INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL MOBILIZATION: 
THE CHINESE EDUCATION MOVEMENT IN 
MALAYSIA

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INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL MOBILIZATION: THE CHINESE EDUCATION MOVEMENT IN MALAYSIA

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Ang Ming Chee

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SUMMARY

Why do certain movements persist over a significant period of time while some do not? How do those that persist sustain themselves and overcome constraints over time, especially those imposed by non-liberal, democratic states? This thesis examines the persistence of a minority social movement, despite facing considerable constraints imposed by a majority-dominated state. Utilizing the Chinese education movement—arguably Malaysia’s longest-running social movement—as its case study, this thesis argues that both structural and relational institutions are crucial in a prolonged movement’s efforts to overcome constraints and sustain social mobilization in a non-liberal, democratic state.

Two important players of this movement, the United Chinese School Committees’ Association (Dongzong) and the United Chinese Schoolteachers’ Association (Jiaozong) were established in the backdrop of Malayan nation formation stage during the 1950s. The movement started in opposition against the British colonial administration’s threats (and attempts) to marginalize Chinese vernacular schools in the national education system. Over the years, both Dongzong and Jiaozong have survived a host of challenges from many quarters, and have endured for six decades while many other movements have long since been disbanded.

One significant factor behind such persistence has been the structured mobilization system that has effectively linked movement communities at the school, local, state and national levels. These strong links have been important for solidifying the movement’s organizational efforts in facing state-imposed constraints and suppression. The bottom-up democratic leadership selection system has also bolstered the legitimacy and the power of negotiation of the movement’s leaders in dealing with various states agencies.
The thesis also examines the internal dynamic of the movement, one topic that has been downplayed by social movement studies. Using interviews and archives materials in Chinese, Malay and English, this thesis traces the dynamics of the agencies in mobilizing movement campaigns in the context of various opportunities and constraints affecting domestic contentious politics. The thesis highlights three factors that have been crucial to the movement’s endurance: inter-elite networking and brokerage in mediating the changing relationship between movement and state; the unique mobilization mechanisms in the form of movement working committees; and the role of the professional and full-time executive branch that has developed over time to fulfill the specific needs of the movement.

To link the six-decade-old movement into contemporary Malaysian political context, the thesis illustrates the participation of the Chinese education movement activists in the community-based Damansara Save Our School movement in Selangor. This case study provides crucial discussions on the aforementioned themes, and articulates the conditions that induce different types of mobilization and processes of social change in the Chinese community in Malaysia.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

7-Huatuan  Seven Chinese Education Related Guilds and Associations (华教界七华团)

15-Huatuan  Fifteen Leading Chinese Guilds and Associations (十五华团领导机构)

Alliance  UMNO-MCA-Malaysian Indian Congress political coalition

Baixiao  Damansara Chinese Primary School (白沙罗华文小学)

Barnes Report  Report of the Committee on Malay Education

BN  National Front coalition (Barisan Nasional)

CSTA  Chinese Schoolteachers’ Association (华人教师公会)

DAP  Democratic Action Party

DDDF  Dongjiaozong Duzhong Development Fund (董教总全国华文独中发展基金)

Dongjiaozong  The alliance of Dongzong and Jiaozong

Donglianhui  State-level alliance of Chinese school committees’ association (董事联合会)

Dongzong  United Chinese School Committees’ Association (华校董事联合会总会)

Duzhong  Independent Chinese secondary schools (华文独立中学)

Duzhong Proposal  Guiding Principles of Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools (华文独立中学建议书)


Gerakan  Malaysian People’s Movement Party (Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia)

HLC  Dongjiaozong Higher Learning Center Non-Profit Private Limited (董教总教育中心非营利有限公司)

Huatuan  Chinese guilds and associations (华团)

Huaxiao-WC  Dongjiaozong National Chinese Primary Schools Development Working Committee (董教总全国发展华文小学工作委员会)

Huazong  Federation of Chinese Associations Malaysia (中华大会堂总会)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jiaozong</td>
<td>United Chinese Schoolteachers’ Association (华校教师会总会)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>Malaysian Chinese Association (马华公会)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOUs</td>
<td>Memorandums of Understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-governmental organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAS</td>
<td>Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (Parti Islam Semalaysia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKR</td>
<td>National Justice Party (Parti Keadilan Nasional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPSMI</td>
<td>Teaching and Learning Science and Mathematics in English Program (Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik dalam Bahasa Inggeris)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>People’s Alliance (Pakatan Rakyat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rahman Talib Report</td>
<td>Report of the Education Review Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Razak Report</td>
<td>Report of the Education Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM</td>
<td>Ringgit Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandajigou</td>
<td>Grand Three Associations of Chinese Education (三大机构华文教育中央委员会)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCAH</td>
<td>Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (雪兰莪中华大会堂)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMOs</td>
<td>Social movement organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOSC</td>
<td>Damansara Save Our School movement committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOS movement</td>
<td>Damansara Save Our School movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suqiu</td>
<td>Malaysian Chinese Organisations Election Appeals (华人社团大选诉求)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tanglian</td>
<td>Unified Federation of Malaysian Chinese Assembly Hall (中华大会堂联合会) (renamed as Huazong in 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEC</td>
<td>Unified Examination Certificate (华文独中高初中统一考试)</td>
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<td>UMNO</td>
<td>United Malays National Organisation (Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu)</td>
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For the list of translated words, please see Appendix 7.
Chapter One

Institutions and Social Mobilization

1.1. Introduction

The Chinese education movement in Malaysia is arguably one of the oldest nationwide social movements in Asia. The *Kisan Sabha* movement in India has, since 1936, been fighting to end peasants’ political and economic exploitation,¹ and, since 1949, the Taiwanization movement has been highlighting ideological differences between the United States-allied Taiwan and mainland China. The former, however, transgressed into violent resistance, while the latter was co-opted by the state’s propaganda machine. The Chinese education movement in Malaysia—the focus of this study—is a rare example of a movement that has ceaselessly engaged in non-violent contentious politics against an ethnic-majority, non-liberal, democratic regime since 1951.

Over the years, the state has sought to constrain the movement, its organizations and its supporters through a range of restrictive regulations and discriminatory policies. Unlike in liberal-democratic regimes, the state in Malaysia has been dominated by a powerful executive branch, especially so under Mahathir Mohamad’s tenure (1981–2003). A weak system of checks and balances has enabled the National Front coalition (*Barisan Nasional*, BN) ruling regime, led by the United Malays National Organisation (*Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu*, UMNO), to manipulate democratic institutions, weaken the rule of law, restrict media freedom, control and manipulate law enforcement, and politically exploit the distribution of state resources.²

The lack of recourse to democratic institutions, coupled with the imposition of state-directed restrictions, has yet to bring the Chinese education movement to its

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² Diamond (1999; 2002); Crouch (1996); Epstein et al. (2006: 555).
knees, however. It has adroitly adapted and established clientele relationships with ethnic-Chinese politicians within the ruling regime in exchange for benefits for the movement. While other social movements in Malaysia—such as the trade union movements or the Islamic movements—have either faded or have been crushed, this tactic by the Chinese education movement has prevented it from facing a similar fate.\(^3\)

In return, these politicians, mostly those associated with the Malaysian Chinese Association (马华公会, MCA)\(^4\)—the political party that has served as a junior partner in the BN—make opportunistic use of the collaboration to achieve political gains by acting as brokers between the Malay-dominant ruling regime and the Chinese movement.

Notably, the broader social movement literature has paid insufficient attention to the survival of oppositional social movements in repressive states. These studies have been largely predicated on the experience of Western industrialized and stable democratic states. Concomitantly, they have emphasized the important role of structural institutions—namely, resources, political opportunities and identities. Problems and tensions arise, however, when these concepts are applied indiscriminately across cultures and state systems.

