition parties together and present them as a single unit for their supporters.

Chakrabarty (2006) suggests an interesting premise when he argues that the crucial point in the process of forming a coalition party is not about 'ideological purify' but 'the exigency of the situation'. This may be true to be applied to Pakatan Rakyat earlier formation as they at that time would need to form such a coalition if they wished to form state governments. However, at the same time, this does not mean that such urgent needs will end up there without further action. They themselves would need to prove in their governmental decision making and policy implementation that they can actually work together and they are moving towards the same direction, not taking ethnicity as an absolute agenda but on merits.

Therefore, although the formation of a coalition party may not necessarily mean that it can directly de-ethnicise the political landscape of Malaysia, there is no doubt that such a formation can be an apparatus to achieve de-ethnicisation and more practically, as an electoral strategy in winning an election. Whether political parties in Malaysia are practically following through on their talk of putting aside (or comparatively, towards more de-ethnicisation) ethnicity, this will be discussed in further detail below.

6.3   ELECTORAL PRACTISES IN MALAYSIA

In Malaysia, the electoral system that is practised is a single-member plurality system. Under the system, each constituency will be represented by one elected representative. As there is no maximum limit for the number of candidates contesting a particular seat, the number of candidates for each seat varies. This also depends on the political cooperation among opposition parties (Mozaffar 2013). For all the elections, BN nominated only one candidate as representing BN, although BN alone constitute many political parties within it. For the opposition, the number of candidates depends on the electoral pact agreed among them (Cotts 2012). For the 2008 and 2013 General Elections, due to the electoral pact formed between PKR, DAP, and PAS, most of the seats in Peninsular Malaysia were contested by two candidates, alongside candidates from other smaller parties and independents (although there exists a tiny number of isolated cases where PAS and PKR candidates stood for the same seat). However, for the case in the 2004 General Election, due to the non-existence of a political pact among opposition parties (the only political cooperation was between PKR and PAS), such electoral settings encouraged a three-cornered fight or more (Kabner 2014).

In terms of seat allocations for component parties to contest, in BN, the allocation is fixed for each component party, although it does permit seat swap and seat loan, but the number of such seats wouldn't be big (Berger 2010). Therefore, as our focus of studies in BN is on UMNO and MCA, the ethnicity of the candidate contesting in a particular seat is fixed as well. This is because, if a seat is allocated to UMNO, the candidate from BN will be Malay, and likewise, MCA seats will have a Chinese candidate.

Such ethnicity of candidates in opposition is different. Although seat allocations for PKR, DAP, and PAS are fixed before the election, the ethnicity of their candidate is unknown until their parties announce the name of the candidate (Lim 2014). For DAP, most of the candidates will be non-Malay, but in recent elections (which is to be discussed in a later section of this chapter), DAP did nominate a Malay candidate for their Parliamentary seats, and won the seats. Similarly, (which is also discussed in a later section), PAS had started to nominate non-Malay as their candidate. However, for PKR, the ethnicity of their candidate is largely unknown. This is because PKR is a diverse

party and the party does not 'link' itself to a particular ethnic group, nor is dominated by any particular ethnic group.

The discussion above has portrayed how the electoral system works in Malaysia and how different political parties approach the election differently, especially in ethnicity terms. However, one concept that may not be directly related to (de-)ethnic politics is gerrymandering. By giving a brief idea of how gerrymandering works in Malaysia, readers could gain a better idea of the gerrymandering practice when looking at the majority votes between constituencies. In Malaysia (similar to other countries), gerrymandering is a mal-appropriation practice (Samuels & Snyder 2001) where the boundaries between constituencies are manipulated to give advantage to one side (Greenberg & Pepinsky 2013). Although such practice in Malaysia gives advantages to the ruling party, BN, this does not relate much to ethnicity, but instead is related to the political competition at that time. At the peak of Islamisation, due to the tough competition between UMNO and PAS, seats are craved to be as diverse as possible, to give UMNO an advantage because UMNO could lure non-Muslim voters easier than PAS. However, at the time where non-Malays throw their strong support behind opposition parties, seats are craved in a way where non-Malay voters are put in the same constituency to give them a win in that seat, at the same time dispersing Malay voters into a couple of seats to increase the chances of those seats. Therefore, although gerrymandering does favour BN, this is not due to the ethnic-based component parties of BN, but rather is due to electoral arrangements in winning more seats in number rather than more popular votes.

6.4   CLASIFICATION OF GROUPS

For this reason, the contest between identity of the candidates will be divided into three categories, namely Malay versus Malay seats, non-Malay versus non-Malay seats and Malay versus non-Malay seat. First of all, such classifications to lump all the non-Malays such as Chinese and Indian into the same category is because of the nature of the problem that such communities are facing as explained in previous writings. Furthermore, the contextualisation of Chinese and Indians in politics are less severed as compared to

between Malay and non-Malay. For instance, DAP does have a significant number of Indian elected representatives and some of them have climbed to the highest hierarchy within the party. However, this is not being viewed or argued by their opponents who instead focus on the Malay-Chinese issue. Similarly to PAS where attention is paid to whether PAS is going to field in non-Muslim candidates rather than paying attention to whether PAS is fielding in Chinese or Indian candidates. The same goes to BN where the target of attack by the opposition is often on either UMNO alone or onto collectively against MCA, MIC, Gerakan and so on. Therefore, it is justifiable for such a classification to be made.

On the practical side of classification, the ideal grouping will be a candidate from BN contesting against another candidate from the opposition. This will make the classification very much easy without much criticism. However, the practical grouping does not always work that way. Therefore, a few guidelines are made in relation to such an issue. Firstly, should a seat not be contested by more than one candidate (meaning the candidate won without contest), it will be categorised as a seat contested by the same ethnic group. Secondly, should a seat be contested by 2 parties plus independent candidates, the classification will only be on the two political parties and this research is focusing on party politics instead of individual politics. Generally, these independent candidates secure much lower votes as compared to the political party candidates. Therefore, such issue should not create much trouble. However, there are also rare occasions where independent candidates secure more votes than a political party. In such instances, a guideline as above is drawn.

Thirdly, similar to the second guideline, this guideline is to deal with cases where more than two political parties are contesting in the same seats. Although there is only a small number of such contests especially for 2008 (since compromising seat negotiation has taken place) and 2013 General Elections (as PR had then been formed), but such cases happened for a number of seats during the 2004 General Election as the election did not have political seat allocation within opposition parties. For such instances, only the top two political parties would be considered (which means that the seat is considered as

BN against another highest votes opposition party). Fourthly, should a candidate be a Muslim convert with non-Malay ethnic identity contesting against another candidate from either the same ethnicity or religion, they will be considered as the same identity contest. For instance, it has always been a contest in Kelantan state assembly for a couple of times where a Chinese Muslim from PAS is contesting against another Chinese candidate from BN. The reason the groups the together under the same category is due to the local sentiment where Muslim convert "ethnic" identity is ambiguous (as the everyday-defined ethnicity might be different from government-defined ethnicity).

6.5   CLASSIFICATION ON ETHNIC BLOC VOTING

A Malay voting for a Malay may not necessarily means that he is voting along the ethnicity line. At the same time, a Malay voting for a Chinese may also not necessarily means that he does not put ethnicity as his consideration. The two premises above are true. A Malay who votes for a Malay candidate instead of a Chinese candidate may be due to the Malay candidate being of a better calibre, and so on. He is voting according to capability instead of ethnicity. Therefore, such a premise is ambiguous in arguing that he is an ethnicity/non-ethnicity based person. However, for the second premise, should a Malay be willing to vote for a Chinese candidate, this means that the person did not vote alongside his ethnicity line. Although there can be other reasons for his actions, but generally, it is justifiable to argue that ethnicity may not be his consideration in such an instance (or at least not main consideration).

Therefore, for the analysis part of this chapter, I will be arguing the case through ideal mathematical calculations and negation of common sense statements, as similar to the principle explained in the two simple examples above. As this writing is from the perspective of ethnicity, only seats that are contested by different ethnic candidates will be discussed. To define whether a seat is considered to be an ethnically bloc voting seat, a few guidelines will be used for consideration. Firstly, it is to see if the seat has been won by different ethnic candidates within these three General Elections. If the seat has

been won by different ethnicity within these three General Elections, the seat is ruled out as ideally an ethnic bloc voting seat. Although political parties might switch seats with their component party or shift the ethnicity of the candidate, however, as weighting between political party's perspective and ethnicity perspective, this writing will pick the ethnicity perspective over political parties. Furthermore, this seat swapping may be considered as isolated cases as the allocation of seats are generally following the previous arrangement (as there are no seat increment for these three General Elections). Secondly, should the same ethnic candidate win the seat throughout the contestation period, it will then be further analysed whether the winning candidate is coming from the highest ethnic group of the particular seat. If the winning candidate is not the highest percentage of the voters composition, the seat will be ruled out as well. Thirdly, should the winning candidate come from the same ethnicity with the highest percentage of the seat composition, it will then be further investigated to see if the majority of votes are gained by the winning candidate. Should the majority be large and requires a large amount of inter-ethnic voting, therefore the seat will be ruled out as well. The fourth classification is when the winning candidate is coming from the same ethnic group as the highest ethnic voters and at the same time, the percentage of votes received is near to the ethnicity composition of voters for the particular seat, with such a result it may be hard to assume whether it is voting according or not along the ethnicity line. This is because although the result may be due to ideal ethnic bloc voting, at the same time, it can also be due to cross-ethnic voting that causes such a result. Therefore, such results would not affirm whether it is or it is not an ethnic bloc voting. In general, the classifications in this writing will be based on this guideline which depends on the ideal assumption of ethnically voting bloc. This is because there is no way (at least in this thesis and the fact that political parties are the main unit of analysis instead of voters) to affirm whether a person votes according to the ethnicity line, such a logically negation method is justifiable to negate seats that are (non-)ethnically voted. The table below gives an example of different scenarios in ethnicity group naming so that it can be understand better and more clearly.

