

Singapore's Ethnic Politics and Representations of the "Malays"

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Abstract

This paper examines Singapore's ethnic politics through an analysis of the representations of people in the Malay "racial" group. Ethnic politics plays a significant role in a process of multi-ethnic Singapore's nation building and economic development. The state classifies its citizens into four "racial" categories; Chinese, Indians, Malays, and other and defines culture and mother tongue of each of the three main categories. Cultural and language differences within each category are ignored. Each "racial" category is imposed specific representations based on culture seen as shared by the entire group. These representations construct an ethnic hierarchy in which "racial" groups are positioned according to a degree of its contribution to the state's economic development. In this hierarchy, the Malays hold its position at the bottom while the Chinese at the top. The mass media have reported problems particular to the Malays, which are derived from their representations and which are closely linked with their economic positions in Singapore. In contrast to such representations, the representations of "new Malays" reported in the 1990s have been created in a process of cultural homogenization: they are similar to those of other successful Singaporeans unless their religious affiliation is specified.

Keywords: Singapore, ethnic politics, ethnicity, race, nation building, representations, economic development, Malay, ethnic hierarchy

Preface

Singapore is a multi-ethnic, as well as multi-religious, state. It is the only state in which the Chinese are dominant and the majority in Southeast Asia. Singapore is also known as a state which achieved an "economic miracle." For its economic development, ethnic politics has played an important role.

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Although the Singaporean population includes a variety of ethnic groups, the state classifies its citizens and permanent residents into four official categories: Chinese, Malay, Indian, and other. The state calls these categories “races.” In the main three categories (Chinese, Malay, and Indian), ethnic and language differences within each individual category are ignored. A single language is imposed on people in each “racial” category as their “mother tongue,” and each member of a “racial” group is perceived to share a culture with other members. In short, the Singaporean state defines the categories of people, their “mother tongues,” and cultures.

Likewise, although the Malay category includes many ethnic groups that have different languages and cultures, the state labels people originally from the Indonesian Archipelago and the Malay Peninsula as “Malays.” However, Malay is also the name of an ethnic group whose homelands are located in the Malay Peninsula and a part of Sumatra. For this reason, in this paper, I use the term “Malay” in quotation marks to refer to the Malay “racial” group in order to distinguish it from the Malay ethnic group.

The official “racial” classifications are the basis of Singapore’s ethnic policies, which try to create ideal Singaporean citizens who can adapt to Singapore’s rapid economic development and which promote its internal security and support international confidence (both of which have been significant for Singapore’s economic strategies, i.e., the introduction of multinational investment and companies). The Singaporean government has assumed that internal security results in international confidence and is thus a necessary condition to attract foreign capital (Foo 1987: 1, cf. Turnbull 1977: 304, 305). Singapore has experienced ethnic tensions between Chinese and “Malays,” with serious ethnic conflicts occurring between them in the 1960s. Such tensions and conflicts threatened Chinese dominance in Singapore, which is surrounded by the ancestral countries of the “Malays,” Indonesia and Malaysia. In ethnic politics, the state has tried to establish a harmonious “multi-racial” society and has publicly created the representations of each “racial” group, especially the negative images of the “Malays,” as well as positive images of the Chinese, which have worked to legitimize Chinese domination in the state.

These representations or images are based on cultures imposed on members of each “racial” group by the state and construct an ethnic hierarchy. Through criticisms of cultures, especially “Malay” culture, the state tries to shape ethnic cultures and to produce citizens who contribute to Singapore’s economic development. Singaporean leaders criticize “Malay” cultural features which they have thought result in their maladaptation to Singapore’s economic development. The mass media have reported such criticism and have represented the “Malays” as those who cannot catch up with the development due to their culture. However, in the 1990s, the mass media began to create new representations of Singaporean “Malays,” who have conquered the criticized cultural features and who cannot be distinguished from other economically successful Singaporeans.

This paper examines representations of the Malay “racial” group and provides an argument about Singaporean identity politics, which is essential for discussions about ethnicity formed by members of individual ethnic groups under the official “racial” categories. Williams (1989, 1991) and others (Barth 1969, Comaroff 1987) claim that the national ideology must influence ethnic expressions when a state has attempted to create culturally homogeneous individual members. I argue that the representations of the “Malays” conflict with the figure of the ideal Singaporean population that is seen by the state as

appropriate for economic development, and that these representations position those who belong to the "Malay" category at the bottom of the "racial" hierarchy. I also discuss a process by which the Singaporean state creates the Singaporean "Malay" identity, i.e., a process of cultural homogenization. These arguments progress in three sections. First, I briefly examine the economic policies of Singapore, which are closely related to Singapore's ethnic politics. Second, I analyze the state ideology which is based on the official "racial" classifications and which results from the economic policies. Finally, I discuss representations of the "Malay" group appearing in the most popular English language newspaper in Singapore, *The Straits Times*, in relation to the Singaporean state ideology.

The mass media are a type of Ideological State Apparatus, which employs the dominant ideology—a complex of reproduced imaginary relationships of individuals (or relations of production) defined as real conditions of existence—in order to create consensus in the entire society (Althusser 1971). As Hall (1977) notes, the mass media convert real events into symbols assigned specific meanings supporting the dominant ideology and make them understandable; they create selected images of totality and unity of society.

In Singapore, the government always controls the mass media (Tanaka 2000: 172–175), and self-censorship is general. The top priority of newspapers of all languages is to contribute to nation building (Chen 1991: 306, 307). As a result, national ideology penetrates in ethnic representations produced by the mass media. As I note later, "racial" groups are often represented in relation to contributions to the state's economy.

1. Singapore's Economic Development

Singapore has flourished as a free port since the British trader of the East India Company, Thomas Raffles, discovered the island in 1819 and established a trading spot soon after. Singapore became a port connecting the Sunda Straits and the Straits of Malacca, which were sea routes to Europe and Asian countries (Turnbull 1989: 98, 99). When the Suez Canal was opened in 1869, the island became a center of Asian trade. It was a central port for Siamese, Indonesian, and Malaya trade (Turnbull 1977: 38).

However, in the 1950s, the leaders of the People's Action Party (PAP), which has been the dominant political party in Singapore since its establishment in 1954, began to seek new economic resources for further economic growth, although Singapore was still an important trading port. This was because they recognized that the trading sector was not enough to support the economy of Singapore, whose population had rapidly increased (Mirza 1986: 29, 31). In 1931, the population was only 557,700; in 1947, it had increased to 938,100; and in 1957, it had reached 1,445,900 (Saw 1980, cited in Saw 1991: 221, Singapore Department of Statistics 1984, cited in Mirza 1986: 24).