The nature and practice of institutions within single-party-dominated or non-liberal, democratic states (commonly found in developing countries) have a different, yet significant impact on the understanding of social movements and the importance of social movement organizations (SMOs). The frequent emergence of social movements as vehicles for channeling social—and sometimes

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\(^3\) About trade union movement, see Stenson (1970); Wong L (1993); Jomo and Todd (1994); Ramasamy and Rowley (2008). The Islamic movements included the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia, Darul Al-Arqam and Tabligh groups. See Mutalib (1993); Jesudason (1996: 156); Nair (1999: 97); Lee CH (2010).

\(^4\) It was known as the Malayan Chinese Association prior to 1963.
political—grievances in non-liberal, democratic states points to the urgent need to better understand such phenomena empirically and theoretically.

This thesis argues that structural institutions within non-liberal, democratic states are, in various degrees, significantly influenced by informal relationships—that is, those built on interpersonal networks and trust. Such informal relationships seem to have similar effects, if not more so, on state-social movement interactions than official and structural relations. In other words, social movements in non-liberal, democratic states develop parallel—at times overlapping—both formal and informal institutions to prolong their existence and increase their opportunities to affect change. Utilizing Malaysia’s longest-running social movement, the Chinese education movement, as a case study, this thesis seeks to shed light on the persistence of a minority social movement that has been facing ongoing and changing constraints imposed by a majority-dominated, non-liberal, democratic state.

This introduction first surveys the background of the case study, proposes the study’s research questions and makes four explanatory propositions. The chapter then examines the mainstream social movement literature, identifies its gaps and traces the rise of such studies in non-liberal, democratic contexts.

The thesis’ main theoretical framework correlates with the three perspectives on the role of extra-institutional variables in the execution of structural institutions: the intra-movement perspective focuses on the roles of SMOs and movement leaders in mobilizing movement activities within non-liberal, democratic states; the movement and state perspective concerns the dynamic interaction among the movement’s actors through various movement repertoires; and the inter-movement perspective explores the role of interpersonal bonds in engaging and strengthening networks and alliances. Subsequently, this chapter presents the study’s significance in the context of
Malaysia’s pluralistic society and non-liberal democracy. An elaboration of the research methodology, limitations of the research, and a general roadmap of the thesis’s chapters concludes this introduction.

1.2. The Chinese Education Movement

As early as 1920, leading Chinese community leaders in the Straits Settlements of Penang and Malacca protested against the British colonial administration’s effort to exert ‘order’ over Chinese vernacular schools in Malaya through the 1920 Registration of Schools Ordinance.\(^5\) Loosely structured and lacking the capacity to respond uniformly to changing developments, pre-World War II resistance was confined to towns or districts. Although activists enjoyed the support of the local Chinese population (in particular, the Chinese-speaking community), which at the time numbered roughly 1.1 million,\(^6\) most attempts to oppose colonial policies ended poorly. The British simply expelled these ‘agitators’.

Not until after World War II did the movement coalesce into an organization-led entity. The Chinese educational movement was formally begun in 1951, led by a group of Chinese schoolteachers who precipitated a sense of crisis in the local Chinese society after the release of the controversial Report of the Committee on Malay Education (also known as the Barnes Report) in 1951. This government report

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\(^5\) A similar law was passed by the Federal Council of the Federated Malay States on November 20, 1920. Under this education enactment, all schoolteachers and school committees had to register with the Department of Education and comply with various regulations. Many believe that the regulation was imposed due to the increase in Chinese nationalism and anti-imperial sentiments in Chinese schools strongly influenced by the 1919 May Fourth Movement in China. From 1925 to 1928, 315 Chinese schools’ registrations were revoked for failure to comply with curriculum, administration and management, or sanitary standards. See MICSSWC (1992: 76–77) and Choong WC (2004: 183).

\(^6\) The Chinese population in the Malaya Federation in 1921 was 1,174,777 or about 35% of the total population. See A Report on the 1931 Census (p. 36).
had recommended all vernacular schools to be abolished and replaced by a single system of primary school teaching in English.  

Early on the movement witnessed collaboration among three major Chinese associations of the time: The United Chinese Schoolteachers’ Association (华校教师会总会, Jiaozong), the United Chinese School Committees’ Association (华校董事联合会总会, Dongzong) and MCA. They were drawn together under the framework of the Grand Three Associations of Chinese Education (三大机构华文教育中央委员会, Sandajigou) and sought to defend the status of Chinese education during Malaya’s rocky and uncertain transition from a colony into a new nation state.

Nevertheless, their collaboration began to break apart in 1960 when pro-Chinese education MCA leaders, led by party President Lim Chong Eu (林苍佑), left the party over disagreements with the then Prime Minister Abdul Rahman (1957–1970). The deterioration of this collaboration marked a historical turning point for this movement, where Dongzong and Jiaozong began their long journey of resistance as the Dongjiaozong (董教总) alliance, without the direct patronage of MCA.

The Federation of Malaysia, formed in 1963, saw the merger of former British colonies: Federation of Malaya, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak. However, political disputes between Singapore’s leaders and Malaysia’s federal government resulted in the departure of Singapore from Malaysia two years later. The Chinese population in Malaysia suffered a dramatic drop from 42% in 1963 to 25% in 1965, putting the

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7 The Barnes Report (1951) recommended that all vernacular schools to be abolished and replaced by a single system of primary school teaching in English and Malay. It triggered strong reactions in the Chinese community and brought together 1,400 Chinese associations to discuss this governmental legislation.
Chinese in the new state of Malaysia at a political disadvantage.\textsuperscript{8} \textit{Dongjiaozong} made a name for itself nationally through its unsuccessful efforts to establish Malaysia’s first independent Chinese university, Merdeka University (独立大学) in the late 1960s. Thereafter, many Chinese communities began to relate the right to operate Chinese schools in a ‘Chinese way’ to the preservation of their culture and the security of the Chinese identity amid heavy-handed state-building policies and Islamization of state and society.

Today, outside China and Taiwan, only Malaysia has a complete Chinese education system, and it is the only country in Southeast Asia perpetuating the Chinese education system established during the colonial era. The Chinese education movement remains as a legitimate organization in the eyes of the Chinese-speaking community in Malaysia and regularly conducts activities such as seminars, donation campaigns, submissions of memorandums and press conferences. In the face of a repressive and ethnic-Malay-controlled state, the movement has restrained from organizing extra-constitutional, anti-government activities to avoid open confrontation with the state.

The movement maneuvers within the country’s limited democratic space to conduct, mobilize and maintain resistance through the Chinese school communities’ networks at local, state and national levels. Thus far, it has continued to exercise its influence from within and beyond the state to push its agenda to promote the status of Chinese language and Chinese education in state policymaking. To better understand the conditions that induce the processes and persistence of such a movement, this study brings a social movement perspective to illuminate the historical and cultural

\textsuperscript{8} Data extracted from Ongkili (1985: 154).
experiences of the movement’s struggles beyond the mainstream, Western-centric, liberal democratic state social movement literature.

For research purposes, the dichotomous concepts of minority and majority are limited to exclusively-divided categories, such as ethnicity and religious differences. A majority-dominated state is a set of institutions in which the distribution of resources and power is biased in favour of the majority group. This set of institutions is largely controlled by (a few) leaders who belong to the majority group.

1.3. Research Questions and Propositions

A principal question this study seeks to answer is: How does a minority social movement persist in pushing its agenda despite facing ongoing constraints imposed by a majority-dominated, non-liberal, democratic state?

Secondary questions include:

a) What factors have provided motivation to the movement’s activists (and general supporters), and how have these factors changed over time?

b) How do SMOs sustain a prolonged social movement? What are the mechanisms deployed by these SMOs that have contributed to the maintenance, mobilization and persistence of the movement?

c) How have the interactions between the challengers and state authorities influenced the movement’s trajectory, and how have these changed over time?

d) How has the non-liberal, democratic state constrained the movement, and vice versa? Why has the state yet to ‘terminate’ the movement? Has it chosen not to, or are there constraints placed on its repressive capacities?
To come to grips with these questions, the author suggests the following four propositions:

1. Continuous threats and attempts by state authorities to dilute the minority’s identity have shaped a culture of resistance that has become a key source of motivation for the social movement.