CATEGORY	(NON-)ETHNIC BLOC VOTING	JUSTIFICATIONS
Different ethnic group candidates won in a same seat	Non-Ethnic Block Voting	If different ethnic candidates can win in that seat with constant (near to constant) ethnic composition, this shows that a person can win regardless of ethnicity.
Malay candidate won but the seats are of Chinese as the highest voting population	Non-Ethnic Block Voting	If voters vote along ethnicity line, the winner should be Chinese and not Malay.
Malay candidate won and the seats have Malay as the highest voting population but with a very high percentage of majority votes	Non-Ethnic Block Voting	Cross-ethnic votes is needed, therefore, negating the fact that people voted along ethnicity line.
Malay candidate won and the seats has Malay as the highest population while the majority votes is small	Uncertain	Should ethnic line voting be used, it will show such a result. At the same time, should cross-ethnic votes happen, it may show such a scenario as well.

Table 5: Classification of (non-)ethnic bloc voting

(Ethnicity above is just for illustration only while the principle of it remains)

As discussed in previous chapters, 2004 is the best performance for BN throughout Malaysian political history where BN won more than 90% of Parliamentary

seats. For PR, 2008 was their best ever performance at that time where they managed to deny a two third majority domination of BN and rule in five states. Their Parliamentary performance was enhanced further in the 2013 General Election. Therefore, it will be fairer to analyse the peak performance for both BN and PR as to dilute the party influence onto ethnicity. This is because as a lot of the seats are fixed based on intra coalition party or alliance seat allocation negotiations (although there are some changes from one election to another), therefore, by going through the peak performance of both BN and PR, it can dilute the fact that a candidate won the seat based on the party influence rather than the ethnicity of the candidate. This is because since BN had an upper hand in the 2004 General Election while PR had an upper hand in the 2008 and 2013 General Election, the seat should shift hands according to generalisation of election results. For a simple example, if a Malay candidate from BN won in 2004 General Election, the seat should shift to PR even if PR is fielding in a non-Malay candidate should party influence overwhelm ethnicity. Although there might be other reasons for winning a particular seat, but for the purpose of generalisation and from the perspective of ethnicity in Malaysian politics, seats will be ruled in or out of ideally ethnic bloc voting category.

6.6   ELECTION RESULT ANALYSIS

For this section, I will analyse in depth the ethnicity of candidates and the ethnic composition of voters within a particular seat. For this section, I will follow the classification as highlighted above in classifying whether these Parliamentary seats, are contested by different ethnic groups are voting along ethnicity lines or if it is the other way around. Below is the classification of Parliamentary seats for 2004, 2008 and the 2013 General Election according to ethnicity contestation. The data is generated through the information from Election Commission publication and printed mainstream newspaper (should Election Commission have not published the report at the data collection time).

GENERAL ELECTION	MALAY VS MALAY	NON-MALAY VS NON-MALAY	MALAY VS NON-MALAY	TOTAL
2004	102	39	25	166
2008	101	46	19	166
2013	107	47	12	166

Table 6: Classification of ethnic competition for 2004, 2008 and 2013 General Election Parliamentary seats (Reconstructed from Election Commission Report 2004, 2008, 2013)

GENERAL ELECTION	BN	PKR	DAP	PAS
2004	198	1	12	8
2008	140	31	28	23
2013	133	30	38	21

Table 7: Number of Parliamentary won by BN, PKR, DAP and PAS in 2004, 2008 and 2013 General Elections. (Reconstructed from Election Commission Report 2004, 2008, 2013)

From the table above, we can see that the number of Malay versus non-Malay seats is actually decreasing instead of increasing if de-ethnicisation is taking place. This is because de-ethnicisation is about nominating candidates regardless of ethnicity, the number should be higher. However, a higher number of Malay versus non Malay seats does not necessarily mean that it brings de-ethnicisation. For BN, the allocation of seats are quite fixed and for instance, if the seat is awarded to MCA, we cannot expect a non-Chinese candidate to be contesting. Therefore, the burden should be shifted to PR instead as they claimed themselves to be multi-ethnic. As there are a significant number of seats where BN does not allocate it to the highest percentage of ethnicity composition to their community party (A Malay majority seat is allocated to MCA or MIC instead), this may cause the alternation of the number. For example, if a Malay majority seat is allocated to

MCA while PR, just for the sake of playing along ethnicity line and purposely nominates a Malay candidate due to the nature of the seat, the number of Malay versus non Malay seats may increase but not for the de-ethnicisation reason. Similarly, using the same example, if PR does not care about the seat's ethnicity composition (not using ethnicity advantage) but nominates their candidate based on merit (and nominates a Chinese candidate), the number of Malay versus non Malay seats may be lower, but for de-ethnicisation reason. Therefore, the number of such Malay versus non Malay candidate seats could not be used as a parameter to measure the readiness of political parties and people towards de-ethnicisation. A better measurement is suggested above on how to categorise whether voters in that particular seat voted according to ethnicity line or otherwise.

In order to understand better on how the actual result can be translated into the categorisation of whether such a seat can be classified as ideally block voting or the other way, it is necessary to analyse those seats one by one according to states. Although such analysis may be full with numbers, but such numbers, apart from affirming (or negating) the idea of ideally ethnic block voting, the analysis could itself provide a wider scope on the kind of seats that encounter with such Malay against non- Malay contest. Below are the three tables classifying ethnic competition for Parliamentary elections in 2004, 2008 and 2013.

PARLIAMENT 2004

STATE	MALAY VS MALAY	NON-MALAY VS NON-MALAY	MALAY VS NON-MALAY	TOTAL
Perlis	3	0	0	3
Kedah	13	0	2	15
Kelantan	14	0	0	14
Terengganu	8	0	0	8
Penang	5	6	2	13

Perak	10	9	5	24
Pahang	10	2	2	14
Selangor	9	6	7	22
Federal Territories	5	6	2	13
Negeri Sembilan	5	2	1	8
Malacca	4	2	0	6
Johor	16	6	4	26
TOTAL	**102**	**39**	**25**	**166**

Table 8: Classification of ethnic competition for 2004 General Election Parliamentary

seats (Reconstructed from Election Commission Report 2004)

PARTY	MALAY	NON-MALAY
UMNO	111	0
MCA	39	0
PKR	31	12
DAP	3	35
PAS	83	0

Table 9: Classification of candidate by UMNO, MCA, PKR, DAP and PAS by ethnicity

in 2004 General Election. (Reconstructed from Election Commission Report 2004)

PARLIAMENT 2008

STATE	MALAY VS MALAY	NON-MALAY VS NON-MALAY	MALAY VS NON-MALAY	TOTAL
Perlis	3	0	0	3
Kedah	13	2	0	15
Kelantan	14	0	0	14
Terengganu	8	0	0	8
Penang	4	7	2	13
Perak	11	10	3	24
Pahang	10	2	2	14
Selangor	10	9	3	22
Federal Territories	5	7	1	13
Negeri Sembilan	5	2	1	8
Malacca	4	2	0	6
Johor	14	5	7	26
TOTAL	**101**	**46**	**19**	**166**

Table 10: Classification of ethnic competition for 2008 General Election Parliamentary

seats (Reconstructed from Election Commission Report 2008)

PARTY	MALAY	NON-MALAY
UMNO	116	0
MCA	37	0

PKR	50	14
DAP	2	34
PAS	62	0

Table 11: Classification of candidate by UMNO, MCA, PKR, DAP and PAS by ethnicity in 2008 General Election. (Reconstructed from Election Commission Report 2008)

PARLIAMENT 2013

STATE	MALAY VS MALAY	NON-MALAY VS NON-MALAY	MALAY VS NON-MALAY	TOTAL
Perlis	3	0	0	3
Kedah	13	2	0	15
Kelantan	14	0	0	14
Terengganu	8	0	0	8
Penang	5	7	1	13
Perak	12	11	1	24
Pahang	11	2	1	14
Selangor	10	9	3	22
Federal Territories	7	4	2	13
Negeri Sembilan	5	2	1	8
Malacca	4	2	0	6
Johor	15	8	3	26
TOTAL	**107**	**47**	**12**	**166**

Table 12: Classification of ethnic competition for 2013 General Election Parliamentary seats (Reconstructed from Election Commission Report 2013)

PARTY	MALAY	NON-MALAY
UMNO	121	0
MCA	36	0
PKR	49	16
DAP	3	33
PAS	64	1

Table 13: Classification of candidate by UMNO, MCA, PKR, DAP and PAS by ethnicity in 2013 General Election. (Reconstructed from Election Commission Report 2013)

From the three tables above, some of the states are showing exactly the same composition of contest while some other states are showing a shift. Focus will be paid on those Malay versus non-Malay seats and a loser look will be applied to the impact of such a trend towards the result. For the first four states listed in the table above, the composition is almost equal. Perlis, Kelantan and Terengganu are showing exactly the same composition. Such trend is not surprising as the demography of the states are mainly comprised of Malays. UMNO is contesting in all those seats while for the opposition, it is either by PAS (mainly) or PKR. For the state of Kedah, the contest for Malay-Malay seat remains the same for three consecutive elections. The only shift is for the Parliamentary seats of Alor Setar and Padang Serai. Both seats are having a Malay majority voters with Alor Setar having 61.2% while Padang Serai is having 55.6% of Malay voters. In 2004 General Election, where both seats were seeing Malay candidates against a Chinese candidate, both Chinese candidates won the seat at that occasion. Mathematically, both Chinese candidates have broken the trend of ethnic bloc voting while the subsequent 2008 and 2013 General Election is having non-Malay versus non-Malay. Therefore, different ethnicity candidates contesting the same seat does not arise.