However, until 1965, when Singapore was independent of the Federation of Malaysia, the island could not achieve such rapid economic development that it is often called an "economic miracle," partly because of Indonesia's armed confrontation against Malaysia. After achieving independence, the Singaporean government established new policies in order to attract multinational companies. These policies included industrial and political stabilization, development of the industrial infrastructure, encouragement of foreign investors to invest in priority industries, and the establishment of state owned boards and enterprises that controlled the Singaporean economy. The location of Singapore as an ideal

trading port—which enabled commodities to be distributed globally—combined with its economic base—in which labor power was “cheap, skilled, [and] plentiful”—attracted foreign investment (Mirza 1986: 36–37).

In the 1970s, Singapore successfully attracted foreign investment in the manufacturing sector and expanded the finance and service sectors (Mirza 1986: 59). In the early 1970s, Singapore began to promote commercial banks and discount houses and became an international finance center (Cheng 1991: 196). The government adopted a policy encouraging the establishment of technologically sophisticated industries. This policy in turn demanded skilled laborers and resulted in high productivity (Mirza 1986: 59, Cheng 1991: 196–197).

In 1979, the government announced a plan that Singapore would be an “information society” and the “brain center” of Southeast Asia, providing services, such as medical services. This was an undeveloped field in Southeast Asia (Mirza 1986: 59, 64). Furthermore, in order to distinguish Singapore from other countries in Southeast Asia, the PAP changed its economic strategy from low wage and labor intensive manufacturing industry to high wage, capital intensive, and higher technology industry. The PAP called this new strategy “Singapore’s Second Industrial Revolution.” However, in 1985, the party could see the effect of failure of the strategy: 40% of invest went decline; the demand of Singapore’s manufacturing products decreased; transfer to higher technology was not successful as the government anticipated (Tremewan 1994: 35); the growth of GDP declined from 8.2% in 1984 to -1.8% in 1985 (Lim 1989: 208, cited in Tremewan 1994: 36). Additionally, the PAP’s plan of raising wages made foreign investors avoid Singapore and decreased the business of Singaporean companies (Tremewan 1994: 35, 36).

This failure made the Singaporean government change its economic strategy, and this change led to Singapore’s economic growth. Through the experience of the failure, Singapore returned to the policy of low wages; as a result, its labor costs became lower than its major rivals, Taiwan and South Korea, and Singapore successfully attracted foreign capitals (Balakrishnan 1990: 61). Moreover, after 1986, the PAP adopted another new economic policy, under which Singaporean companies, including government owned ones, invested not only in its neighboring countries but also in developed countries as well as Eastern Europe and China (*Straits Times Weekly* 1990, cited in Tremewan 1994: 38, 39). This strategy, especially investment in developed countries, resulted in Singapore’s achievement of economic success: Singapore’s companies could share surplus with developed countries and gain high technology and skills which the state had yearned for from enterprises in these countries. In addition, Singapore came to serve as foundation from which foreign enterprises could extend their business to other countries in Southeast Asia (Tremewan 1994: 39).

In the 1990s, the government has adopted economic policies aimed at making Singapore a developed country.¹⁾ The government has emphasized the importance of the service sector (Hoehner 1995: 451–452) and of introducing higher technology, which requires more skilled labor power. For this purpose, the state has advocated the importance of further job training and the acquisition of computer skills and has provided courses for the skills. The government has also promised that every child will be able to gain access to a computer in near future. Furthermore, through the mass media, it has encouraged laborers to invest in their training.

Through the process of economic development, the Singaporean state has seen the security of Singapore in Southeast Asia as significant in order to gain international confidence to attract

multinational investment and companies. It has also taken internal security as important to realize further development of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious state.

2. "Multi-Racialism"

Since Singapore came to flourish as a free port during British colonial times, a variety of ethnic groups have resided there. In addition to European traders, Singapore attracted Chinese, Arab, and Bugis traders (Turnbull 1977: 38). From the 1840s to the 1870s, the number of Chinese immigrants increased because of economic decline and change in mainland China (Mirza 1986: 25). By the end of the nineteenth century, the Chinese composed about three quarters of Singapore's population, and other ethnic groups established their communities. Peoples originally from the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian Archipelago, such as Malays, people from Sumatra, Javanese, Boyanese (from Bawean Island), and Bugis, formed the second largest community together and have been called "Malays." Indians built their own community in Singapore. Additionally, Arabs, Jews, Eurasians, and Europeans settled on the island (Turnbull 1977: 97, 98).

Now, Singapore classifies its citizens and permanent residents into four categories, Chinese, Malays, Indians, and others, and calls them races. A person who has mixed parentage is also classified into one of the four categories, according to the category to which his/her father belongs (Department of Statistics 1992a: 15).

The definitions of the four categories are as follows:

- Chinese This refers to persons of Chinese origin such as Hokkiens, Teochews, Cantonese, Hakkas, Hainanese, Hockchians, Foochows, Hengnuan, Shanghainese.
- Malays This refers to persons of Malay or Indonesian origin such as Javanese, Boyanese, Bugis.
- Indians This refers to persons of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan origin such as Tamils, Malayalis, Punjabis, Bengalis, Singhalese.
- Other Ethnic Groups This comprises all persons other than Chinese, Malays and Indians such as Eurasians, Europeans, Arabs, Japanese [Department of Statistics Singapore 1992a: 15].

Among the four "racial" groups, the Chinese are the majority in Singapore. According to the 1990 census, the Chinese comprise 77.7 percent of Singapore's population; "Malays," 14.1 percent; Indians, 7.1 percent; others, 1.1 percent (Department of Statistics 1992b: xiv). The state imposes these four categories on its citizens for its ethnic politics.

This multi-ethnic Singapore has experienced ethnic conflicts and tensions. The most serious conflicts occurred in the 1950s and the 1960s; these are the Maria Hertogh Riots in 1950, the 1964 Racial Riots, and the May Racial Riots in 1969. In these three conflicts, Muslims, including "Malays"—most of whom adhere to Islam—, played active roles. The latter two conflicts occurred because of the agitation of Indonesia and the influence of Malaysia, respectively (Clutterbuck 1985: 320–321, *The Straits Times* 1987c: 10). The 1964 Racial Riots happened during the Confrontation. Indonesia incited the Muslim "Malays," who had not been satisfied with Singapore's ethnic policy—which has advocated equal treatments of the four "racial" groups, unlike Malaysia's, which has acknowledged privileges of the

Malays—and Chinese dominance, and caused serious tensions between the Chinese and the “Malays” (Clutterbuck 1985: 320–321). The May Racial Riots were derived from the riots of Malaysia which occurred, involving the three groups, Chinese, Malay, and Indian, after the first report of general election that Chinese candidates had won. The riots in Malaysia caused tensions between the Chinese and the “Malays” in Singapore, which led to an ethnic conflict (*The Straits Times* 1987c: 10).