Threats (and efforts) by the Malay-dominated regime to dilute the Chinese identity and assimilate the Chinese into Malay society has created a powerful desire for the Chinese minority to preserve its cultural distinctiveness and maintain an exclusive ethnic identity as a last-ditched, self-help effort.\(^9\) Such cultural resources as the vernacular language and the identity it symbolizes have shaped the imagined territory of the Chinese community. Such a desire has manifested as a culture of resistance (political and cultural) against the state through the Chinese education movement.\(^10\) This thesis argues that, generally speaking, the volume of threats from the regime is positively related to the collective support received by the movement from the Chinese community. These threats also help to promote unity, strengthen solidarity, and overcome meaningful differences within these communities over dialect, political preference, social status and economic class.\(^11\)

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\(^11\) There are five major dialect groups within the Chinese community in Malaysia, namely, *Hokkien, Hakka, Cantonese, Teochew* and *Hainanese.*
2. *The combination of Western-style bureaucratization with a distinct Chinese characteristic has produced a hybrid SMO that performs as a suitable and sustainable platform to attend to the movement’s managerial and mobilization needs.*

The movement’s SMOs have developed adequate strength to survive Malaysia’s political hothouse by running a bureaucratic system that is formulated around loosely-defined rules and that is under the control of its powerful leaders. The movement’s constitution and regulated procedural system have transformed the traditional management operating style into one that is more result-oriented and responsive. A bottom-up leader selection system has empowered and strengthened the traditional role of movement leaders with formal legitimacy in representing the movement in its interactions with the state. The executive branch enables the movement to recruit individuals with professional capacity into the movement, thus expanding and deepening the inter-dependence and importance of the social networking among its supporters. The full-time and salaried staffs attend, maintain and execute various routine movement activities, thus overcoming the free rider problems that potentially arise from the movement’s large and extensive grassroots support base.

3. *Movement activists sustain interactions with the non-liberal, democratic state through interpersonal (and inter-ethnic) bonds that often function as a more effective platform than structural institutions or official mechanisms.*

Structural institutions within non-liberal, democratic states are imposed in varied degrees according to the interpersonal relationship between the power-executer and
power-receiver. Lacking a stable collective bargaining channel, movement activists rely on interpersonal bonds and offstage influences (such as brokerage and alliances) to deliver their demands and interact with the state. This thesis suggests that the significance of relational institutions is inversely related to the effectiveness of democratic institutions in delivering the state’s responsibility and in channeling demands from the people. Notably, the Chinese education movement has grown dependent on both structural and relational institutions, although the latter tend to be more effective.

4. *Malaysia’s non-liberal, democratic system has provided a limited but significant channel for political competition, which in turn has opened opportunities for negotiation and thereby has limited violent expression by state authorities and social movement activists.*

Non-liberal, democratic regimes may infuse state bureaucracy, mediate patronage, dispense clientelist benefits and avail partial democratic procedures by limiting, but not extinguishing, civil liberties, and distorting, but not excessively manipulating, electoral procedures.  

12 Therefore, although political contenders hardly have room to maneuver or curb politicking, and very often such electoral processes are symbolic rather than politically significant, the voters’ choice in selecting its government via elections remains an important political institution in non-liberal, democratic states.  

13 It is such pressure and need to legitimate power by winning elections that force the regime to utilize both carrots (compromise and collaboration) and sticks (pressure and threats) in order to win support from its citizens, and particularly from the potentially contentious


agency of social movement activists. Possible agents range from established political forces to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and more oppositional social movement groups. This thesis maintains that the state with a lower quality of democracy will need more legitimacy from winning elections. It is within this tightly contended political environment that social movement actors may maneuver by striking deals with politicians. For example, by providing necessary support to the ruling regime during elections, the Chinese educational movement has been ‘rewarded’ by the regime, such as the regime offering a favorable response to the movement’s demands for special grant allocation for Chinese schools (see Chapter Five). More importantly, the movement’s ability to influence and swing votes has prevented its termination by the state. Although tensions between the regime and the movement have waxed and waned over time, the latter has been safe from the fate of coercive termination by the state, especially when compared to the fate of other ethnic- (and religious-) based movements in the country.14

1.4. Social Movements, Resources, Opportunities and Identities

Contemporary social movement studies have their origins in the collective behavioral literature of the 1940s and 1950s that examined riots, crowds and mass hysteria. These works considered the participants of these activities as irrational, dysfunctional and abhorrent aberrations in the functioning of a modern social system.15 In contrast to these modernization-infused studies that stressed the integration and equilibrium inherent in social systems, contemporary social movement studies pointed to conflicts and struggles as focal points of social systems.

14 For example, the 1985 Mamali religious school incident saw Ibrahim Libya and 13 of his followers killed, with 159 others arrested. See more at Barraclough (1985) and Hussein (2002: 92).
15 See Durkheim (1938) and Tarde (1969) for the European tradition. See Parsons (1937), Blumer (1939), Park (1955) and Smelser (1963) for the American tradition.
Social movements, according to Tarrow (1994), Tilly (1995; 2004) and Thomas (2001), are a series of sustained interactions and collective actions, contentious performances, displays and campaigns by ordinary people outside established political institutions. These people share collective claims, common purposes and solidarity to challenge authorities in order to change elements of the socioeconomic and political structure, or in the distribution and exercise of power in society. Such collective actions are culturally oriented, socially conflictual, and based on the networks or movement areas of these individuals. In this light, this thesis defines social movements as networks of ordinary people outside of political institutions that interact and challenge the state through a series of collective actions to demand for change. Such interactions are considerably influenced by local political structure and social environment.

Social movements differ from political parties and interest groups. Political parties nominate candidates in elections and aim to win formal control of the state in order to implement its programs; interest groups and social movements do not principally engage in these activities. Social movements and interest groups overlap in terms of the flexibility of being formally (or informally) organized to influence public policy in their areas of concern; some social movements may transform into interest groups when the need arises. However, social movements cover broader issues, consist of heterogeneous membership, pursue transformational goals, engage in contentious interactions with the state, and possess less access to political institutions than interest groups customarily have. Social movements, interest groups and the state continuously and ineluctably influence each other. Movements influence state actors by setting agendas and suggesting new political strategies; the state, in return,

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18 Truman (1951: 33, 135–136); Key (1964: 9–10, 155); Thomas (2001: 5).
influences movements by proactively employing covert (and occasionally overt) repression measures, and setting the rules for counter-movement as well as movement activities.\textsuperscript{20}

Given that social movements involve collective behaviors and actions, how or why rational individuals act collectively in a sustained manner has puzzled scholars. Despite evident diversity in their processes and outcomes, social movements share commonalities and principles that make comparative research and generalizations possible.\textsuperscript{21} Resistance entails costs and usually requires such stimuli as grievances and deprivation, although such stimuli do not axiomatically translate into movement activity.\textsuperscript{22} Quite famously, Olson argued that, “unless the number of individuals in a group is quite small, or unless there is coercion or some other special device to make individuals act in their common interest, rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests”.\textsuperscript{23} These ‘free rider’ problems are especially common in large social movement groups.

Certain scholars have begun to recognize and emphasize the importance of resource mobilization to solve free rider problems and achieve movement success.\textsuperscript{24} Any given society possesses external resources (money, time, media, facilities and material), as well as internal resources (members’ capacity, commitments and moral support), that can be put to use by movement leaders to coordinate, organize, mobilize,

\textsuperscript{20} Goldstone (2003: 24).
\textsuperscript{21} Zurcher and Curtis (1973); Coy (1978); Klandermans et al. (1988); Escobar and Alvarez (1992); Klandermans (1993); Zirakzadeh (1997); Edelman (2001); Veltmeyer (2004); Davis et al. (2005); Della Porta and Caiani (2009).
\textsuperscript{22} Zald (1992).
\textsuperscript{23} Olson (1965: 2).
\textsuperscript{24} Lipsky (1968); Snyder and Tilly (1972); McCarthy, Smith and Zald (1973); Wilson (1973: 131); Gamson (1975); Jenkins and Perrow (1977); Tilly (1978).
and, ultimately, agitate. Mobilization is facilitated by the internal organization and structure of the collectivity, known as a SMO.