For the state of Penang, different ethnicities contesting the same seat happen in Nibong Tebal and Bukit Bendera (2004), Nibong Tebal and Bayan Baru (2008) and Bukit Bendera (2013). Nibong Tebal is a mixed seat with Malay voters constituting 44.9% while Chinese and Indian voters comprise of 37.3% and 17.6% respectively. In 2004, the seat was won by a Malay candidate against a Chinese candidate while the 2008 results showed otherwise (2013 had a Malay against a Malay candidate). Therefore, from these results, it shows that the seat had been won by different ethnic groups while going against different ethnic opponents. For Bukit Bendera seat, it is a Chinese majority seat with a composition of 73.7% while the Malay only constitutes of 14%. Even so, the Malay candidate managed to win the seat in the 2013 General Election going against a Chinese candidate although in 2004, it was a Chinese candidate victory against a Malay candidate (2008 was having a Chinese-Chinese candidate). The last Parliamentary seat in the state of Penang having such a trend was Bayan Baru seat. It is a mixed seat comprises of 49.0% of Chinese voter and 39.2% of Malay voters. The 2004 and 2013 election were seeing a Chinese candidate going against another Chinese candidate. Our focus is on the 2008 result where it is a Malay candidate going against a Chinese candidate where the Malay candidate scored victory for the higher-Chinese-voters seat. Therefore, in the state of Penang for Parliamentary seat, it does not show that ethnicity is relative with the result.

For the state of Perak, out of the three General Elections, those Parliamentary seats that saw different ethnic candidates contesting against each other were Bukit Gantang (2004), Tapah (2004), Lumut (2004, 2008 and 2013), Bagan Datok (2004), Tanjong Malim (2004 and 2008), Gerik (2008). Starting off with Bukit Gantang seat, although it comprises of 64.8% of Malay voters, but the seat is won by a Chinese candidate. Tapah is an interesting seat to look at. The interesting part of the seat is that the seat is a very ethnically diverse seat, while Orang Asli (aborigine) from Peninsular Malaysia constitutes 11.8% (not a common composition for aborigine) of the total voters for the seat (Malay 46.5%, Chinese 27.9%, Indian 13.3%). In 2004, the seat was contested by a Malay and Indian candidate in which the seat went to the Indian candidate. To add-on with the interesting part of the seat, this seat could hardly be ideally dissected according to ethnicity. Ideal bloc voting, Indian voters alone could never have made the candidate win the seats. Even with the sum of Indian and Chinese percentage it would

still have been lower than the Malay percentage alone, but the result may be different if we were to sum-up Indian, Chinese and Orang Asli votes together. Therefore, for this seat, we could not claim that such a seat was from the ethnicity perspective. Lumut, which is contested by Malay and Chinese candidates consecutively for 2004, 2008 and 2013 General Election, is a seat comprised of 51.3% of Malay voters. Although the seat was won by a Chinese candidate in 2004 and 2008 election, but the election was won by a Malay candidate in 2013 General Election with the Malay candidate securing 40,308 votes, while the Chinese candidate secured 32,140 votes. Therefore, the result from these 3 elections show that Malay or Chinese candidate has won the seat before.

The next seat to be discussed is Bagan Datok Parliamentary seat where the seat is contested by a Malay candidate against an Indian candidate during the 2004 General Election. Although the percentage of Malay voters in the seat constitutes only 56.5%, but the total votes that were gained by the Malay candidate were 17,049 votes as compared to 4,510 votes secured by the Indian candidate. Therefore, ideal ethnic bloc voting does not work here too by looking at the large majority of votes secured by the Malay candidate. A large amount of cross-ethnic voting is required for such a large majority of votes to take place. Tanjong Malim, being a 53.5% of Malay voters seat, was won by a Chinese candidate on both occasions where a Chinese candidate was going against a Malay candidate (in 2004 and 2008 General elections while 2013 General election was seeing a Chinese candidate going against another Chinese candidate in which the seat is still held by the same party consecutively for these three terms). For the reason that a Chinese candidate won in a Malay as then highest composition seat, therefore the seat itself is ruled out for the ideally ethnic bloc voting framework. The last Parliamentary seat to be looked at is for the state of Perak is Gerik seat. From these 3 General Election, Gerik was only contested by different ethnic candidates during the 2008 General Election. Gerik seat constitutes of 68.1% of Malay voters. In 2008 General Election, the seat was won by a Chinese candidate against a Malay candidate. Its predecessor and successor was a Malay candidate when they went against another Malay candidate during those election. Therefore, it can be concluded that this seat has been won by both Malay and Chinese candidates before, and a Chinese candidate is able to triumph against a Malay candidate in this Malay majority seat. As a summary for the seat of Perak, this state can be said as

scoring a perfect score in negating ethnicity as the element in ideal ethnic bloc voting (if we negate the Bagan Datok seat as well by looking at the large majority).

Moving on to the state of Pahang, the largest state in the Peninsular of Malaysia geographically. Out of three latest General Elections, only three seats had seen different ethnic candidates contesting against one another. These seats are Kuantan (2004 and 2008), Bentong (2004) and Raub (2008 and 2013). Kuantan seat comprises of 62.5% of Malay voters. Both 2004 and 2008 General Elections were seeing Kuantan being contested by Malay and a Chinese candidates. The results were fairly distributed between them where a Chinese candidate won in the 2004 General Election with a Malay candidate winning in the 2008 General Election. The next interesting seat to be discussed is Bentong Parliamentary seat. This is because the seat has been won by the same Chinese candidate against all three main ethnic groups in Malaysia (in 2004, he won against a Malay candidate; in 2008, he won against an Indian candidate; in 2013, he won against a Chinese candidate). This may or may not be coincidental, but with such a scenario, the composition of ethnicity does not seem to matter anymore. The last seat to be discussed for the state of Pahang is Raub Parliamentary seat. Although 2004 General Election for this seat was seeing two Chinese candidates going against each other, but the subsequent General Elections were seeing a Malay candidate going against a Chinese candidate, in which a Chinese candidate won in 2008, while a Malay candidate won in 2013. Based on the analysis above, up to the state of Pahang, the Malaysian elections are still seeing ethnicity as non-relative to election results by looking at it on ideal ethnic bloc voting.

The next state to be discussed is the state of Selangor. Selangor, being one of the richest and most developed states in Malaysia, has the highest number of Malay versus non-Malay Parliamentary seat contests in 2004 General Election and co-share the top position with Johor in 2013 General Election. For 2004 General Election, Selangor was seeing such contests in 7 Parliamentary seats, namely Hulu Selangor, Ampang, Pandan, Puchong, Kelana Jaya, Subang and Kota Raja, while the 2008 and 2013 General Elections were seeing exactly the same trend for once again the seat of Hulu Selangor, Pandan and Kota Raja. To start, let me begin with the three consecutively repeated seats

which are Hulu Selangor, Pandan and Kota Raja. For the Hulu Selangor Parliamentary seat, it was contested by a Malay candidate against an Indian candidate throughout the three terms. An Indian candidate managed to win the seat in the 2004 and 2013 General Election while the Malay candidate won in 2008 General Election. Since the seat was won by a different ethnic group, therefore the composition of ethnicity for the seat does not matter in this seat. Similarly, for Pandan Parliamentary seat, it was won by a different ethnic candidate with Chinese winning in 2004 and 2008 General Elections (going against a Malay candidate) while a Malay candidate won in 2013 (going against a Chinese candidate). The similar trend applies to the Kota Raja Parliamentary seat, as well where an Indian candidate won in the 2004 General Election (going against a Malay candidate) while a Malay candidate won against an Indian candidate in the next two consequent General Elections.