”Malay” matters are still crucial and sensitive issues with regard to ethnic and religious harmony in Singapore. This is partly because the dominant religion of Singapore’s closest neighboring countries is Islam, to which most “Malays” in Singapore adhere. These matters are reflected in discussions in the 1980s that “Malays” could not promote to certain position in the Singapore Armed Forces.²⁾

Since the last riots, Singapore has not experienced serious ethnic conflicts. In contemporary Singapore as a multi-ethnic as well as a multi-religious state, its citizens and permanent residents are from multiple ethnic groups, which by and large coexist and seem to have no ethnic conflicts. Clammer (1982: 137) and Hill and Fee (1995: 95) attribute this coexistence to a state policy of “multi-racialism.” Singapore has advocated a multi-ethnic or “multi-racial” and multi-religious society and sought meaningful state integration of this diversity.

The concept of equal treatments of the four “racial” groups has been central to building a sense of Singapore’s “multi-racialism.” The state tries to create “multi-racial” environments in which people from the four “racial” groups coexist. The concept of equality among the “racial” groups exists together with another important state ideology, meritocracy. However, this policy of meritocracy together with the concept of “multi-racialism” has created an ethnic hierarchy among the groups when upward mobility is reported according to divisions of “racial” categories.

In the “multi-racial” model, creating and maintaining “racially” mixed environments is significant. It is believed that constant contact with other cultures is useful for mutual understanding and the maintenance of harmonious inter-ethnic relations. The state has tried to create these environments. The mass media often depict schools, the national service, and the public apartments or the HDB (Housing and Development Board) estates as ideal “multi-racial” environments. In public schools, pupils from every “racial” category study together. In the national service, male Singaporeans at age 19 from any “racial” category should have military training for two years. Finally, in the HDB estates, the majority of Singaporeans from any “racial” group live. HDB apartments are so popular in Singapore that people have to wait two or three years to gain them after their applications. Once they buy apartments, they can sell them as their properties. However, in 1989 after the state found that “racial” enclaves were going to be established as a result of individuals’ resale of the HDB apartments, the government introduced a new rule to prevent the formation of “racial” niches after the resale (*The Straits Times* 1989: 14). The new rule limits the ratio of the population of each “race” in one HDB estate. In this way, the state has adhered to the “racially” and culturally mixed environments.

In addition to “multi-racialism,” meritocracy is another important part of Singapore’s national ideology. It is thought that the concept of meritocracy is compatible with “multi-racialism,” which in turn admits that people from any ethnic group have equal rights. The principle of meritocracy allows people upward mobility based not on their ascribed status but on their achievement and abilities. However, even if they fail to gain upward mobility, they are not permitted by the government to form a group of workers along “racial” lines to appeal for greater opportunities. The state does not permit any

form of "racially" based protest (Clammer 1985: 148).

Because the government deals with each "racial" group equally and does not especially support only one group, the state encourages each "racial" group to construct self-help organizations to resolve a variety of problems, such as economic, educational, and family problems, which are thought to be shared by members of each group. "Malay" self-help organizations are the most active self-help groups (Chua 1995: 10–12, cf. *The Straits Times* 1996a: 1). Under the policy of "multi-racialism," members of each "racial" group are seen as culturally homogeneous and as sharing problems derived from their culture with the other members. In the next section, I will examine how problems considered to be shared by the entire "Malay" group or to be rooted in "Malay culture," including those dealt with by self-help organizations, are convincingly represented as opposite to Singapore's ideals or the state policies of development and how people of the "Malay" group are positioned in the ethnic hierarchy.

3. Images of "Races" and Negative Representations of the "Malays"

People of the main three "racial" categories have been the object of stereotypical images. For instance, the Chinese are thought to be hardworking but cunning; Indians are also seen as hardworking, but talkative and drinkers. The "Malay" group may have more negative images than these two groups: they are considered friendly but lazy, backward, traditional, and poor. Before Singapore was completely urbanized, it was said that the "Malays" preferred rural life. Furthermore, the mass media in Singapore often report "Malay problems": high divorce rate, drug addiction, significant school drop out rate, lower level of education, and juvenile delinquency. In Singapore, historically ascribed images of the "Malays" have positioned them at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy, and the "Malays" are depicted as those who have not adapted to Singapore's economic growth and need to catch up with the other groups. As Williams (1991) notes, ethnicity here is a socially produced categorical distinction in the process of homogenization of citizens in a territorially defined nation.

Negative images of the "Malays" have continued to exist since colonial times although ways of expressing them have changed. Alatas (1977) notes that European colonizers created the image of the lazy Malays. According to Alatas, under colonial capitalism, the Malays and Javanese in Malaya and the Dutch East Indies tended to engage in a subsistence economy rather than to work under capitalism, which defines work only within capitalistic parameters; thus, the European colonizers did not see them as industrious. On the other hand, the Europeans considered the Chinese immigrant laborers to be hard working (although they saw the Chinese as dishonest, too). After the colonizers introduced forced labor for the indigenous population, the Malays constituted the lowest class and position in the ethnic hierarchy of colonial society: the Europeans belonged to the dominant class; immigrant laborers such as Indians and Chinese were immediately under this class (Alatas 1977). According to Alatas (1977), the Malay elite and leaders in present-day Malaysia have accepted the dominant ideology created by the European colonizers and perpetuated the distorted images of the Malays.

Like Alatas, Abraham (1983) discusses ethnic policies or the manipulations of ethnic relations in British Malaya and refers to the representations of the ethnic Malays under colonial capitalism. He claims that the Malays were represented as morally inferior according to the colonial capitalist ideology. Descendants of immigrants, Indians and Chinese laborers, shared this view of the Malays: they tended to

think that the Malays' moral inferiority, such as laziness, waste, and conservatism, was responsible for their poor economic situations. On the other hand, they saw their own success as due to moral superiority, such as industriousness, thriftiness, and adaptation to capitalism or modernity.

Likewise, Li (1989) examines the representations of the Malay "racial" group and the related public discourse until the 1980s. Li states that problems ascribed to the "Malay" group—poverty, low educational level, poor educational performance, and backwardness—are attributed to "Malay culture" and are said to be unique "Malay problems." However, Li claims that the same problems among the Chinese majority are never mentioned. Li finds that those who attribute "Malay weaknesses" to "Malay culture" are "Malay" leaders themselves and Chinese politicians. The Chinese leaders have insisted that Chinese culture, including Confucianism, has led the Chinese to diligence, material success, and progress (Li 1989: 180). Additionally, many of the "Malay" leaders whom Li interviewed claimed that their life philosophy was different from that of the majority of the "Malays." Li (1989) concludes that the "Malay" elite have gained "merit" and the Chinese elite can emphasize their cultural superiority through the attribution of "Malay problems" to "Malay culture" and through criticism of the culture.