McCarthy and Zald (1977), two leading scholars in what came to be known as the resource mobilization school, placed special emphasis on the role of professional SMOs in solving collective action problems. They defined a SMO as “a complex, or formal organization that identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement or a counter-movement and attempts to implement these goals”. Social movement activities may be organized by one or more SMOs; in some cases, the SMOs themselves constitute the movement; in others, the movement has no SMO. Nevertheless, the resource mobilization school tended to overstate the importance of external resources without explaining where and how these resources can be generated; or fail to explain why social movements did not appear in all countries where there were grievances and sufficient resources to mobilize people to act on their grievances.

The political opportunities school arose in response to the limitations of the resource mobilization approach. A principal proponent of this perspective, McAdam (1982), argued that political opportunities, a heightened sense of political efficacy and the development of institutions played a central role in shaping the civil rights movement in the United States, for example. The political process model places great emphasis on the structural constraints and opportunities that social movements face. These include political pluralism, internal fragmentation within political systems, receptivity of political systems to organized protest, as well as support and facilitation of political elites. McAdam asserted that the emergence of social movements was determined by expanding opportunities, indigenous organizational strength of the population, and cognitive liberation.

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25 Olson (1965); McCarthy and Zald (1977); Tilly (1978); Oliver and Marwell (1992).
26 Oberschall (1993: 56).
27 McCarthy and Zald (1977: 1217).
For Tarrow (1989; 1994), Tilly (1978), and McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (1997; 2001), the success of mobilization (or politicization) hinges on the opportunities afforded the group in question. The opportunities present themselves when there is a shift in the institutional structure or the ideological disposition of those in power. Although this approach was successful in justifying the growth and development of social movements that were based on grievances, material needs and accumulation of resources, it could not adequately explain how social movements based on ideas and grievances related to ways of life could arise.

A newer European-focused social movement literature sought to tackle this problem. These scholars argued that advanced industrialization had created structural possibilities for conflicts, especially with the widening of access to higher education and the en masse entry of women into the labor market. This perspective has grown from the phenomena where individuals opposed the state’s and market’s intrusion into social life, and asserted their rights to determine their private identities and affective lives vis-à-vis the comprehensive manipulation of the larger system. These new social movements—such as preservation of the environment, human rights, gay and lesbian rights—foregrounded quality of life issues. Moreover, this paradigm placed importance on the actors and their abilities to capture the innovative characteristics of movements.

The formation and creation of personal, collective and public identities were defined by Melucci as “an interactive and shared definition produced by several interacting individuals who are concerned with the orientations of their actions as well

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29 Della Porta and Diani (1999).
31 Offe (1985).
as the field of opportunities and constraints in which their actions take place”. This definition is supplemented by Gusfield who saw that the members of the group “agreed upon definition of boundaries” and provided the basis that enabled shared beliefs, making collective action possible.

This literature associated the formation and mobilization of movements based on the individualized, middle-class lifestyles and the diversity of social identity in post-industrial societies, especially in Western Europe. It went beyond the resource mobilization and political process schools that emphasized the availability of resources and political opportunities as key factors in giving rise to social movements. However, these three research agendas have been largely developed in the context of industrialized North American and Western European states with stable democratic regimes. This has meant that the limitations of these camps are thrown into stark relief when their concepts and arguments are indiscriminately applied across cultures and state systems.

1.5. Social Movements in Non-Liberal, Democratic States

Liberal regimes are able to perform because they are based on highly institutionalized rules and democratic procedures (such as constitutions, elections, media, courts) that structure social interactions by constraining and enabling actors’ behaviors. Institutions within liberal democratic states invite comparison and evaluation, with emphasis on the reproduction and stability of social order.

Nonetheless, societies’ access to institutions varies according to local legal settings, institutional hierarchies, cultural orientations and type of regimes.\textsuperscript{36} In this thesis, the state is defined beyond the traditionally narrow, static and rigid way. Instead, it consists of overlapping institutions and heterogeneous agents: elites, politicians and bureaucrats, each with divergent interests.\textsuperscript{37}

Non-liberal, democratic regimes tend to control institutional access tightly to strengthen their capacity in achieving economic, political or social goals. Institutions are frequently arranged according to the styles and preferences of the power-holders. Non-liberal, democratic states, either of the military or civilian type, do differ on the degree of legal and institutional legitimacy. Today, save for North Korea, most non-liberal, democracies range from semi-democracies—those with mixed or hybrid characteristics—to those deemed more authoritarian.\textsuperscript{38}

At the illiberal end, authoritarian regimes rule without accountability, which enables abusive state actors to enjoy absolute impunity.\textsuperscript{39} According to Panizza, instrumental authoritarian regimes may be democratically elected but the regimes would not hesitate to temporarily defer democracy, such as through coercive military rule, or to brutally repress open demonstration to impose social order during social polarization or political turmoil.\textsuperscript{40} These regimes do not tolerate social activism, and tend to quell contention through hefty penalties.

Hybrid regimes can be both competitive and authoritarian and have been categorized by scholars according to the proportion of authoritarian or democratic features.\textsuperscript{41} For starters, Schedler (2002) separated ‘electoral democracies’ from

\begin{itemize}
    \item\textsuperscript{36} Scheingold (2004).
    \item\textsuperscript{37} Skocpol (1979; 1985: 9); DiMaggio and Powell (1983); March and Olsen (1984); Evans (1989).
    \item\textsuperscript{38} Jopple (1995: x); Helmke and Levitsky (2006: 1–2); Marsh (2006: 1).
    \item\textsuperscript{39} Linz (1975: 264); Mainwaring (2003).
    \item\textsuperscript{40} Panizza (1995: 183).
    \item\textsuperscript{41} Levitsky and Way (2002).
\end{itemize}
‘electoral authoritarianism’, with the former having free and fair elections that comply with minimal democratic norms, while such criteria is absent for the latter.42 Within electoral authoritarianism, Diamond (1999; 2002) further categorized electoral authoritarianism regimes into the ‘competitive authoritarian’ and ‘hegemonic electoral authoritarian’ regimes, with the former instituted via multi-party electoral competition and a significant parliamentary opposition, while in the latter, these challenges and processes are politically closed.43 There are also the ‘repressive yet responsive’ semi-democratic regimes, which respond to pressure and demands from society, but do so through co-optation, neutralization and suppression to control social conflict.44

Within the numerous categorizations of hybrid regimes, scholars generally agree that a hybrid system enables a regime to extend its tenure by authoritative control of democratic institutions.45 Most hybrid regimes consist of some features of formal democratic institutions (such as regular elections), but liberalism is tightly contained, resulting in little real competition for power to assure political stability and discourage any challenges to power holders.46 Above all, there are low levels of political participation beyond voting.

A hybrid system enables the country to be controlled by a small number of individuals rather than democratic institutions or the rule of law.47 Such manipulation of power sees some hybrid regimes intervene aggressively in the economy through shrewd state policies and use performance legitimacy to substitute for procedural legitimacy. These hybrid regimes tend to manipulate state resources to establish political patronage with their supporters, or frequently abuse the law, resulting in poor

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43 Diamond (2002); Levitsky and Way (2002); Schedler (2002).
46 Ottaway (2003).
representation of citizens’ interests and low public confidence in state institutions.\textsuperscript{48} Although such constraints and limitations have systematically weakened civil societies and social organizations, they allow some political debate and the avenue of social mobilization remains possible within semi-democratic states, as long as it does not challenge the state’s political legitimacy.\textsuperscript{49}

The emergence of an increasing number of hybrid state systems after the Cold War has yielded a better understanding of their patterns and effects on political system, and the influence of the domestic political environment on social movements.\textsuperscript{50} Although political inequality is acutely felt by social movement actors in varied degrees, the need to fulfill one’s internal motivation (such as self-expectation and conceptions, personal interest and political ideology) and external legitimacy (such as political structure and potential opposition) are elements that constrain the ability of institutions to achieve meaningful social change, making comparative analysis across states possible.\textsuperscript{51}

Such a perspective was explored by Boudreau (2004). He argued that the modes of people’s resistance are shaped by the types, patterns and degrees of repressive strategies imposed by authoritarian states. Political opportunities—in particular, political openness—increase protests and anti-dictatorship pressure from democratization movements. Moreover, centralized and mediated movement organizational resources (such as formation of alliances) increase the power and capacity of contention that may lead to successful contention against an authoritarian regime. Boudreau’s important study also demonstrated the state’s ability to adapt its

\textsuperscript{48} Foweraker (1995: 2); Jones (1997); Laothamatas (1997: 12); Diamond (1999); Goodwin, Jasper and Khattra (1999); Forsyth (2001).
\textsuperscript{49} Case (1992); Gomez (1994); Khoo BT (1997:72).
\textsuperscript{50} Carothers (2002: 5–6); Diamond (2002); Levitsky and Way (2002: 51–52); Armony and Schamis (2005).
\textsuperscript{51} Scheingold (2004).
strategies in response to different patterns of contention, which may range from radical to moderate challenges.