The next dimension of discussion is for the balance of the four Parliamentary seats, namely Ampang, Puchong, Kelana Jaya, Subang which see different ethnic candidates only in the 2004 General Election. Ampang, a Parliamentary seat which comprises of 55.3% of Malay voters was seeing a Malay candidate going against an Indian candidate during the 2004 General Election. In that election, the Malay candidate won against the Indian candidate. The Malay candidate gained 33,214 votes while the Indian candidate only gained 13,482 votes. The Malay candidate's votes were about 2.5 times greater than that of the Indian candidate. This case is similar to the Bagan Datok (state of Perak) case above where Malay constitutes between 50% to 60% of the overall composition only, but the large majority gained by the Malay candidate shows that ideal ethnic bloc voting does not work here. Ideally, by assuming that all Malay voters vote for the Malay candidate, the Malay candidate still needs a large amount of votes from other ethnic groups in order to achieve such a large majority. Going by this assumption, it is justifiable to argue that ideal ethnic bloc voting does not work over here as well. The next Parliamentary seat to be discussed is the Puchong Parliamentary seat. The seat comprises of 43.5% Chinese, 39.4% Malays and 15.9% Indians. While 2008 and 2013 General Election were seeing non-Malay candidate going against non-Malay candidate, 2004 General Election was the most difficult one to deal with. This is because the seat was facing a three cornered fight, with a Chinese candidate from BN securing 21,291

votes while the Malay candidate from PAS secured 9,409 votes. The third candidate, a Chinese candidate from DAP managed to gain 9,185 votes in the contest. Therefore, if we were to fully follow the classification outlined above, where seats with more than 2 political parties are contesting, only the top two political parties candidates are considered. This means that it is a 21,291 votes against 9,409 votes. The gap is not that big as compared to the Bagan Datok and Ampang examples above; and not to confidently rule out the possibility of ideal ethnic bloc voting in practical terms. The gap is even smaller if we were to combine the total opposition parties votes and compared them between the Chinese BN and Malay opposition (which will make it a 21,291 votes against 18,594 votes); a nearer reflection of ideal ethnic bloc voting. Therefore, for this seat, I would argue in an abstention stance where no affirmation or negation can be made for that seat.

Kelana Jaya is a mixed seat with Chinese having slightly more voters (41.7%) while Malays and Indians stand at 37.9% and 18.6% respectively. In 2004 General Election, the Chinese candidate won the seat against a Malay candidate. The Chinese candidate gained 35,846 votes while the Malay candidate only secured 14,275. The total number of votes gained by the Chinese candidate was around 2.5 times the votes gained by the Malay candidate. This seat is similar to Ampang seat (same state which is Selangor) where the ethnicity of the winning candidate was the same as the highest percentage of the ethnicity composition within the seat. However, the total number of votes secured by the winning candidate was around 2.5 times the total votes secured by their opponent. These two seats should be considered to be in the same classification. As argued above in the Ampang seat, I would put this seat as non-ideally-ethnic-bloc-voting seat, as well due to the large majority obtained by the winning candidate.

The last seat to be discussed for the state of Selangor is Subang. Subang is another mixed seat in Selangor. However, this mixed seat is seeing a higher composition of Malay voters which stands at 47.7% while Chinese and Indian voters stand respectively at 38.0% and 12.7%. In the 2004 General Election, the seat was won by an Indian candidate (more accurately a Punjabi candidate) against a Malay candidate despite the fact that the Malay had a higher percentage in the electoral. Furthermore, the

majority won by the non-Malay candidate is not small; gaining 32,941 votes against 17,481 votes gained by the Malay candidate. It can be said that this seat does not lie within the boundary of ideal ethnic bloc voting.

Federal Territories which have a total of 13 seats (Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya in Peninsular Malaysia and Labuan in East Malaysia). Out of these 13 seats, only two seats have experienced a competition between a Malay candidate against a non-Malay candidate for the latest 3 General Elections. Bandar Tun Razak, is a seat where every General Election (I refer to the latest three; namely 2004, 2008 and 2013 General Elections in this context) saw a contest between a Malay and a non-Malay candidate. The seat has 52.6% of Malay voters while the next highest percentage is Chinese voters which stand at 37.4% (Indian ranks third at 8.7%). The seat was won by a Chinese candidate in the 2004 General Election while the subsequent 2008 and 2013 General Elections were won by a Malay candidate. Therefore, the seat has in fact been won by different ethnic candidates which rules it out to be classified as an ideally ethnic bloc voting seat. Wangsa Maju is another seat within Federal Territories that had a Malay versus non-Malay contest. It happened in 2004 and 2013 General Election (2008 was seeing a Chinese versus Chinese). The composition of the seat comprises of 53.3% of Malay voters while Chinese and Indian voters stand at 36.2% and 8.8% respectively. Although Malay voters constituted a large percentage of voters, both occasions were won by Chinese candidates. Therefore, this seat is ruled out from the ideally ethnic bloc voting as well.

The next state to deal with is the state of Negeri Sembilan where the state is having only one seat, that sees a contest between a Malay candidate going against a non-Malay candidate. The seat is Teluk Kemang Parliamentary seat where it is having a 42.4% of Malay voters, 33.8% of Chinese voters and 21.4% of Indian voters. The seat was won by an Indian candidate in 2004 General Election against a Malay candidate. However, the seat went to a Malay candidate for two consecutive terms by going against an Indian candidate. Therefore, this election result history has shown that different ethnic candidates have won this seat before.

Although the next state in sequence to be discussed should be the state of Malacca, however, due to the absence of Malay versus non-Malay Parliamentary seat contest, the discussion will be continued with the next and last state which is Johor, the most southern state in the Peninsular of Malaysia. Those Parliamentary seats that see Malay versus non-Malay competition are Bakri (2004), Ayer Hitam (2004 and 2008), Simpang Renggam (2004, 2008 and 2013), Tebrau (2004 and 2008), Ledang (2008), Sembrong (2008), Gelang Patah (2008 and 2013), Tanjong Piai (2008 and 2013).

Bakri Parliamentary seat constitutes of a 53.2% of Chinese voters, followed by Malays at 44.1% and Indian at 2.3%. In the 2004 General Election, the seat was won by a Chinese candidate which gained 29,320 votes against a Malay candidate 10,261 votes. To add on the spice, this seat is among the handful of number of seats where DAP is fielding a Malay candidate. Similar to Bagan Datok and Ampang seat, the winning candidate for this seat was won by the highest percentage of the seat composition. For this seat, it is nearly triple the total number of votes gained by the winning candidate against the losing candidate. Therefore, by comparing these seats, if Bagan Datok and Ampang seats were ruled out from the ideally ethnic bloc voting classification, this seat is definitely out too, as the total votes are triple as compared to 2.5 times for both Bagan Datok and Ampang seat. If both Bagan Datok and Ampang seats were ruled in the trend, this Bakri seat may need further consideration then due to the majority votes. However, as discussed in the section for Bagan Datok and Ampang seat, due to the large majority and a large number of inter-ethnic voting are needed to shows such a large majority votes, therefore, all these seats are ruled out of the ideally ethnic bloc voting trend.

Ayer Hitam is another interesting seat to study. Ayer Hitam Parliamentary seat comprises of 57.9% of Malay voters, 38.0% of Chinese voters and 4.0% of Indian voters. Although Malay constitutes a higher percentage of the composition, the Chinese candidate won on both occasions; 2004 and 2008 General Election, with a significant majority of votes. Although the 2013 General Election saw a Chinese versus Chinese competition, the interesting part of it is that this General Election was the first time for PAS to field in a non Muslim candidate using PAS symbol.

Out of all of the seats in Johor which sees Malay versus non-Malay competition, Simpang Renggam Parliamentary seat is the only seat that experiences such a trend throughout the three General Elections. Simpang Renggam is a seat where 56.8% of its voters are Malays while the Chinese voters only constitute 33.1% of the overall voters (Indian is having a 9.7% composition). Even so, the Chinese candidate won in every of the three General Elections against a Malay candidate. Similarly for the Tebrau Parliamentary seat, the seat constituted a higher percentage of Malay voters (47.4% Malays, 38.2% Chinese, 13.3% Indian), but a Chinese candidate won on both the 2004 and 2008 General Election against a Malay candidate. The same trend once again applies to Tanjong Piai Parliamentary seat where the seat has a highest percentage of Malay voters as compared to other ethnic groups (52.1% Malays, 46.5% Chinese, Indian 1.1%) although the Malay and Chinese percentage gap is the smallest among the three. Similarly, a Chinese candidate won against a Malay candidate in both the 2008 and the 2013 General Election. However, one interesting fact to be noted over this seat is that the Malay candidate is coming from DAP (lost on both occasions). With the result of the Chinese candidate winning all these three seats despite the fact the Malay is having a higher percentage of voters, it eventually rules them out of the ideally ethnic bloc voting trend.

The next seat to be discussed is the Ledang Parliamentary seat. Ledang Parliamentary seat constitutes of 53.6% of Malay voters, 41.1% of Chinese voters and 4.8% of Indian voters. In both 2004 and 2013 General Elections, it was a contest between Malay candidates only. However, in the 2008 General Election, a Malay candidate won against a Chinese candidate by gaining 25,319 votes against 17,702 votes by the Chinese candidate. So far, this is the first seat that saw a nearest trend towards the idea of ideally ethnic bloc voting trend.

The next seat to be discussed is Sembrong Parliamentary seat. The seat comprises of 58.7% of Malays, 30.9% of Chinese and 9.0% of Indian. Similar to Ledang

Parliamentary seat in terms of overall result, the seat was contested by Malay candidates in 2004 and 2013 General Elections. In the 2008 General Election, the result showed a Malay candidate won over a Chinese candidate, gaining 17,988 votes against 6,418 votes. This is the difference between this seat and Ledang Parliamentary seat. The winning candidates scored more than 2.5 times the number of votes as compared to the opponent. Therefore, this seat is more suitable to be classified together with Bagan Datok, Ampang and Bakri Parliamentary seat instead of being classified together with the Ledang Parliamentary seat.