In the 1990s, the stereotypical images of the "Malay" group began to change, as I note later, although "Malay" and Chinese leaders have continued to criticize "Malay culture." As Li (1989) notes, it has been said that "Malay weaknesses" are rooted in their culture or are caused by family problems. These family problems are linked with moral inferiority. However, one of the most eminent changes in the 1990s is that favorable representations of "new Malays" have begun to be produced in Singapore. These new representations are a response to the given criticisms of "Malay culture" and may indeed be similar to those of the ideal Singaporeans. The second change is that "Malay progress" has increasingly begun to be reported. However, "Malay progress" does not mean that the position of the "Malays" in the ethnic hierarchy became higher. In Singaporean contexts, when this "progress" is compared with other groups, it only shows that the "Malay" group still retains its position at the very bottom of the ethnic or "racial" hierarchy in Singapore. On the other hand, in international contexts or in comparison with the Malayo-Polynesians in Indonesia and Malaysia, the positive evaluation of "Malay progress" makes the Singaporean "Malays" more suitable for modernization and economic development than those who are thought to have the same hereditary features outside Singapore.

(1) Representations of the "Malays"

In 1990, an article with the headline, "There is not strong stereotyping today," appeared in *The Straits Times*. This was the year when the Singaporean government issued the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Law because of disturbed religious harmony which might lead to ethnic conflicts caused by religious tensions between Christians and Muslims, including Muslim "Malays." The article reported how people of one official "racial" category viewed themselves and those who belonged to the other two categories. It emphasized that each group ranked friendliness as the most prominent characteristic of the other groups. Furthermore, the article indicated that the percentage of the population of each of the three "racial" categories holding negative stereotypes of the other "races" had declined. The article stated that about 25 percent of the Chinese evaluated themselves as "hardworking," whereas only 3 percent of them saw themselves as "money-minded." The article continued with images of the "Malays" and the Indians as viewed by the Chinese:

While only 15 per cent of the Chinese believed that the Malays were lazy, this was the second most common trait the Chinese identified the Malays with, followed by their image of Malays as a united community.

About 12 per cent described the Indians as hardworking and less than 2 per cent thought that the Indians were talkative or fond of liquor [*The Straits Times* 1990: 18].

The results of the survey showed that 10 percent of the "Malays" considered their group to be "religious" or "traditional." About 35 percent of the "Malays" thought that the Chinese are "hardworking," whereas 12 percent described them as "money-minded." One in ten "Malays" saw Indians as "racist" and "talkative"; 5 percent believed that they enjoy engaging in drinking. On the other hand, 5 percent of the Indians described the "Malays" as "easy going" and the Chinese as "selfish," while one in ten Indians evaluated themselves as "hardworking" (*The Straits Times* 1990: 18).

The above article claimed that stereotypical images decreased. The only exception was that a relatively high percentage of people evaluated the Chinese majority as "industrious." The impression that negative stereotypes of the Chinese, the "Malay," and the Indians were no longer widespread was enhanced by the author's use of the word, "only," to characterize the number of people who believed these negative images. It was especially impressive that most people saw the other groups as friendly. The overall message was that Singaporeans maintained harmonious ethnic relationships.

The stereotypical images of the "Malay" category, such as "lazy," do not appear in newspaper articles in the 1990s. In the 1990s, the "Malays" are praised for their achievements. However, the evaluations of their "progress" are made by a comparison with the other groups, which create a representation of the "Malays" at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy.

"Malay progress" is usually mentioned in association with the results of major examinations, such as Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE), and O-level and A-level examinations (taken by students who are graduating from primary schools, secondary schools, and pre-university level educational institutions, respectively). The results of these examinations are usually published in *The Straits Times* together with comments from Singapore's leaders. For example, in an article on May 31, 1992, the Minister of State for Education evaluated the improvements in the pass rates for major examinations of students of the "Malay" category. The headline was "Malay students getting better results in exams." The Minister of Education stated,

Malay students have made marked improvements in their results at key examinations, but their grades are still below the national average... [*The Straits Times* 1992a: 2].

In the table in the article, figures of the national average appeared, together with the pass rates of each of the four "racial" groups in 1984 and 1991 (see Table 1). Even if the examination results of the "Malay" group had improved, the table suggested the percentage of "Malay" students who passed the examinations was "below the national average" and was at the bottom among the four "racial" groups.

Another article on the results of the examinations appearing in *The Straits Times* on July 14, 1993 may also produce the same impression (see Figure 1). The headline of the article was "Malays and Indians Do Better in Exams." In the article, "Malay" and Indian leaders evaluated the pass rates of their

PSLE						
	Year	All races	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Others
(Figures in percentage)						
Overall pass rate	1984	85.5	88.9	68.9	79.7	89.8
	1991	89.8	92.9	75.3	81.3	84.4
English Language	1984	85.3	87.7	74.3	84.9	94.9
	1991	94.3	95.4	88.4	92.7	87.4
Mathematics	1984	74.6	83.3	37.4	51.8	68.0
	1991	78.0	84.9	46.6	55.9	71.9
Science	1984	84.4	88.3	65.0	78.9	90.8
	1991	91.4	94.4	77.3	82.6	91.8
O-level						
3 passes	1984	79.9	83.8	57.7	72.3	77.6
	1991	80.9	91.5	79.8	82.4	83.9
5 passes	1984	50.6	55.6	23.1	39.7	48.2
	1991	69.7	73.5	44.9	54.9	58.2
A-level						
2A and 2 AO level passes	1984	65.3	65.6	51.7	68.5	77.1
	1991	83.1	84.5	64.5	75.4	80.0

Table 1. Scores of major examinations according to the "racial" groups. (Source: *The Straits Times* 1992a: 2)

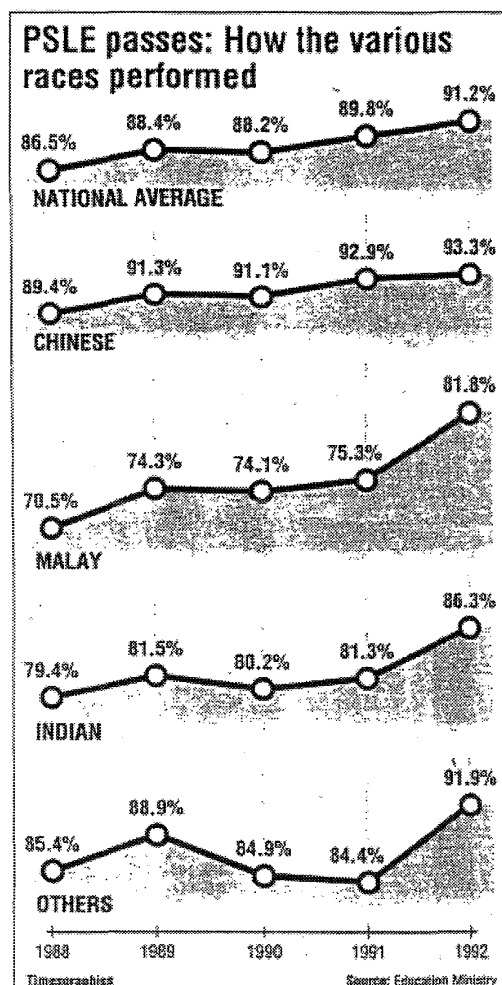


Figure 1. "PSLE passes: How the various races performed." (Source: Teik 1993: 1)

own groups. The Minister in Charge of Muslim Affairs commented that "Malay parents are... more willing now to spend money on education" and "make an effort to spend time with their children on their education" (Teik 1993: 1). He related the improvement of "Malay" students with their parents' performance in relation to education. The government has recommended that "Malay" parents motivate their children in education. However, in contrast to the Minister's evaluation, the pass rates of the examinations indicated that those of the "Malay" group were the lowest among the four groups.