Boudreau covered three different democracy movements in Southeast Asia. He showed how Ne Win’s regime in Burma survived various challenges. The regime’s intolerance of protest, its use of extreme means to weaken the oppositions’ organizational capacities—which, among others, prevented alliances from forming among protest groups—resulted in a weak opposition that was easily crushed. In the Philippines, Boudreau highlighted how the coalition between politicians and the communist front survived initial repression and re-emerged as a strong oppositional alliance; the latter played a key role in the toppling of the Marcos regime.52 Finally, an uprising in Indonesia was delayed before ripe moments (the Asian financial crisis) occurred in the late 1990s, which enabled a breakthrough in collaboration among opposition groups to bring down Soeharto’s New Order regime.

Although social movements within non-liberal, democratic states may lack the capacity to effectively impose checks and balances on the authoritarian state, their appearances (and subsequent protests) shape pressure and form a basis for political pluralism and structural change. Boudreau’s argument was illustrated by He Bao Gang (1993; 1996) using the 1989 democratic movement in China. Although the demonstrations at the Tiananmen Square (天安门广场) in June 1989 were brutally crushed by the communist regime, it had a positive impact on the gradual liberalization process in China. Pressure to bolster the Chinese Communist Party’s waning political legitimacy saw the party’s political elites begin to adjust their conceptions of

legitimacy, implement economic reforms, and allow the existence of populist and liberal notions of democracy proposed by the democratic camp from within the party.\(^{53}\)

Similarly, Kerkvliet (2005) studied the seemingly unorganized and non-confrontational way Vietnamese peasants engaged in undermining the system of collective farming dictated by the state. Consequently, the peasants forced the state into replacing collective farming with peasant family farming in the 1980s. As Kerkvliet convincingly argued, the character and power of everyday politics provided political implications for understanding Vietnamese state policy. Although a strong state prevented the establishment of a broad peasant SMO to conduct open protest, these passive and individualized forms of resistance successfully paralyzed the state’s farming policy. The centrality of peasants as the source of labor power and its significance as the foundation of political support and national unification prevented authorities from using force or coercive methods to crush peasant movements.

Phatharathananunth (2006) explored the struggles of the Small Scale Farmers’ Assembly of Isan—a major grassroots movement in Thailand—in its campaign to protect the rights of the rural poor since 1993. The movement provided a political channel for peasants who have been marginalized in the Bangkok-based and elite-controlled electoral politics from participating meaningfully in the democratization process. The state, in return, tried to control the gradually powerful movement by co-opting key movement leaders and marginalizing the radical faction of the movement.\(^{54}\)

The differences in political ideology, experience of colonization, economic development and social structure all have direct and powerful implications on the development and trajectories of social movements. Therefore, analysis of social

\(^{53}\) He BG (1993; 1996).

\(^{54}\) Phatharathananunth (2006).
movements in non-liberal, democratic states needs to pay special heed to cultural and historical contexts. This is what mainstream social movement literature, with its focus on structural conditions such as the availability of resources, political processes and opportunities, and the construction of identity, tends to lack.

Moreover, power relationships between challengers and authorities are in a constant state of flux, and even more so in non-liberal than liberal democratic states, ironically limiting the availability of opportunities for social movements to draw upon. In light of this, activists rely less on formal institutions and more on unconventional methods to disseminate movement messages, mobilize support and engage in contention action.

In the social movement literature, the understanding of extra-institutional variables has been clumsily lumped into the categories of framing and culture without much systematic analysis. Framing is a vital strategy for many movements’ activists within advanced Western states to instill a sense of injustice, shape collective identities, attract mass media coverage, garner bystanders’ support and demobilize antagonists. The significance of framing and the distribution of its products (speeches, images and writings) have different effects in the non-liberal, democratic world. Limited access to media, higher risk of state suppression and a fragmented society divided along linguistic, ethnicity, religious and cultural lines make it distinctly challenging to create (and sustain) a universal frame that is equally appealing to all.

In fact, cognitive understanding, community influences, moral missions, kinship links and emotional attachments tend to matter greatly in the process of social

56 McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996); McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (1997: 154); Goodwin, Jasper and Khattra (1999).
57 Snow et al. (1986); Snow and Benford (1988: 198; 1992: 137); Benford (1993); Hunt and Benford (1994); McAdam (1996: 340–341); Steinberg (1999: 737).
mobilization in non-liberal, democratic states. Here, this thesis proposes to study such institutions by taking into consideration the humane, organic, dynamic and flexible interpersonal bonds in the execution of structural institutions. The analysis will be conducted at three levels: dynamics within the movement (intra-movement relations); dynamics between the movement and the state (movement and state relations); and dynamics between the movement and other movements (inter-movement relations).

(1) Intra-Movement Relations

While social movement studies focus on the logic of collective action, studies of SMOs expressly address the elements of agencies and institutions that harness collective action. Social movement institutional elements, such as regulations, the strength of SMOs, and financial and human resources, set the criteria for defining a social movement. SMOs are particularly important for legitimating the selection of leaders to govern and consolidate the needs of social movements, reduce uncertainty through the centralization of power along a line of authority, control organizational effectiveness through collective decision-making procedures, and mobilize the grassroots to overcome external obstacles and constraints—in other words, enable the movement to struggle for change.58

Most SMOs are loosely organized, especially during their early phases, with institutionalization normally taking place following the height of mobilization.59 Within many non-liberal, democratic states, the execution of these institutions and the delivery of their functions are shaped (and reshaped) by temporal processes and political struggles. Unlike in democratic states, SMOs in non-liberal, democratic systems face higher risks of coercive suppression, encounter more constraints in terms

59 McCarthy and Zald (1977); Kriesi, Koopmans and Duyvendak (1995).
of accessing resources or mobilizing support from the community. Such limitations force SMOs to adapt themselves frequently throughout their lifespan in response to pressures imposed on them.

The extent and sophistication of SMOs may vary throughout the process of achieving their objectives, but characteristically, there are divisions of labor and bureaucratic structures in SMOs. Formalization matures toward expansion in size and professionalization of staff. Appointed bureaucrats serve as committees or administrative officers, each adherent to a hierarchy of positions, scope of authority and responsibilities. SMOs may establish parallel institutions to confront and engage with state institutions more directly. For instance, movement leaders deal with cabinet ministers, SMOs officers deal with various federal departmental officers, state-level committees deal with state-level government officers, and so on.

As will be shown in Chapter Four, the SMOs of the Chinese education movement were professionalized with strong local influences, such as by congregating the school professionals to form a hierarchical bureaucracy and structure for the working committee that enabled the constant flow of sustainable resources to the movement. Moreover, in a persistent yet amorphous condition between the loosely-defined and the institutionalized organizations, the movement enabled democratically-elected leaders with centralized authority to respond promptly and effectively to the rapidly changing landscape of contentious politics.