The last seat to be discussed for Parliamentary seat with the trend of having Malay candidate contesting against non-Malay candidate across the Peninsular of Malaysia is the Gelang Patah Parliamentary seat. Gelang Patah Parliamentary seat constitutes of 52.4% of Chinese voters, 34.3% of Malay voters and 12.5% of Indian voters. In the 2004 General Election, it was contested by Chinese candidates only. However, for 2008 and 2013 General Election, it was contested by Malay and Chinese candidates. In 2008 General Election, the Chinese candidate gained 33,630 votes while the Malay candidate gained 24,779 votes. Similarly, in 2013 General election, the Chinese candidate won the seat by securing 54,284 votes, while the Malay candidate secured 39,522 votes. With such a trend, this is the second seat to be considered in the framework of ideally ethnic bloc voting trend.

From the discussion above, four loose categories of ideally ethnic bloc voting seats are defined. The first group is the nearest to the ideally ethnic bloc voting seat. For this category, only Ledang (Johor) and Gelang Patah (Johor) Parliamentary seats are considered to have fulfilled the guidelines set above. For the second category, this is for those winning candidates whom come from the same ethnicity with the highest voter's percentage in the seat composition. However, these seats are ruled out based on the large majority gained by the winning candidate which requires a large cross-ethnic voting. For this category, I classify the Parliamentary seats of Bagan Datok (Perak), Ampang (Selangor), Bakri (Johor) and Sembrong (Johor) into it. The third category is abstention category where the seat could not be ascertained as to whether to rule in or rule out from

the ideally ethnic bloc voting framework. Only one seat is considered for this category which is Puchong (Selangor) Parliamentary seat. The fourth category is for the rest of those where they are ruled out directly from the ideally ethnic bloc voting framework as according to the guidelines above.

The intention of this paper is only for Parliamentary seats. This is because State Assemblies lie between elected Parliamentarians and appointed Local Government Councillors. However, it is good to at least to know about the seat distribution within state assemblies. To further strengthen the case that voters do not in general vote according to ethnicity block voting, the table below summarises the seat per seat analysis for such classification according to the nature of Malay versus non Malay candidates:

CLASSIFIC-ATIONS	CATEGORY 1	CATEGORY 2	CATEGORY 3	CATEGORY 4
PARLIAME-NTARY SEATS	- Nibong Tebal - Bukit Bendera - Bayan Baru - Lumut - Gerik - Kuantan - Raub - Hulu Selangor - Pandan - Kota Raja - Bandar Tun	- Alor Setar - Padang Serai - Bukit Gantang - Tapah - Tanjong Malim - Bentong - Subang - Wangsa Maju - Ayer Hitam - Simpang Renggam	- Bagan Datok - Ampang - Bakri - Sembrong - Kelana Jaya	- Ledang - Gelang Patah

	Razak - Teluk Kemang	- Tebrau - Tanjong Piai		
TOTAL	12	12	5	2

Table 9: Classification of Parliamentary seats which sees Malay candidate versus non Malay candidate

Category 1: Different ethnic candidates won

Category 2: Candidate ethnic A won, seats with most voters from ethnic B

Category 3: Candidate ethnic A won, seats with most voters from ethnic A, but majority is large

Category 4: Candidate ethnic A won, seats with most voters from ethnic A, majority is small

By looking at the table above, only 2 out of 31 seats are classified as ambiguous, thus it could not be ascertained as to whether voters in these two seats were voting along ethnicity line. The result of the rest of the 31 seats are showing that although these seats are having Malay candidates versus non Malay candidates, but the results do not show that ethnic block voting is taking place. This is a good measurement numerically in proving that the voting trend in Malaysia does not suggest that people vote according to ethnicity while de-ethnicisation is scoring higher points than ethnic politics. There is one special seat which could not be categorised into any of the groups above easily, which is the Puchong Parliamentary seat. The seat comprises of 43.5% Chinese, 39.4% Malays and 15.9% Indians. While 2008 and 2013 General Election was seeing a non-Malay candidate going against a non-Malay candidate, 2004 General Election was the most difficult one to deal with. This is because the seat was facing a three cornered fight, with

a Chinese candidate from BN securing 21,291 votes, while a Malay candidate from PAS secured 9,409 votes. The third candidate, a Chinese candidate from DAP managed to gain 9,185 votes in the contest. Therefore, if we were to fully follow the classification above outlined above, where seats with more than 2 political parties are contesting, only the top two political parties candidates are considered. It means that it is a 21,291 votes against 9,409 votes. The gap is not that big as compared to the Bagan Datok and Ampang examples above; not to confidently rule out the possibility of ideal ethnic bloc voting in practical terms. The gap is even smaller if we were to combine the total opposition parties votes and compare it between Chinese BN and Malay opposition (which will make it a 21,291 votes against 18,594 votes); a nearer reflection of ideal ethnic bloc voting. Therefore, for this seat, I would argue in an abstention stance where no affirmation or negation can be made for that seat.

6.7   MINORITY CANDIDATES FOR DAP AND PAS

From the discussion in previous chapters on party membership and party core values, informants from both political fronts agree that ethnic politics do(did) take place. Some informants opine that ethnic politics still exist in Malaysian politics while some informants argue that Malaysian politics is moving towards de-ethnicisation. Therefore, the idea of de-ethnicisation should be discussed in real political terms. It means that political parties would need to show their practical readiness in following through on their talk. As discussed in previous chapters, candidates for the main BN component party are fixed due to their nature as ethnic-based party. For PKR, their membership is diverse and therefore, is not of interest for this discussion as well.

In this section, I would look at the minority candidates for DAP and PAS. DAP, although by its Constitution is a multi-ethnic party, but the party can hardly see the winning of Malay candidates as elected representatives. Although DAP has been fielding in Malay candidates for many of the General Elections, but only very few of them have

managed to win seats. The table below shows the number of Malay candidates contesting in Parliamentary and State Assembly seats during 2004, 2008 and 2013 General Elections:

GENERAL ELECTIONS	PARLIAMENT	STATE ASSEMBLY
2004	3	2
2008	2	1
2013	3	1

Table 10: DAP Malay candidates during 2004, 2008 and 2013 General Elections for Parliamentary and State Assembly seats.

In 2004 and 2008 General Elections, none of the Malay candidates managed to win a single seat in the election. It is until the 2013 election where 2 out of 3 candidates for Parliamentary seats and the lone State Assembly candidates manages to win their respective seats. Although DAP has been fielding in Malay candidates since long ago, but the yardstick for DAP is not to field in, but to win those seats.

It is different for PAS whether their yardstick is not to win a seat through non Muslim representative (surely winning is a bonus for them, but their first step should be looked at as nominating non-Muslim candidates instead). There are no non-Muslim candidates standing under the symbol of PAS until 2013 (although in 2008, DHPP did contest for a seat using the PKR symbol. Therefore, I discounted that as a PAS nomination) where PAS has fielded in 1 non-Muslim candidate for a Parliamentary seat and 2 non-Muslim candidates for State Assembly seats. Such a number is tiny as compared to the overall seats that PAS is contesting. Numerically, it is even smaller compared to DAP Malay candidatures, which is DAP Malay candidature is already being condemned as too small). However, as discussed in the previous chapter, PAS has at least opened up their door for non-Muslim candidatures in the 2013 General Election.

6.8   CONCLUSION

In 'old politics', ethnicity is often related to political activity. With the flow of de-ethnicisation in Malaysian politics, the magnitude of ethnic politics is much less(Lim 2002). One of the measurements is to look at how people vote and how political parties execute their propaganda of bringing Malaysia towards de-ethnicisation of politics (Berger 2010). At the first level, although the election result above could not fully prove that, even though voters nowadays may vote cross-ethnicity, this does not mean that they are voting according to a non-ethnic line. They may vote in such trends due to other factors. On the other hand, such voting trends can be seen as a rejection of an extremist candidate. Although it cannot prove the level of de-ethnicisation in terms of a voting trend, the general view from the analysis above manages to negate the premise that Malaysia masses still vote for their own ethnic group only. Furthermore, such analysis has explored one by one Parliamentary seat with strong justification in classifying them as such. Otherwise, the election result would not be as above.

For the second question raised in the introduction section, DAP and PAS are seen to have come out of their comfort zone, nominating their minority members or associate members as election candidates. Such a move is commendable, because the risk of putting up such candidates is higher when compared to nominating their conventional dominant ethnic candidates into the election. This could show their persistence with their propaganda in practising inclusivity in their party (Maznah Mohamad 2008). As mentioned above, political rhetoric may give impact towards a party's image, but election candidature could give impact directly towards the power-gaining of a political party should they be willing to take such a high risk, which may cost them the seats and, eventually, the chance of forming a federal government (if they are in a marginal majority scenario).

In general, electoral politics is one of the important pillars (aside from party membership and party stance) in arguing on whether Malaysian politics is moving towards de-ethnicisation. Although there is a lack of literature directly explaining how a coalition party (or other kind of political cooperation) could advance de-ethnicisation, in order to advance de-ethnicisation, apart from ambitious propaganda, a success from real

politics is needed too (Case 2009). That is why, by making those political parties gain success in real politics, it is one of the steps necessary in pushing even further the idea of de-ethnicisation, not only in terms of rhetorical propaganda or internal party restructuring, but also in the field of electoral politics.