These two articles show that the "Malays" have been making progress in the educational field, while they are still in the process of catching up with the other "racial" groups from the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy. Like other countries, Singapore has seen education as important both for state economic growth and for the introduction of new technology for further industrialization. The 1990s was a decade in which the state took more interest in manufacturing. For its development, Singapore has focused on education and human resources. However, under this policy, the "Malays" are often depicted as those who need to make further efforts to catch up with state development.

Singapore's leaders repeatedly warn that the "Malays" need higher levels of education and higher scores in English and mathematics in order to follow technological and industrial development. English is the main language for commerce and industry. A basic knowledge of mathematics is thought to be

necessary for those who work for industry.

In an article in *The Straits Times* on September 7, 1995, "Malay" achievement was praised, while the article suggested that the "Malays" had to further adjust to changing Singapore, which had adopted economic policies to be a developed country. "Malay" leaders in a panel discussion stated,

Malays in Singapore have made progress in education but the achievement is not very significant considering the stiff competition expected in the year to come.

What is needed is higher aspiration. It is not a question of increasing quantity but quality.... In general, they agreed that Malays had made progress. The psychological barrier that existed, holding the community back, had been demolished with a 62 per cent pass in mathematics at the Primary School Leaving Examination.

However, with Singapore entering a new era as a developed country requiring a faster rate of development, Malays here have to make the necessary adjustments [*The Straits Times* 1995c: 12].

The "Malay" leaders sought for the "Malays" to adapt to the competitive environment of the developed countries and noted that the "Malays" needed higher aspirations. The lack of aspirations and motivation they mentioned has also been seen as one of the "Malay problems."

In *The Straits Times* on November 5, 1995, the Chinese Labor Minister, Lee, evaluated the results of the examinations and urged

Malay and Muslim Singaporeans, especially parents, to help the Government encourage and motivate their children to do well in school.

He said yesterday that although the pass rates for Malay students had improved significantly, the percentage actually achieving tertiary qualifications was still low [*The Straits Times* 1995g: 15].

Then, he raised the issue of percentage of "Malay" enrollment in tertiary education, as compared to the national figures: 15.3 percent of the "Malay" Primary 1 students in 1982 entered Polytechnic in 1995, while 34.7 percent of the entire Singaporean Primary 1 students in 1982 did. Additionally, 3.2 percent entered a local university, whereas national figures showed 18.5 percent (*The Straits Times* 1995g: 15). Through use of elaborate calculations, the article showed that the ratio of "Malay" students who enrolled in tertiary education was far from the national average.

The Labor Minister continued,

Many of them [Malays] have low levels of education, and skills which may be replaced with new technology and methods of production. They can lose their jobs when industries have moved to other countries with cheaper labor. People must have good basic education to continue to learn new skills, Dr.Lee said [*The Strait Times* 1995g: 15].

The Labor Minister associated the low level of education with maladaptation to the requirements of living in a developed country. He warned that "Malays" without new skills supported by education would lose their jobs when new technology and appropriate skills were introduced. In this article, the

Labor Minister further urged parents to motivate their children to perform better in school.

Likewise, Brigadier-General Lee mentioned,

[E]ducation and training were important factors if the community wished to contribute fully to Singapore's economy in the league of developed nations.

He noted that there were proportionally more Malay/Muslims among the unskilled and lower educated workers and said that they must be helped to upgrade and learn new skills [*The Straits Times* 1995f: 26].

In this statement, the importance of education was emphasized. This Chinese leader interpreted the rates of the "Malays" among "the unskilled and lower educated workers" and suggested that more "Malays" were such workers than in the other categories.

In the article, "Training Plan 21 to improve lot of Malay/Muslim labour," statistical data presented by the Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP) (see Figure 2) appeared, showing the percentage of lower educated workers among the "Malays." In the article, every adult of the Malay "racial" category was classified according to occupation, personal income, educational level, and language used in his or her occupations. Furthermore, the article indicated the ratio of the "Malays" with secondary school or lower education according to four categories of occupations under the subtitle of "Opportunity Knocks": 98 percent of "mature blue-collar workers" had secondary or lower education; 96 percent of "younger blue-collar workers"; 62 percent of "PMEBs [professionals, managers, executives, and business men] and other white-collar workers"; 96 percent of "house wives" had secondary or lower education. Also, the article suggested that the average income of the four categories was less than S\$2000 per month. According to the article, the AMP found that "many [Malay] workers were in blue-collar jobs and had low education, skills and pay, all of which blocked their chances of training and retraining" to adapt to national economic and industrial development (*The Straits Times* 1998b: 32).

In these latter three articles, the leaders' interpretations of figures show their convictions about the portrayal of the "Malays." It is not surprising if readers have the impression that because of their low educational level, more "Malays" than people of other "racial" categories belong to the underclass. Furthermore, in the first two articles, the "Malay" leaders referred to a "Malay" deficiency in aspiration and motivation. Although the term, "lazy," is no longer used to be described the "Malays," another phrase—"lack of motivation and aspiration"—, which is closely associated with "laziness," has appeared in the mass media. In this regard, it is explained that the "Malays" do not seek the best in this world and that instead, they are satisfied with happiness in their religion, Islam (cf. *The Straits Times* 1982: 11). "Malay" leaders in the 1990s have advocated that pursuing worldly interests can be compatible with Islamic values. For example, the Minister-in-Charge of Muslim Affairs noted that some "Malay" Muslims were afraid that pursuing success led to spiritual devastation, but that "[t]here is no reason why a good Muslim cannot also be a successful student, professional, businessman or whatever vocation that is chosen" (*The Straits Times* 1993b: 24). This leader's statement brings an impression that most Muslim "Malays" do not know their religion well and mistakenly apply their religion to their lives in this world. Thus, it is represented that the "Malay" deficiency of aspiration and motivation results from "Malay" mass culture.