Once a social movement has transformed from a ‘state of resistance’ into a ‘state of persistence’, goal transformation occurs as leaders begin to replace unattainable goals with those that are more pragmatic and relevant, simply to become

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60 Wilson (1973: 8, 164).
more sustainable. These changes allow social movements to endure, especially when opportunities for influence are minimal; however, they may also alienate supporters and draw normative commitment away from members. Because the decision for such transformation and changes are made based on the powerful movement leader’s judgment, little justification or bottom-up participation is available. Such top-down authoritative management styles can mimic the regimes that constrain the movement in the first place, and the movement depends on the capacity of good leaders to successfully execute such relational mechanisms.

What makes a capable leader is profusely subjective, and these individuals are rare. As will be examined in Chapter Five, the Chinese education movement suffered internal tensions. Factions of SMOs community led by movement activists who were closely affiliated with the preceding leader refused to collaborate with new leaders who wanted to transform the movement’s strategies from one of radical resistance into conservative persistence. Such a shift of repertoires was perceived by the reformist faction as a failure to inherit the legacy of prior leadership.

The matter became more complicated when the reformist faction was supported by senior SMOs officers who succeeded in the oligarchization of the movement—that is, concentrating power by manipulating the hierarchical bureaucratic structure for personal desire and benefits. As argued by Zald and Ash (1966), the use of adversarial tactics increases with oligarchy. An elaboration of the twists and turns of these contentions will contribute significantly to the literature on internal dynamics (and tensions) of SMOs, something which has been downplayed by contemporary social movement literature.

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64 The concept of repertoires will be discussed in the intra-movement and state perspectives.
(2) Movement and State Relations

Social movements within non-liberal, democratic contexts are defined by the interests they represent, and the ways such demands are carried out. Repertoires are relational products of contention between challengers and power holders, which limit both the strategic choice of performances, as well as the conceptual mapping of possibilities for action. Tilly (1976; 1983; 1986; 1995) argued that since the nineteenth century, collective action repertoires in advanced Western countries changed from being local, autonomous and reactive to become national, directed and proactive as a consequence of the rise and formation of full-fledged nation states as the dominant political organizations. Yet, such shifts are absent from, or only partially exist, in most non-liberal, democratic and developing states which lack experience in the building of democratic institutions (inherited from their colonial master), in addition to having to deal with a host of other more critical state-building problems such as an underdeveloped economic sector and a polarized society.

Repertoires can come in the form of highly conventional actions, such as lobbying and judicial action, or as passive as everyday resistance, which may better encapsulate the challenger-versus-state authority relations in non-liberal, democratic states. Demonstrations may be common in many mature democracies, but their absence (or infrequency) in non-liberal, democratic states cannot be taken as an absence of social movements. The state’s control of law enforcement allows little space for maneuver or negotiation. Therefore, high intensity social protests, open political opposition, or any extra-constitutional mass groupings often face harsh, coercive repression. Movement leaders who (successfully) organize such contention activities often face imprisonment and ‘follow-up’ punishment from the regime.

Lacking institutional access and facing repression, resistance often occurs outside the political arena, and exists in a manner that is clandestine, small-scale and constantly subjected to refrainment. The proliferation of everyday forms of peasant resistance as observed by Scott (1987) suggests that informal acts of resistance (such as foot-dragging, dissimulation, pilfering, or sabotage) involve no overt protest and require little or no coordination and organization. These resistances concern largely immediate, *de facto* gains, and at the same time minimize the risks of any direct confrontation with the authorities. Scott’s discourse, however, best pertains to a small community with dense informal networks and historically deep subcultures of resistance. The potential and influence of passive resistance by a small community constituting powerful repertoires is elaborated in Chapter Six through the case study of Damansara villagers’ resistance against the state’s closure of Damansara Chinese Primary School. Unlike Scott’s peasant movement, which was confined to the village level, the Damansara resistance successfully rallied for support from the nation, and eventually forced the Malaysian regime to yield to their demands.

This thesis also proposes that social movement activists engage in active and dynamic collaboration, other than passive resistance, with non-liberal, democratic state regimes though brokers. Facing a regime that relies on interpersonal networks rather than on structured institutions galvanized movement activists to seek informal—yet potentially more promising—channels such as brokerage to achieve their demands. Brokerage is a process in “which intermediary actors facilitate transactions between other actors lacking access to or trust in one another”.

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69 Marsden (1982).
increase the success of promulgating changes between the movement and the regime.\textsuperscript{70} Brokers within a pluralistic society must be equipped with multi-linguistic ability and a good understanding of the sensitivities of traditional cultures. As will be discussed in Chapter Two, English- and Chinese-speaking MCA politicians have created political advantages for themselves by assisting the inter-movement and state collaboration since 1951. These politicians have received recognition from the Chinese community for their roles as successful gatekeepers of the Chinese’ cultural and kinship interests, which are critical in the eyes of this community.

(3) Inter-Movement Relations

The formation of inter-movement networks and alliances is a critical strategy to reduce competition over resources among social movements. Strong institutional bonds based on a shared identity provide opportunities for routine interaction and consequently reduces cleavages, develops trust, and promotes sharing of information and experiences.\textsuperscript{71}

Social movements establish both formal coalitions and informal collaboration with other movement organizations at local, national and international levels, but social movements in non-liberal, democratic states tend to rely on inter-leadership collaboration rather than inter-institutional coalition.\textsuperscript{72} For one, not all social movements in such settings can afford to establish a formal organization. Moreover, agent-based alliance is easier to conduct—for instance, an underground meeting—and thus can remain under the regime’s radar. Such agent-based networks rely primarily on the leaders’ social reputation, professional commonalities and political connections. Networks and alliances that are based on personal connections can be stable and

\textsuperscript{70} Foster (1961); North (1990: 37); Staggenborg (2002: 126); Roy and Sidera (2006: 4).
\textsuperscript{71} Olson (1982); Coleman (1990); Morrill (1995); Putnam (2000); Bandy and Smith (2005: 4).
\textsuperscript{72} Meyer and Tarrow (1998: 19).
enduring, especially in the face of state oppression or co-optation.\textsuperscript{73} A tight cadre of committed allies facilitates rapid and honest sharing of information.

Associational relationship can be dense, such as groups that share many similarities and a common identity, or weak, such as groups divided ethnically, culturally and linguistically. Sharing the same language, life style and experience of being exploited by the state and its policies, along with experiences of prior collaboration, help to enhance collective bonds that are, over time, strengthened by emotional attachment and trust among these agents.\textsuperscript{74} Because social movements in polarized societies tend to articulate their aims in terms of racialism or communalism rather than associational activities, this increases opportunities for collaboration within the same ethnic, cultural, or linguistic groups.\textsuperscript{75} Such prior collaboration is important for forming a strong associational alliance, as it was key to the success of the civil rights movement in the United States in the 1960s where black leaders and the non-black masses with similar religious backgrounds and experiences united for a common cause.\textsuperscript{76} Such an alliance may survive if members of the alliance can fulfill the components of a strong capital, which range from economic, cultural and social to political needs.\textsuperscript{77}

The lack of opportunities for collaboration between social movements may also result in a minimal level of trust across movement organizations, and delay the formation of a more unified and stronger alliance to overcome the constraints imposed by a repressive state. It is only during times of frustration, such as the failure of intra-ethnic alliances, or the co-optation of former allies by the regime, that such inter-movement collaboration may be born. Operating in the often unpredictable

\textsuperscript{73} Chwe SY (1999).
\textsuperscript{74} Klandermans and Goslinga (1996); Koopmans (2004).
\textsuperscript{75} Jennett and Stewart (1989).
\textsuperscript{76} McAdam (1982).
\textsuperscript{77} Bourdieu (1986); Diani (1997); Purdue (2007: 224).
environment of non-liberal, democratic regimes, every step forward and every act of resistance is meaningful. By joining forces, the allied movements increase their capacity to seize political opportunities and overcome constraints.78