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

From this research, we can see that a new political landscape has emerged in Malaysian politics. 'Old politics', with an emphasis on ethnic politics, does not seem to be the only cleavage in the current political setting anymore. It is challenged by a 'new politics', which moves away from the sort of ethnic politics and is replaced by a political discourse that no longer depends on ethnicity but rather on services provided by political parties and their candidates (Weiss 2013). Although universal values such as justice, transparency, zero corruption and the like are becoming more salient in political mobilisation, Loh (2007) also suggests another dimension of 'developmentalism' as a complement to the universal value idea. However, even with such a new setting, the importance of ethnicity has not been totally neglected. It still occupies a certain space within Malaysian politics.

Overall, however, the trajectory from 'old politics' to 'new politics' in Malaysia leads to the emergence of de-ethnicisation in Malaysia. Dunning and Harrison (2010) propose the idea of de-ethnicisation as a shift from the current cleavage to a new cleavage. This is supported by Gomez (2007) who argues that the Malaysian political landscape in the late 1990s following the arrest of Anwar Ibrahim (the *Reformation* era) witnessed a shift in discourse to more universal values, especially related to justice and corruption issues. Such a shift has indeed taken place, not occluding the ethnic cleavage, but shifting it, the salient side of making new universal values cleavage more prominent. Secondly, it can also avoid the existence of a vacuum during such transition. This is echoed by Zuckerman (1975), in how political parties are trying to shift their position to suit the political development at that time.

A second approach that is suggested for de-ethnicisation to occur is by re-rooting for similarities over differences. Susanne (2006) suggests that in order to de-ethnicise a political system, it is crucial to find out the similarities among those involved. In each

society, including a diverse society, even though such societies might have more differences among them than similarities, as long as the similarities can be derived and the emphasis placed more on such similarities than differences, de-ethnicisation is not impossible. Such strategy is supported by Milikowski (2000), who introduced 'similarity strategy', where similarity is being used to counter ethnic-related elements. In Malaysia, Khoo's (2016) examination of 'mobilisation of dissent' similarly shows that different opposition parties, namely PKR, DAP and PAS, can work together despite their different own political ideologies. Their common objective to overthrow the ruling regime, BN, showed evidence of success when they won power in 5 states during 2008 General Election.

Principally, as discussed above, de-ethnicisation of politics can occur in two suggested ways, namely shifting to a new cleavage and re-rooting for similarities. However, to the extent that Malaysian politics has been de-ethnicised, such research questions have been addressed through the three dimensions of this discussion: party membership, party stance, and electoral strategy. The changes in each of these dimensions will be summarised in the sections below. However, in general, Malaysian politics seems to show progress in de-ethnicising the political landscape. Political parties have adapted to various changes in pursuing a higher degree of de-ethnicisation of politics (Mitchell, Evans & O'Leary, 2009). Although such emergence is not yet perfect, the intention of this research is not to prove that Malaysian politics has changed to de-ethnicisation of politics absolutely, but to argue the success of de-ethnicisation of Malaysian politics by political parties.

Apart from the success in attempting to answer those questions raised since the Introduction chapter, this research aims to be able to expand the scholarship of de-ethnicisation of politics, which is limited to begin with. A three-dimensional approach is introduced to widen the narrow perspective of how politics could be de-ethnicised, as opposed to other literature, which prefers to focus on the principles of the debate. There is no doubt that principled debate is crucial in arguing the case, yet at the same time, the case application onto real examples is equally important. However, to date, less attention has been paid upon this by scholars.

In this chapter, I will start with summarising how party membership, party stance, and electoral strategy can bring forward de-ethnicisation of politics. This summary is believed to be able to provide a clearer picture of the arguments in previous chapters and reinforce them here. Then, I will look at why ethnic politics has a lesser say in Malaysian politics nowadays, before justifying how this research can contribute to the existing scholarship. The final section will be on the future prospect of Malaysian politics.

PARTY MEMBERSHIP IN BRINGING DE-ETHNICISATION

Political parties played a major role in pushing for de-ethnicisation to happen. The first dimension of it is through party membership. This is because the inclusion of a political party in terms of their membership could represent to what extent a political party is trying to move away from being confining within their own ethnic community only. According to Prasad (2016), the overall party membership of a political party in Malaysia can describe the 'ethnicity' of the party. Apart from how their party Constitution portrays their party, or how their party members might wish for their party to be seen, the perspective from outside -the party is also important. Party membership structure also influences the directions parties take (Chin 2006): party members elect their leaders and in return, these leaders are constrained by the wishes of the majority members should they wish to remain in power in their party. From the research, we can see that different political parties adopt different policies. For PKR, they do not need to prove much as they are a non-ethnic party to begin with. Even so, by looking through their membership and leadership composition, they do have a wide representation across various segments of the society. Even scholars such as Hamayotsu (2013) agree that PKR is one of the genuine non-ethnic (or multi-ethnic) parties.

DAP, on the other hand, was formed as a multi-ethnic party from the start, and has been more outward in championing multi-ethnicity in its political programme (Kartini Aboo Talib Khalid 2014). From the research, we can see that they do not have much problem in handling the wave of de-ethnicisation, as their party is ready to accept any members from any background. However, in reality, DAP fails to attract Malays into their membership. This makes DAP look a Chinese-dominated party. Even so, especially in the 'new politics' era, efforts have been made by DAP to attract more Malays

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into their party. People such as Zaid Ibrahim, Samad Said, and Aziz Bari are among the famous figures who have been recruited as members and assigned party responsibility.

The third group of parties to be summarised are MCA and PAS. These two parties, due to their party Constitutions, are restricted from recruiting non-Chinese and non-Muslims respectively as their members. MCA is a Chinese party, based on the interpretation of their Constitution, and the same goes for PAS as an Islamic party, as argued by Weiss (2014) too. Although both parties are facing hurdles in that sense, they are making an effort in recruiting non-Chinese and non-Muslims as their associate members respectively. This can be seen as the first step in accepting other ethnic groups into their parties.

The final party is UMNO. Unlike the previous four parties, UMNO has less inclination to open their doors to other ethnic communities. UMNO's Constitution defines them as a Malay-based party, and so, as in reality, they only accept Malay community as members (putting aside isolated cases, as discussed in the Party Membership chapter). Even so, when compared to other political parties in terms of degrees of willingness to open their doors, the door is open for KIMMA (as discussed in the Background chapter).

From all these five parties, in terms of membership, we can see that most are making an effort to make their party membership more inclusive to non-dominant groups in their party. This effort can be seen as one of the yardstick in arguing that political parties in Malaysia do have the political will to push Malaysian politics towards de-ethnicisation, instead of remaining in the 'old politics' confinement of ethnic politics.

PARTY STANCE

By looking at the changes of each political party's stance, the second dimension shows that Malaysian politics is being de-ethnicised by political parties. In general, the change of party stance could be seen from two perspectives. The first is that these political parties are becoming more pluralistic or inclusive by celebrating all walks of life instead

of just focusing on their own community. This is line with Kirchheimer (1996) ideas of a catch-all party, and Chandra Muzaffar's (2005) idea that an ethnic party does not mean that it will serve their own community only. The second approach they attempt is to move away from ethnic politics and focus more on universal values issues such as justice, good governance, and fairness. This second attempt is applying both approaches of de-ethnicisation (shifting to other cleavage and re-rooting similarities), as discussed in the Theoretical Context chapter and an earlier section in this chapter.

As party membership argues on the explicit issues, this dimension argues on the implicit issues: on what the party has done or intends to do in changing their party direction. According to Mair, Müller and Plasser (2004), a political party might need to adapt their party direction with the political development, to, at times, make themselves relevant in the mainstream politics. This is shown by Ong (2015) through the example of the Spirit of 46 Malay Party which split its allegiances between two different coalitions from late 1980s to mid-1990s. As its name suggests, the Spirit of 46 Malay Party is supposed to be a Malay party. However, due to electoral consideration, Spirit of46 Malay Party had to work with other opposition parties to defeat the incumbent regime. During that time, though, DAP and PAS were not capable of working together within a grand coalition (Ong 2015). For these reasons, Spirit of 46 Malay Party formed a Malay/Muslim coalition (named as Muslim Unity Movement) together with PAS and other similar parties and at the same time, formed another coalition with DAP and its partner parties (named as People's Might). In short, Spirit of 46 Malay Party is a member of two coalitions at the same time. Ironically, during the PR era, DAP and PAS even worked together under the umbrella of PR together with PKR through a 'mobilisation of dissent' as described by Khoo (2016). This shows that the party stance can be manipulated to accommodate changing circumstances, and as a result the post-2008 Malaysian political landscape seems to have skewed towards de-ethnicisation. According to Case (2015), with PAS joining the opposition fray, the political landscape reveals a more balanced ethnic composition between the ruling regime and opposition alliance. With such a balance achieved, the significance of ethnicity may have waned. This is in part because it becomes more difficult for UMNO to claim that the opposition is dominated by DAP since PAS, a conservative Islamic party, has joined forces with the opposition alliance. Therefore, in the Party Membership chapter and Party Stance chapter,

I have shown that political parties have made various changes to make their parties more inclusive. Such inclusivity encourages political parties with different ideologies to work together (Gomez 2007). By being more inclusive, less attention is devoted to their particular ethnic group, instead focusing more on a party stance that is more inclusive for the general community's consumption.