Opportunity knocks

Mature blue-collar workers
 ▶ 96% with secondary education or lower. Low skills make them vulnerable to retrenchments. Arbitrary dismissal courses conducted in English. May feel they are too old to study.
 ▶ Average income of \$1,156. They may recognize and have less time for training or money for children's education.

AMP's plan
 ▶ Persuade them that age should not stop them from learning.
 ▶ Equip them with IT skills.

Younger blue-collar workers
 ▶ 96% with secondary education or lower.
 ▶ Average income of \$1,098. Low disposable income may stop them from upgrading themselves.
 ▶ Not many use computers at work.
 ▶ Want to get ahead, but some are content with present achievements.

AMP's plan
 ▶ Lift their educational levels and equip them with IT skills.

PAFES* and other white-collar workers
 ▶ 82% with secondary education or lower. Comfortable with English. Multitasked, but some may be complacent.
 ▶ Average income of \$1,918. Can afford higher-level courses.
 ▶ More receptive to IT courses, but cannot keep pace with technology.

AMP's plan
 ▶ Push learning at higher level, while helping them cope with technology.

Highly skilled workers
 ▶ 82% with secondary education or lower. This makes it difficult to retrain them for jobs.
 ▶ Many ex-blue-collar workers, so skills may be obsolete.
 ▶ Most would not want to work, or prefer part-time and project-related jobs.

AMP's plan
 ▶ Equip them with relevant skills.
 ▶ Convince them that age is not a barrier to training.
 ▶ Jobs have to be flexible to allow them to stay at home.

*Professional/managerial/technical occupations
 Source: AMP survey

Training Plan 21 to improve lot of Malay/Muslim labour

AMP says aim is to make workers more competitive

By Pang Gek Choo

THE Association of Islamic Professionals (AIP) will soon put in place a comprehensive training programme that aims to improve the lot of Malay-Muslim workers.

Called Training Plan 21 (TP 21), it will be done up by a 12-month course, comprising mainly seminar human resource professionals.

The team, headed by AIP's head of education and training, Mr Mohamed Azmi Ibrahim, has put forward some proposals, which will be fine-tuned in four months' time.

The initiative comes in the wake of a year-long survey done by the association, which found that many workers were in blue-collar jobs and had low education, skills and pay, all of which blocked their chances of training and retraining.

Under the plan, which aims to see improvements within five years, AIP will:

- ▶ Set up a 'Workforce Resource Centre' to offer information, career counselling and job placement services.
- ▶ Partner with employers and groups such as the Singapore National Employers Federation and National Trades Union Congress, to encourage workers to go for training.
- ▶ Develop an information technology plan for the community which will raise the level of computer literacy and ownership of computers at the home.
- ▶ Promote courses in English, mathematics and computer skills and identify relevant courses for different types of workers.
- ▶ Hold inspirational seminars using Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of life-long learning.

At a press conference yesterday, AIP chairman Azmi Ibrahim said the association wanted to retrain workers that they had better "stage up or be shaken out".

This was because the survey it did among 2,000 Malay-Muslims showed that 85 per cent had secondary education or lower.

It also found that one-third of them were blue-collar workers with low monthly incomes. Most respondents were also not computer literate and found it hard to keep pace with technology.

More alarming was the fact that many indicated they had no intention of advancing their career or education.

But he added there was "great potential" among the workers to be trained.

For example, most respondents said they were willing to sacrifice present gains for future benefit.

He said: "With TP 21 and all other national manpower development initiatives, we are confident that the Malay-Muslim worker will become more competitive in the marketplace and can fit the bill of 'Singapore's worker of world-class quality'."

— Mr Azmi Musa.

Profile of adults

Occupation	%
PAFES*	8%
White-collar workers	21%
Blue-collar workers	33%
Housewives	22%
Others	16%
Perennial income	%
Not earning	40%
\$1-\$1,000	17%
\$1,001-\$2,000	23%
\$2,001-\$3,000	8%
More than \$3,000	3%
Unemployed	7%
Education level	%
University	3%
Diploma	12%
Completed secondary	29%
Some secondary	22%
Completed primary	15%
Some primary	10%
No formal education	6%
Working language	%
English only	42%
English and Malay	43%
Malay only	12%
Others	3%

*Professional/managerial/technical occupations

Figure 2. "Training Plan 21 to improve lot of Malay/Muslim labour." (Source: *The Straits Times* 1998b: 32)

Another characteristic of "Malay problem" is that almost all major "Malay problems" are linked with family problems. In addition to these above "weaknesses," the "Malay weaknesses" reported in the 1990s were drug addiction, lack of leadership, juvenile delinquency, and high rate of school drop outs. Li (1989) suggested that educational and economic problems were also described as "Malay problems" in the 1980s. In the 1990s, the situation has not changed.

Singaporean leaders connect a series of problems with "Malay" family problems. In a newspaper article in 1993, a "Malay" leader attributed the cause of juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, the high rate of school drop outs, and many "Malay" students' participation in gangs to "bad parenting arising from high divorce rate" (*The Straits Times* 1993a: 24). He further stated, "Irresponsible parents who fight and argue over divorces and separations drive the child to find security in a gang as he cannot find it in his house" (*The Straits Times* 1993a: 24). Another "Malay" leader, the Muslim Affairs Minister, "believes that the answer to solving the drug, divorce, or drop out problems lies in strengthening family values" (*The Straits Times* 1994a: 32). Furthermore, on April 2, 1995, by raising three cases, a newspaper article warned "Malays" not to sacrifice their families as follows:

A single mother claimed it was her daughter's choice not to go to school and that she could not do anything about it when a teacher asked her about the child's absence.

Two children whose young mother re-married had to stop schooling because their step-father could not provide the financial support. He had to support three children from his previous marriage.

A father of three children who were in primary school asked his eldest son, who was sitting for his PSLE, to stop schooling to look after the younger siblings while the father was at work [*The Straits Times* 1995a: 24].

Three school drop out cases are profiled in the article, " 'Progress' should not be at expense of family values." A "Malay" leader claimed that "Malay" Muslims needed to support "the family as a valued institution even as they worked towards becoming a rich, accomplished community." The Muslim Affairs Minister further commented that the more couples in nuclear families work, the more pressure their families experience (*The Straits Times* 1995a: 24). A "Malay" child welfare specialist also noted that 98 percent of the children who entered his welfare facility came from "broken families," and most of them were from low-income families. According to him, family members needed to work longer to supplement their income; as a result, children were not taken care of well and were involved in "undesirable activities" (*The Straits Times* 1995e: 35). In addition, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong blamed family problems for the "Malay" drug abuse as well as other problems and stated that the complex of lack of family support, of strong moral and religious values, and of education has led to "Malay" drug problem (*The Straits Times* 1995d: 1).