1.6. Social Mobilization in Malaysia

Unlike General Ne Win’s military regime in Burma, which refused to recognize the institutions of democracy such as constitution, parliament, election results and the like, or President Ferdinand Marcos’s martial law regime in the Philippines, which assassinated members of the opposition and filled key ministerial positions with family and friends, Malaysia’s BN regime—in particular during Mahathir Mohamad’s era—has taken a relatively less authoritarian approach than its neighbors, such as Indonesia (Soeharto’s New Order) or Singapore (Lee Kuan Yew and the People’s Action Party). The state does claim some form of legitimacy through its domination of democratic institutions.79 Yet, Malaysia wavers between authoritarianism and democracy. Debate on its quality or state of democracy is notable for the variety of hedging adjectives scholars have used to describe it: ‘fettered’, 80 ‘modified’, 81 ‘quasi’, 82 ‘illiberal’ 83 and ‘semi’. 84

Malaysia demonstrated a promising pattern of consociational democracy under the Alliance coalition in the 1950s and 1960s.85 Nevertherless, the Alliance was dissolved following the 1969 ethnic riots and was replaced by the BN alliance in 1974. Enhanced power was placed in the hands of the executive, which, in turn, dominated

79 Bruun and Jacobsen (2000).
82 Ahmad Z (1989).
84 Case (1992).
85 Case (1996: 1–2); Lijphart (1985:6; 2008: 49)
the once-meaningful legislative and judiciary branches of government. Such power has enabled the executive-heavy regime to control and manipulate state resources, the civil service and law enforcement. Elections remain the most important institution that confers legitimacy upon the regime, despite widely known and unfair practices that constitute Malaysia’s elections, including gerrymandering, short notice on the election dates, hurried campaign period, and domination of mainstream media by the BN regime.

Not until 1998 with the rise of Malaysia’s Reformasi movement to support former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim (1993–1998)—who had been trumped up by his political opponents for corruption and sodomy, leading to his overnight political demise in 1999—did a strong coalition of opposition parties emerge to confront the BN ruling regime. The Malaysia’s Reformasi movement was inspired by the reformasi movement that toppled Soeharto in Indonesia. Although Malaysia’s Reformasi movement and the opposition coalition failed to challenge BN’s two-thirds majority in the parliament at the 1999 General Election, the formation of the People’s Justice Party (Parti Keadilan Rakyat) by Anwar’s supporters and the increase in demands for democratic reforms by Malaysia’s middle-class population laid important foundations for political change.

After Mahathir Mohamad’s retirement in 2003, the political system gradually liberalized under the stewardship of his handpicked successor, Abdullah Badawi, the fifth prime minister of Malaysia (2004–2008). Abdullah Badawi promised to reconstitute an independent judiciary and reform the Anti-Corruption Agency to counter the degenerative corrupt practices within UMNO and across the civil service

agencies. These promises convinced Malaysian voters to support Abdullah Badawi’s administration and saw BN coalition win a landslide victory in the 2004 General Election. However, as these political promises remain unfulfilled at the end of Abdullah Badawi’s first term as the prime minister, Malaysians were becoming progressively impatient and disappointed with the administration’s inability to fulfill its campaign promises.

By 2008, for the first time after 1969, the opposition People’s Alliance (Pakatan Rakyat, PR) successfully challenged BN’s two-thirds majority in the parliament. It also won control of five state governments during the country’s twelfth General Election. Scholars and pundits hailed these developments as the dawn of a true democracy, especially when an increasing number of senior BN politicians admitted there were deficits in the BN legitimacy that required political reforms from within. Although the relatively peaceful transition of power of the state governments was promising, it was marred by the Perak Constitutional Crisis (that enabled BN to regain state government control from the PR coalition), the new sodomy trial against PR leader, Anwar Ibrahim, and the mismanagement of the distribution of PR-led states’ development funds by the centralized federal government (which channeled these funds to state-level federal agencies instead of the PR state governments).

The BN regime, while competing to remain as a significant player in the formal political arena, also has to deal with demands from various social movements. Significantly, through constant interactions, the Malaysian government-Chinese education movement relationship has produced interesting, yet puzzling, outcomes.

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89 Loh and Khoo (2002).
1.7. **Malaysian Social Movements**

Social movements in Malaysia can generally be divided into two main types: inclusive and exclusive. The former is concerned with universal issues such as the environment, democratization and human rights, while the latter focuses on ethnic- and religious-based concerns. Inclusive-based movements are often studied as part of civil society activities or the democratization process by movement activists who are also academics and researchers at local and international universities. On the other hand, activists of exclusive-based movements tend to be in professions that are non-research-related, such as schoolteachers and religious teachers. More importantly, linguistic limitation has restricted the accessibility of research works and resources of these movements, resulting in most of these important developments being left understudied to the English-speaking scholarly world of social movement studies.

The women’s rights movement has gained considerable attention. Works are mostly published by well-established women research centers at local universities. Among the most significant works is that by Ng, Mohamad and Tan (2006). Ng and her associates studied the market forces that drove the politicization of feminism in Malaysia. Urban development and industrialization increased the number of women who engaged in higher education and employment, thus strengthening their economic mobility and political empowerment. Women’s newly acquired economic and political position enabled women (together with other civil society members) to participate in democratization struggles. Their book also highlighted the restrictions placed upon, and inherent limitations of the women’s movement in Malaysia—in particular, conflicting interests within the multi-cultural and multi-religious milieu of the broader society.

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92 On civil societies related studies see Mohamed Idris (1986), Saravanamuttu (2001) and Hilton (2009); on democratization process related studies see Tan and Ibrahim (2008), Loh KW (2009) and Tan LO (2010).

93 Tan and Ng (2001); Lai SY (2004); Tumen (2006); Ng CS (2010; 2010b).
Like many other enduring movements, leaders of the women’s movements have opted to collaborate with, instead of confront, the state, which has enabled prominent feminists to influence state policies from within the government, and thereby avoid incurring the state’s wrath. The observations of Ng and her associates are important, for, as will be shown in this thesis, the persistence of the Chinese education movement, to some extent, has also followed a similar pattern of repertoires.

Another noteworthy work on inclusive-based movements is by Weiss and Hassan (2003). They provided insights into the sociological and economic circumstances that gave rise to the rapid growth of civil society in Malaysia in the 1980s. Booming in numbers in the 1980s, NGOs have adopted strategies and tactics that ranged from antagonism to cooperation with the state’s ideology and interests. According to Weiss and Hassan, the state is particularly threatened by, and will react with harsh repression against, three types of movements: those that advocate Islamic fundamentalism, those that challenge the state’s political foundation, and those that persist in the form of mass protests. The Chinese education movement, the subject of this study, has steered clear of these three criteria in the course of its history. Unfortunately, because Weiss and Hassan’s contributors are mostly practitioners and active movement entrepreneurs, their chapters, although richly detailed, failed to address wider social movement debates and issues. Moreover, by ignoring the exclusive-based movements, their work failed to consider a different kind of civil society envisioned by religious- or ethnic-based groups.

In Protest and Possibilities (2006), Weiss took her analysis deeper to examine the conditions that prompted the formation, and the factors that have constrained the sustainability of coalition capital between NGOs and opposition political parties. Illustrative is the pro-Anwar opposition coalition that formed to challenge the BN’s
political hegemony in the 1999 General Election. Although the coalition fared poorly, it contributed to the country’s democratization. The gradual expansion of space for civil society activists to develop a non-communal based movement, and the opportunity to interact and cooperate with opposition parties, Weiss argued, helped to establish the coalitional capital—that is, mutual trust and understanding—necessary for groups to find a common cause and work in coalition.

Weiss’ two studies debated the formation and strengthening of coalitional capital in mobilizing collective action among civil society agents. She concluded that the lack of a long-term strategy of resistance in the NGOs’ coalition ultimately handcuffed the 1998 Reformasi movement. The role of coalitional capital will be further explored in this thesis, by analyzing the Chinese community’s networks and coalitions that date from the colonial era (Chapter Four), and the role of these networks in the success of the Damansara Save Our School movement (Chapter Six).