We can thus see how four parties, namely MCA, PKR, DAP, and PAS would like to see a more inclusive politics rather than following the way 'old politics' works. Prasad (2016) opines that these political parties do acknowledge the importance of non-ethnic politics, and some even go to the extent of amending much of their party propaganda. For example, PAS has come out with many taglines such as 'PAS for All', in showing people that it is not an exclusive party, but it welcomes all. For MCA, their leaders insist that, even though they are a Chinese party, they do not isolate themselves to the Chinese community only. In fact, they are opening their doors in welcoming anyone, including non-Chinese, should they need their help. Furthermore, the loans, welfare, and benefits offered by them are open for application from all walks of life; they are not exclusively for the Chinese only. Their policies manage to prove that they do not subscribe to the idea that the Chinese party is for the Chinese only. DAP, as a multi-ethnic party to begin with (Kartini Aboo Talib Khalid 2014), do not change their party policy a great deal, as their policy from the day they formed until today is based on multi-ethnicity (Mauzy 2006). According to Prasad (2016), he believes that DAP is facing the obstacles of garnering support from the Malay community. Therefore, they are trying harder in attracting more Malays to join hands with them, including several high-profile leaders. With this, it shows that, principally, DAP has been practising multi-ethnicity since the beginning, and can practise what it preaches much better than before. For PKR, similar to the above (party membership), they do not need to make many changes, as they themselves are the most 'genuine' multi-ethnic party in terms of membership and leadership composition (although it still does not exactly reflect the population composition).

The special political party that takes a different stance to the four of them is UMNO. A different leader provides a different opinion on how they view UMNO's role and their party's stance in dealing with non-Malay issues. One of the informants is more

liberal, saying that the UMNO is a party for all as well, and is willing to serve other communities should the need arise. This liberal strain within UMNO, according to Mauzy (2006) has gained traction because Malays feel socio-politically and economically more secure, making it easier to waive their Malay privileges, or at least not feel threaten by the non-Malay community. However, another informant argues that BN is practising cooperation between component parties. Should Chinese issues arise, MCA could help to solve them. It does not necessarily mean that UMNO must be the one to solve such encounters. Even so, this does not mean that UMNO is doing nothing for the non-Malay community. This is because UMNO and all other component members are working under the same roof, which is BN. This doesn't surprise Mauzy (2013) who acknowledges that although BN might appear to be practising a more coercive consociationalism where UMNO seems to be more powerful compared to other component parties. BN is practising nominal consociationalism where UMNO seems to be more dominant within the coalition instead of equal sharing of power. However, at the same time, this latter group of UMNO leader inclines to believe in self-serving among each ethnic group. They believe that community leaders should serve their own community as such method is more effective compared to mixing different ethnic groups of leaders together in serving the overall community. Therefore, for this issue on party stance, it could be concluded that most of the political parties are in agreement that Malaysia should no longer confine itself to ethnic politics per se, but be more inclusive to the whole community although there is a small group of leaders differs to it.

ELECTORAL STRATEGY

The third dimension, which proves that Malaysian politics have been de-ethnicised by political parties, is through their electoral strategy. Political parties no longer talk on one hand and walk on the other. They have shown their consistency with party membership and party stance by making their electoral strategy more inclusive. This is because the voting trend is fluid and is movable from one party to another (Madrid, 2008). People from an ethnicity other than the dominant ethnicity in the political party have been made candidates in the elections. This is most common in PKR due to the fluidity of their candidates. However, for DAP and PAS, their candidates are more likely to align with the predicted ethnicity of the candidates (Malay or non-Malay,as discussed in Electoral

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Strategy chapter) due to the nature of their party membership, though even with them there are some minor exceptions (Lim 2014). This is because there is only a small percentage of non-dominant ethnic group in the party (referring to Malays in DAP and non-Malays in PAS). In practical terms, UMNO and MCA do not have much choice as their members' pool consists of single ethnic groups only (Kartini Aboo Talib Khalid 2014). It cannot be ascertained whether they are keen to put non-dominant groups within their party to contest in the election under their name. This is because, even if they wish to cut across ethnic boundaries, they still are not able to do so because they have none. Therefore, the focus will be on the opposition bench, and the comparison is being made through the classification of seats and competition of different ethnic groups. This is because all three opposition parties have various ethnicity members, be it full members or associate members.

On the level of competition between different ethnic groups, the Electoral Strategy chapter has shown that out of all the seats, which see Malay versus non-Malay candidates, most are being classified as non-ethnic bloc voting seats. This means that the result has shown that ethnic bloc voting does not occur. Should ethnic bloc voting occur, the results will not be the same as those published results. At the same time, there are two seats that show the possibility of ethnic bloc voting. As this approach is based on assumption and mathematical calculations, these two seats may not necessarily reflect whether people in these two constituencies are voting for their own ethnic group only. This is in line with Riker's (1962) game theory idea of deducing the result from as much available data as possible. Such intelligence is based on the idea of assumptive probability, which can be true in general circumstances. Even if this assumption turns out to be true that they vote according to ethnicity, the percentage is still very small: it happened with only two seats. Therefore, for this level of argument, the General Election results show that voters voted, most probably, not according to ethnicity.

The second level is regarding the electorate action taken, especially by DAP and PAS. Although DAP has been nominating Malay candidates for decades, Malay candidates can barely score results. No doubt, there are a few exceptions, but these are considered as isolated examples. In the flow of 'new politics', DAP Malay candidates seem to be able to win seats. This is in line with the arguments put forth by Khoo (2016),

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Gomez (2007) and Mauzy (2006), who all suggest that Malaysia is moving away from ethnic politics. DAP itself also intends to nominate more Malay candidates should the seat allocations permit. This is because DAP has the smallest number of seats to contest when compared to PKR and PAS. Among the small number of seats, a large portion is already allocated to incumbents, party veterans, and party office bearers. One of the informants makes a good point when he argues that it is not really about not wanting to nominate more Malay candidates, but it is because there are a lack of seats to contest. For PAS, the party has started to nominate non-Muslim candidates under their own banner. Although the number may be small, only one Parliamentary seat and two State Assembly seats, this has shown that PAS is ready to be even more inclusive to non-Muslims, up to the level of giving them a chance to contest in the election. This is because for decades, the main crux of PAS struggle has been about religion, confronting UMNO head-on (Welsh 2015). Even though it is viewed as only a small step, but such a small step can represent PAS readiness in practising their tagline, 'PAS for All'.

Therefore, for this dimension, in both levels, political parties are seen to be pushing for more inclusive politics. Such inclusivity is crucial in bringing de-ethnicisation, as explained in previous chapters. This is because, at the first level of discussion, ethnic bloc voting does not seem to take place, while at the second level, DAP and PAS have come out of their comfort zones and are trying to erase the ethnic boundary even further.

THE RISE OF DE-ETHNICISATION OF POLITICS
From this research, for most of the political parties, we can see that party membership nowadays is more inclusive when compared to the era of 'old politics'. Political stances and positions taken by political parties are no longer exclusively for themselves or their own community only. Voting trends have also shown that voting according to their own ethnicity may not necessarily be the case. All these changes are due to the political will of those stakeholders in making changes towards the Malaysian political landscape. These three-dimensional approaches, which inter-link, fit nicely into the effort of de-ethnicising the society. This is because this approach covers both explicit and implicit

changes in their party, while being supported by the electoral strategy in practising their efforts in elections, instead of leaving propaganda as mere propaganda.

Although political parties have tried to make changes themselves, when it comes to the context of politics, voters are voting according to the available options for them to choose. This option generally refers to political parties that contest the election. In order for ethnic politics or non-ethnic politics to work, political parties and voters play a major role in leading the direction to where Malaysian politics should head. Previous General Elections, especially the 2008 and 2013 General Elections, have shown that the voters, particularly the non-Malay community, are inclined towards opposition parties that propagate many issues, which include non-ethnic politics. With such heavy support towards the opposition parties, non-UMNO component parties have started to restructure themselves in order to survive in the latest political trend. With such new alternation towards non-UMNO component parties, it 'encourages' the collapse of ethnic politics among the non-Malay voters. This is what I call a two-way influence.

On the other hand, Malay politics is a bit difficult. UMNO are in the centre line of wanting and not wanting to restructure themselves to be more inclusive. As discussed above, even within UMNO there are leaders who prefer to see UMNO becoming more inclusive, while another camp prefer to see UMNO as it is currently. However, there is no doubt that even for the Malay community, especially by looking at the cross-voting of PAS and DAP supporters, at least as a comparison with 'old politics', the magnitude of ethnic politics is much lower nowadays. With these factors, it makes ethnic politics hard to survive in Malaysian politics at the moment, although it still occupies some space, but is no longer the dominant force.