In Singapore, it is not rare that both husbands and wives work. Thus, it can be said that it is not only in "Malay" families that both parents work. Yet, the high divorce rate among "Malays" enables the leaders to define family problems as a source of "Malay problems." Furthermore, claiming divorce rate only among "Malays" produces impressions that this problem as well as related family problems is particular to the "Malays" and intrinsic to "Malay" culture.

Family problems are also connected with educational problems, which are closely related to problems of adaptation to further industrialization and development. A "Malay" member of the Parliament stated,

[E]ducation remains the key area. Let me explain why. The other problems, whether it is drug addiction or dysfunctional families, have a lot to do with financial problems. The family is not financially strong, so both husband and wife have to work, resulting in less attention and control over the children. But once you are better educated, you can earn a higher income, and this allows the wife to attend to the child better.

So once each member of the community attains higher qualifications, the other problems become less difficult to solve [*The Straits Times* 1995b: 33].

In this statement, family, education, and financial problems were connected together, and educational and financial problems were thought to be a source of juvenile problems. According to the leader, the lack of education resulted in financial problems; in turn, financial problems led to the problems of children's behaviors and education. In the same article, the leader suggested the possibility that families

with these two problems would reproduce families that suffered from the very same problems.

In sum, it has been said that "Malay" lack of motivation and aspiration causes their economic and educational problems. It is widely believed that "Malay" Muslims do prefer happiness in their religion to seeking worldly values. Some "Malays" think that worldly values do not coexist with Islam. In addition, the high divorce rate and/or family problems—which are assumed to result in many other "Malay problems"—are considered to be peculiar to the "Malays." It is said that such "Malay problems" have caused "Malay" maladaptation to state economic and industrial development: the "Malay" group has been left behind the times.

"Malay" self-help organizations have tackled and tried to resolve these problems. For example, a Muslim religious group, MIUS (Islamic Religious Council of Singapore), has responded to the problems of the high divorce rate and established the family development unit (*The Straits Times* 1997b: 39) and a new marriage course for Muslim "Malays" (*The Straits Times* 1998c: 33). MENDAKI has established programs for parents who have school children in order to improve problems in children's school performances (*The Straits Times* 1998a: 33).

Singaporean leaders have evaluated "Malay" self-help groups' activities. In 1996, Deputy Prime Minister Lee stated that "Malay" Muslim self-help groups successfully assisted the "Malays" to "adapt to the rapid economic and social changes in Singapore" (*The Straits Times* 1996a: 1). In 1997, he also praised self-help organizations' activities and "Malay" "steady progress" in the aspects of economy and education (*The Straits Times* 1997d: 1). The Senior Minister of State for Education, Chen, reported that "Malay" self-help groups engaged in matters of family and workers' training, which produced the prospects of "Malay" adaptation to industrial development (*The Straits Times* 1997c: 50).

The fact that "Malay" self-help organizations have tackled specific problems reinforces the impression that these problems are peculiar to the "Malays." On the other hand, the evaluation of "Malay progress" which results from the improvement in "Malay" difficulties considered to be intrinsic to "Malay" culture can produce a distinction between the Singaporean "Malays" and the "Malays" in Indonesia and Malaysia or those who are assumed to have the same "racial" origin as the Singaporean "Malays". This is seen in the Minister of Education's comment on the future of the Singaporean "Malays" as follows:

[T]he Malays were conscious of the close relation between education and training, and social and economic needs... The character of the Malay community in Singapore's future should not be a replica of any other community. It should be its own blend of Islamic values and Malay culture. The highly modernised character of Singapore must be the most enriching environment for Singapore Malays to become dynamic and sophisticated Malays, Melayu Canggih [*The Straits Times* 1996b: 47].

The Minister of Education's comment suggests that Singapore's rapid economic development is changing the "Malays" and making them more suitable for a modernized society. As seen in a series of depictions of "Malays" in the 1990s, the "Malays" were demanded to adapt to Singapore's development, and their responses to the demands were evaluated as "progress." This "progress" creates a difference between the Singaporean "Malays" and people in their ancestral countries. This difference may arise in the process of homogenization of citizens in territorial nationalism, and characteristics which are

considered to be shared by the Singaporean citizens are the factor which distinguishes the Singaporean “Malays” from those who are seen as having the same hereditary features in other states.

The emergence of “new Malays” and their representations can also be taken as a phenomenon in the homogenization process of the state. The representations of “new Malays” are “Malay” figures who have gained or are gaining success in Singapore. Their representations suggest that they have aspiration, higher incomes, white-collar jobs, higher levels of education, and non-problematic families, while they adhere to Islam. In Malaysia, representations of “new Malays” also became evident. But the representations of the “new Malays” in Singapore are entirely different from those in Malaysia, because the representations in Singapore are produced in the context of the “Malay problems” in Singapore.

(2) Representations of “New Malays”

The representations of “new Malays,” which contrasted with those of “Malays” with “Malay weaknesses,” began to appear increasingly in *The Straits Times* at the beginning of the 1990s. In *The Straits Times* on September 27, 1992, under the headline, “New breed Malays venture forth,” “new breed Malays” were shown as entrepreneurs, with images opposite to the earlier stereotypical representations of the “Malays” as “lazy” or “non-risk takers.” This portrayal produced a new impression of the “Malays.”

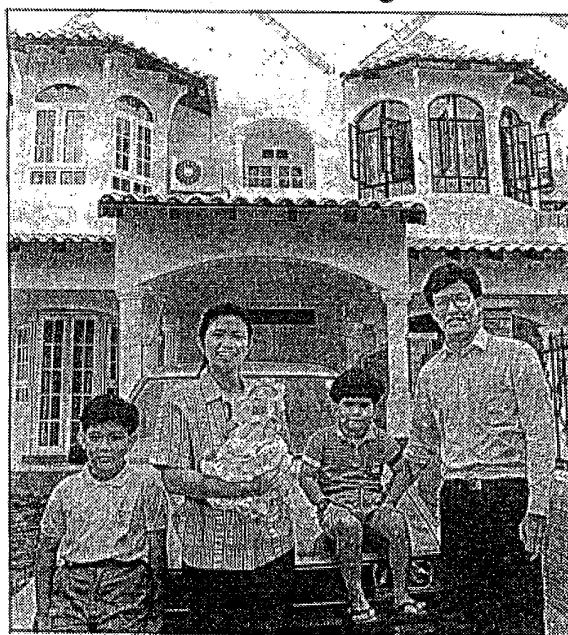
The soupy weather outside dust stained windows cast a dreary air on his office. But the gloom immediately lifts as Mr. Azman Abu Naim slams his telephone down, clenches his fists in the manner of a triumphant tennis player and exclaims: “Yes, yes!”

He has just sealed a deal worth a few hundred thousand dollars. The telephone conversation—peppered with Javanese slang, some risqué innuendo and confident banter—has settled a date and a price to supply electrical equipment to his Chinese Indonesian client’s construction company in Medan [*The Straits Times* 1992b: 7].

This depiction was of a self-confident and busy businessman who gained a big contract in which a large amount of money changed hands. In this article, the “Malay” businessman’s active attitudes, which contrasted with public representations of the “Malays,” were depicted. His liveliness was contrasted to “the gloom” outside of his office and was expressed with the phrases of “slams his telephone down” and “in the manner of a triumphant tennis player.” In the same article, several successful “Malay” businessmen were described. All of them seemed to be conducting risky but important business. They did not appear to have any deficiency of motivation and aspiration. They were even implied to have high incomes.

Besides this 1992 article on “Malay” businessmen, two articles in late 1995 concerning family and marriage came out in the newspaper. *The Straits Times* took the story of “Malay” women who married at a later age. These women were university graduates and were working. They were introduced as “Modern Malay Brides.” The article explained that marriage at a later age enabled women to have time to explore their education and professional careers. Additionally, their maturity helped them avoid the risk of divorce (*The Strait Times* 1995h: 2). Less than two weeks later, in another article, opinions of their male counterparts appeared. Although it had been said that “Malay” men did not like to marry

Islam is the essence of 'new Malays'



Non-Muslims refer to successful Malays as "new Malays", but Malays themselves see success as the ability to balance the pursuit of secular and religious gains.

Figure 3. "Islam is the essence of 'new Malays.'" (Source: Daud 1995: 29)

college graduates, men interviewed in this article insisted that having such wives could be advantageous: they could acquire double incomes, and they could have partners at the same intellectual level (*The Straits Times* 1995i: 2).

"Modern Malay brides" may be seen as one solution to "Malay family problems." They have university level education and professional careers; thus, they are successful in a secular sense. In addition to worldly success, Islamic values are also essential for the "new Malay" image.

Likewise, the ideal image of a "Malay" family was depicted in an article, "Islam is the essence of 'new Malays'" (Daud 1995: 29). The article had an impressive photograph of a family (see Figure 3): a couple with three children; behind them, there were a car and a nice house with an air conditioner. The woman in the photograph was wearing neither *sarong* nor a scarf covering her head, clothing worn by most other Muslim women in Singapore. She and her sons were wearing short sleeves. If there were no headline or caption indicating "Malay," readers would not find out any ethnic traits in the photograph. Instead, the most expensive and desirable things in Singapore—a car and a private house—were behind them. The photograph implied that this was a successful family. The article introduced the idea that "new Malays" were following Islamic teachings while pursuing secular success. It also emphasized the importance of balance between the secular and sacred or religious.

In this way, the representations of "new Malays" are produced in a Singaporean context. The "new Malays" have aspirations and motivation to explore higher education and careers. They no longer wear

typical Muslim clothes, though they respect Islamic values. These “new Malays” are similar to successful Chinese or Singaporeans with the exception that they are adherents of Islam. It can be said that as Hall (1977) notes, the mass media assign meanings supported by the dominant or national ideology to symbols and make realities understandable. The representations of “new Malays” produced by the mass media indicate the control of ethnicity in a process of cultural homogenization.

4. Conclusion

After World War II, Singapore achieved such rapid economic growth that was called an “economic miracle.” The state has attracted foreign capital and has introduced highly sophisticated technology. The introduction of multinational companies and investment has been one of Singapore’s most important economic strategies. The state, which has been a multi-ethnic state, has taken internal political stability as critical for international confidence because the state has historically felt the threats of ancestral countries of the “Malays” and had experienced religious and ethnic conflicts. Furthermore, Singapore has needed citizens who can catch up with its rapid industrial development. Ethnic politics enables Singapore to realize its rapid economic development.

Under ethnic politics, the Singaporean state classifies its citizens and permanent residents into four “racial” categories and assigns a single language as a “mother tongue” to members of each category. In addition, members of each category are considered to share a single culture although various ethnic groups with different languages and cultures exist within a category. Every ethnic policy is based on these classifications.

One of the ethnic policies which has been seen as most effective is “multi-racialism.” Under this policy, the state has created “multi-racial” environments where people from the four official “racial” categories coexist and has claimed that the government treats every “racial” group equally. When this policy of “multi-racialism” is linked with another policy of meritocracy and economic policies, it explains the Chinese dominance and the position of the “Malays” in the ethnic hierarchy.

In the ethnic hierarchy, the “Malays” are positioned at the bottom and are depicted as not adapted to economic development as they were portrayed under colonial capitalism. Members of the “Malay” category are thought to share specific problems, which are considered to cause maladaptation to economic development, and these problems are called “Malay problems.” Interpretations of statistical data show that high percentages of people in the “Malay” group have such problems, and “Malay” self-help groups have eagerly tackled with them. These facts create images that these problems are particular to the “Malays” and are intrinsic to “Malay” culture: they are thought to share a culture as well as specific problems. Representations of the “Malays” derived from the criticisms of “Malay” culture lead to their position at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy. The portrayals of the “Malays” contrast with those of the Chinese, who are represented as fit to capitalism and economic development. These ethnic representations may partly explain Chinese dominance in Singapore, which is the only state whose majority population is Chinese in Southeast Asia. In addition, because the term “race” which applies to the official categories is associated with the concept of shared blood or hereditary features, it creates impressions that cultural features represented as particular to a specific “racial” group are intrinsic to the group and that it is very difficult or almost impossible to subvert the hierarchy.

On the other hand, in the process of homogenization of citizens in Singapore's territorial nationalism, recent "Malay progress" and the representations of "new Malays" are factors that distinguish the Singaporean "Malays" from people in their ancestral countries. The mass media represent the "new Malays" as those who conquered the "Malay problems" and as similar to successful Chinese or Singaporeans; thus, they are depicted as homogenized citizens according to the Singaporean state ideology with regard to economic development.

Notes

- 1) In 1997, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) declared that Singapore is an advanced economy (*The Straits Times* 1997a: 1).
- 2) Brigadier-General Lee, who was Trade and Industry Minister and Second Minister of Defense at that time, claimed that "soldiers should not be put in a position where their emotions for the nation might come into conflict with their emotions for their religion" (*The Straits Times* 1987a: 10, 1987b: 15).

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1995a Progress 'should not be at expense of family values.' *The Straits Times* April 2: 24.

1995b Malay MPs walking on a tightrope, says Othman. *The Straits Times* July 15: 33.

1995c Malays have made progress but should aim even higher, says panel. *The Straits Times* September 7: 12.

1995d PM: 3 challenges for Malay community. *The Straits Times* September 28: 1.

1995e Helping Malay juvenile delinquents back on their feet. *The Straits Times* October 14: 35.

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1995i Why the men still prefer to marry non-graduates? *The Straits Times* December 5: 2.

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