CONTRIBUTION TO EXISTING SCHOLARSHIP

The scholarly field on the de-ethnicisation of politics is still in its infancy. De-ethnicisation is a more developed area of investigation in immigration research (see, for example Joppke & Morawska 2014, Pujolar & Gonzàlez 2013, and Amelina & Faist 2012),. This literature focuses on how immigration policies of countries can be de-

ethnicised through more liberal approaches immigration control and naturalisation. They do not focus on political systems or how political parties are being de-ethnicised. There are other scholars who explore de-ethnicisation from an identity perspective (see, eg, Purdekovà 2008, Ruane & Butler 2007). These scholars are interested in how 'ethnicity' and 'nationality' are being, in some cases, de-ethnicised. They are less interested, however, in how political parties can be de-ethnicised. Their field of interest in within the 'identity' perspective rather than political system mechanism perspective. Finally, there are other approaches who explore de-ethnicisation from the perspective of culture (Milikowski 2000) and sports (Poli 2007). None of these approaches, however, attend in any systematic fashion to a detailed analysis of political system or how political parties can be de-ethnicised within those systems. That is where my research can contribute to the scholarship of de-ethnicisation in politics. This research could have added in other literature to the existing scholarship. One of the contributions is the focus of this research on the mechanism part, which has been narrowed down to party membership, party stance, and electoral strategy in de-ethnicising Malaysian politics. This empirical focus on Malaysia's recent political landscape is distinct. To my knowledge, I believe that there is no such literature in the existing literature as yet. Therefore, this research could provide an insight on a narrowed argument on de-ethnicisation of politics on the mechanism level, rather than just on a principled basis. Furthermore, this research attempts to approach in a way that most ethnic politics scholars are less inclined to approach. Instead of arguing on why ethnic politics occurs, how it occurs, and so on, I am arguing it from an opposite approach of why ethnic politics is less likely to occur, or why it could not sustain itself, as was previously the case.

The second added point is in regard to the application of a classification system in the Electoral Strategy chapter. Firstly, this paper is arguing the 'ethnicity' by recreating a new 'ethnic' identity (or more precisely an amalgamation of ethnic identities). In this writing, the Chinese and Indian communities tend to be grouped together under a single category. This works for the decision in determining the third component party in BN to be interviewed, a combination of an Indian-based party with another Chinese dominated multi-ethnic party. More specifically, in the Electoral Strategy chapter where analysis is being done on different ethnic groups that compete against one another, Chinese and Indian candidates (including other minority ethnic groups such as Sikh) are being

grouped as one. Therefore, in the analysis of different ethnic competition, it is Malay versus non-Malay. Such a combination may or may not work outside Malaysia. Even inside Malaysia, it would largely depend on which field such a combined 'new ethnic group' is to be utilised. For this case, combining both Chinese and Indian ethnic groups during the competition analysis is justifiable because, firstly, many of the problems faced by the non-Malay communities are similar to one another. Furthermore, nominating a Chinese, Indian, or even a Sikh candidate does not make much difference, but should these ethnic groups be replaced by a Malay candidate, it can attract big media attention. This could also be due to the local sentiment where there exists a stronger sense of differentiation between Malay and non-Malay, as compared to between Chinese and Indian. One of the reasons might be due to the fact that special privileges are only attached to the Malay ethnic groups. Therefore, from a political perspective, categorising non-Malay under a single ethnic group is more viable when compared to categorising them according to their actual ethnic identity.

The third contribution, also in the Electoral Strategy chapter, is regarding the classification system in determining whether ethnic bloc voting is occurring. Such assumptive classification, similar to the above premise, may or may not be suitable to be borrowed for outside of Malaysian occurrence. The reasons why such a self-invented classification could well be utilised in the political scene in Malaysia, especially in 'new politics' are because, firstly, Malaysia is practising first-past-the-post electorate rules with single members for single constituencies. It eases the assumptive work further when most of the seats are contested on a one-on-one basis (excluding independent candidates, due to the nature of them rarely being accepted by local voters). When it is a one-on-one contest, you will have to choose either A or B (putting aside those absentee voters). With such classification, the votes gained by a particular candidate could be guessed quite accurately, providing the majority difference is large. The Electoral Strategy chapter has also clearly justified how the voting trend is predicted, based on the common probability assumption. Therefore, such a classification system could classify whether voters of a particular constituency are voting by ethnic affiliation.

Therefore, in this research, apart from adding on to the limited scholarship of de-ethnicisation specifically in politics, it has also introduced two distinct classification

systems, where the ethnicity classification system could explain the ethnicity competition in elections more accurately, while the ethnic bloc voting classification system could provide an alternative to mathematically assuming the voting inclination of voters shows the voting results.

FUTURE RESEARCH PROSPECT

As the scholarship centring on de-ethnicisation of politics is limited, it is time to expand the scholarship and literature to focus more on the scope of de-ethnicisation of politics, rather than expanding scholarship on ethnic politics or de-ethnicisation of immigration, culture, and so on. This is because the latter scholarship has a substantial amount of literature when compared to de-ethnicisation of politics. Such a scenario is due to the lesser attention by scholars in the scope of de-ethnicisation of politics. An advancement of this literature is believed to be able to widen the idea of de-ethnicisation of politics. Furthermore, as this research inclined towards a top-down approach where political parties dictate how de-ethnicisation can take place through their political parties, future research perhaps can view de-ethnicisation from another perspective, such as the bottom-up approach, as to how the masses can force political parties to amend themselves. Although both top-down and bottom-up approaches are inter-linked, even in this research, the inclination perhaps could be on a quantitative methodology on how people want political parties to be and behave.

Apart from the different perspectives on looking at the process of de-ethnicisation, future research could also try to focus at a different level of elections. As this research is focusing on national politics, future research may want to consider the lower level of electoral politics, such as local elections. This is because the lower level of elections usually involve a higher magnitude in touch with the masses (solving their daily problems), as compared to the national level elections that involve a lot of national policies. By doing this, future research could compare whether different levels of elections would affect different degrees of de-ethnicisation of politics.

Even at the same level of national election, specifically in Malaysia, future research may want to focus on East Malaysia (Sabah and Sarawak) politics. As the East

Malaysia political landscape is quite distinct from Peninsular Malaysian politics, researchers may be interested in looking at the level of ethnic politics and the progress of de-ethnicisation of politics in these two states. This is because there is much speculation that Sabah and Sarawak have a higher level of inter-ethnic tolerance when compared to Peninsular Malaysia. Mosques and churches can be built next to each other and lend their compounds to their neighbours on religious event days (such as Muslim Friday prayers, Christian church services, and other religious celebrations). Therefore, a more empirical-based research on such an area is welcome.

PROSPECT OF MALAYSIAN POLITICS

This research has shown that de-ethnicisation politics has emerged and altered the political landscape in Malaysia. The question is, can this de-ethnicisation trend continue? No doubt, this whole research has argued for de-ethnicisation, and for political parties to justify how they push for de-ethnicisation to flourish. We have to bear in mind two things. The first is the coalition party structure. Undeniably, BN has provided an inclusive party structure, although its main component parties are ethnic-based. Even during the days of ethnic politics, BN was still being viewed as an inclusive party, mainly due to there being no other option that could cater for the whole society. However, with PR formation, PR can provide an alternative choice for the people to choose. The coalition party itself is inclusive, while its component parties' status (whether it is inclusive or exclusive is arguable) is debatable. Nevertheless, the structure itself has provided an inclusive platform for people to support.

However, even with such a structure on the explicit level, the implicit level of whether these opposition parties can perform in governance is still in question. This fits nicely into the second issue of whether opposition-turned-government parties are able to rule. To start the circle of government changes, such as happen in many developed democracies where a single party would not rule for a long term, it is not easy, because people have doubts and have no idea what is going on. However, thanks to the 2008 General Election where opposition parties managed to win five states, consisting of developed and rural states, it provided a chance for people to judge them on their capability. Therefore, in the current Malaysian politics, it is no longer the question of

whether opposition is capable to rule, but rather whether you agree with the way they rule or not.

We can see from the 2008 and 2013 General Elections, PR, which champions for de-ethnicisation of politics through the three dimensions as mentioned in this research, has managed to capture the hearts of voters, and such support generally comes from educated groups and younger age groups. These two groups are generally growing positively over time. This means that parties who champion for de-ethnicisation of politics may garner more support, providing other factors with their competing parties are the same. Therefore, with the current trend continuing, I do have confidence that the progress of de-ethnicisation would flourish from day to day and over the long term. At the same time, if the competing parties are no longer providing the same characteristics, the trend may face hindrance. By comparing BN and PR, main component parties such as UMNO, MCA, and MIC seem highly attached to BN. Therefore, there is no problem for them to provide an explicit inclusive option. However, for PR, as happened to many opposition coalition parties (or in the form of cooperation), such relationships do not last long. Should any of these three parties (PKR, DAP or PAS) withdraw from PR, the progress of de-ethnicisation may be hampered. As discussed in the previous chapters, inclusivity is not just to be done but also to be seen to be done. Unless there is a strong replacement for the absence of any of these parties, such coalition could be seen to provide inclusivity. Yet, at the same time, should such break up happen years after a strong belief of inclusivity has been formed, such a break up may not affect the trend of de-ethnicisation too greatly. Similar to the hegemony of BN against voters as a single inclusive party during ethnic politics years, hegemony is not easy to be formed. However, once formed, it is not easy to be broken. Therefore, whether the trend of de-ethnicisation of politics could last long will depend on to what extent political parties can change the mindset of the people to believe in it.

In conclusion, through this research I have become more confident in claiming that de-ethnicisation of politics is taking place in Malaysia. Such emergence does receive support from most of the political parties. By looking at the current trend, such de-ethnicisation of politics may last for the long term, leading ethnic politics, if not eventually fully replacing it.

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