Exclusive-based movements, meanwhile, as argued by Fishman (1969), with his ‘multi-modal nations’ model, are predominantly discrete from their cultural, vernacular, lingual and educational differences. Linguistic familiarity brings members of a common linguistic group together in spite of their different social backgrounds and economic classes. Path dependency from Malaysia’s unique colonial experience and inter-cultural compromises made during its nation building process have shaped the fundamental differences among different linguistic groups; these differences are often determined by their ethnicity. Scholars of these movements have explored the consequences of social grievances and the politics of collective behaviors, such as the Islamic religious movement, the religious and socio-economical struggles of the Indian minorities, and the Chinese education movement.
The literature on the country’s religious movements is dominated by Islamic scholars. Since the early 1970s, Arabic- and religious-educated groups such as Jammat Tabligh and the Darul Arqam have been spreading fundamentalist, Islamic ideas at the grassroots level.\textsuperscript{94} The rise of a highly organized and well-financed Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia) led by Anwar Ibrahim in the late 1970s, in particular, captured the attention of scholars who wanted to explore the far-reaching political influence of the organization.\textsuperscript{95} This Islamic student movement questioned the gradual loss of religiosity and spiritual values among Muslim communities (and state actors) in the face of rapid urbanization and Westernization.\textsuperscript{96} To appeal for the reconstruction of Malay society, the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia formed a powerful coalition with the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (Parti Islam Semalaysia, PAS) in the late 1970s.\textsuperscript{97} However, its rise was quickly subdued after the key leaders of the Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (such as Anwar Ibrahim) were co-opted into the BN ruling regime.\textsuperscript{98}

Othman (2005) detailed the strategies adopted by the Sisters-in-Islam movement—comprising largely middle-class professional Muslim women—in negotiating for equal rights in legal, political, economic and social arena for Muslim women. The Sisters-in-Islam is a civil society group that professes greater religious expressions and demands for greater gender-equality in Malaysia’s male-dominated Islamic society. Tension between the movement on the one hand, and the male-dominated PAS (which advocates an Islamic state) and UMNO (which has

\textsuperscript{94} Abu Bakar (1981).
\textsuperscript{95} Mauzy and Milne (1983); Lee LM (1988); Muzaffar (1989); Camroux (1996); Abdul Hamid (2000).
\textsuperscript{96} Muzaffar (1987); Shamsul (1994).
\textsuperscript{97} PAS has been the main Islamic opposition party in Malaysia. It joined BN coalition and became part of the ruling regime from 1973 to 1977. However, conflicting political interests with the UMNO-led federal government in early 1977 over the control of Kelantan state government eventually forced PAS to leave BN in December 1977. See Milne (1976); Mauzy (1983: 84, 112–114).
\textsuperscript{98} Means (1978); Lyon (1979); Kessler (1980); Mauzy and Milne (1983: 634); Lee LM (1990); Mohamad M (2009).
implemented a series of Islamization programs since the 1980s within a secular nationalist vision) on the other hand, continue to this day.99

Studies of the Indian community’s movements are predominantly focused on religious or socio-economical perspectives: Willford (2006) studied the contrast between Hindu ecumenical movements and the Tamil identity; Jain (2009) compiled the sociological and economical challenges faced by Indian plantation workers; Noor (2008) researched the rise of Hindu Rights Action Force—a coalition of 30 Hindu- and Tamil-based NGOs in 2006—that generated a new wave of collective action to protect the minority community. All told, this literature is underrepresented compared to the magnitude of grievances suffered by the Indian community in Malaysia over the years.

Not surprisingly, the bulk of social movement research related to the Chinese community has revolved around the Chinese education movement. These studies will be explored in detail in the subsequent section.

1.8. Studies on the Chinese Education Movement

Studies on the Chinese education movement can be categorized into three types. The first comprises works written by pro-movement scholars, Dongjiaozong, and the latter’s affiliated organizations. Dongjiaozong has published heavily on themes surrounding the various campaigns it conducted. These include its collections on selected issues of the Chinese education movement,100 historical descriptions of the movement,101 essays on its movement leader, Lim Lian Geok (林连玉)102 and others.103
Notably, a prominent historian of Malaysian Chinese, Tay Lian Soo (1998, 1998b, 1999, 2001, 2003 and 2005), compiled some of the most complete encyclopedic references on the movement from the perspective of the Chinese community. Employing various vernacular sources such as school magazines and the vernacular presses, Tay’s historical studies covered 600 years of the development of Chinese education, with detailed descriptions of the roles played by local actors at the school and community level. Although Tay’s works are largely limited to West Malaysia, they are significant records on the transition of the Chinese education movement from before, during and after the colonial period.

One of the few in-house publications that examined intra-movement dynamics of the education movement was Lew Bon Hoi’s book (2006). It surveyed the contributions by Jiaozong and the movement leaders in the field of education, politics and culture from 1951 to 2005. The first half of the book revealed the activities conducted by Jiaozong in promoting Chinese culture and its involvement in domestic politics. Lew also detailed the relationship between Jiaozong and Dongzong as partners in the movement. The second half of the book focused on the contributions of former Jiaozong leaders. Lew concluded that Jiaozong played a significant role in safeguarding Chinese education in Malaysia, despite having failed to promote and secure benefits for Chinese schoolteachers as was suggested in its constitution. However, Lew’s analysis over-stated Jiaozong’s achievements during the 1950s and 1960s, and overlooked the factors that led to its weakening afterwards. Without analysis of the latter, we lack an understanding of the internal problems that plagued Jiaozong and its strategies to overcome such challenges.

The second type of publications on the education movement comprises works written by independent authors. These works revealed another side of the movement,
giving accounts from bottom-up perspectives, and discussing critical and sensitive issues regarding the movement. For example, long-serving Chinese educators, Wang Siow Nan (1970), Liu Pak Kui (1986) and Huang Zhao Fa (2004) published their experiences and personal observations obtained from running the Chinese schools—the most important and autonomous institutions of the Chinese education movement. Their writings enabled the author to observe the shared similarities of these local institutions, and therefore to analyze the local-central relationship within the movement (elaborated in Chapter Three).

There are also such independent writers as Lin, Wang and Xu* (2006) who disclosed secrets related to the controversy over the alleged corruption among principals of Chinese primary schools (see Chapter Three). Tan Ai Mei (2006) discussed the embedded dilemmas faced by the Malaysian Chinese primary school education system. Kua Kia Soong (2009) revealed his side of the story regarding the 2008 New Era College controversy that led to his own resignation and that of the college’s senior staff (see Chapter Five). Kua also criticized the current movement leaders, thus publicizing the internal power struggles of Dongjiaozong.

The third type of writings on the Chinese education movement consists of academic publications, which can be categorized predominantly into historical, institutional and political approaches. Notably, Purcell’s (1948) documentation provided an important historical sketch of the Chinese immigrants’ political and sociological situation in Malaya prior to the Chinese education movement from an English official’s perspective. Chinese immigrants viewed themselves as an exclusive race, and their desire to preserve their Chinese identity became the key motivation for the establishment of Chinese schools as educational and sociological institutions.
Purcell, in another work, *Malaya: Communist or Free* (1954), gave a chronological account of the political and social developments in post-war Malaya. He analyzed the communist aggression in Malaya and its impact on Chinese school communities in particular. The threats of communism (supported predominantly by the Chinese community) and Chinese nationalism towards China (and not Malaya) became the basis for a series of public policies imposed by Malayan state authorities to control local Chinese schools. This marked the beginning of the Chinese education movement (more elaboration in Chapter Two).

Another frequently cited work, Tan Liok Ee (1997), provided fundamental analysis on the emergence, challenges, controversies and dilemmas of the movement from 1945 to 1961. Adopting a chronological approach, Tan’s study categorized the movement’s trajectories into three periods: the reaction of activists towards the 1951 Barnes Report, the collaboration of Malaya’s Alliance regime with the Chinese education movement leaders, and the failure of the Jiaozong-Dongzong-MCA alliance.

Tan’s work confirmed the development of the Chinese education movement in Malaysia into a social movement. Not only did she show that the movement was a heterogeneous entity, she also showed the dynamic interactions between the state and the social movement across various political trajectories. Drawing on Tan’s and Purcell’s work, Chapter Two of this thesis broadens the analysis of the movement in its early stages by including issues such as the influences of the anti-communist movement, the role of Chinese elites and the impact of the New Economic Policy.

Zainal Abidin Ahmad (1980) asserted that since the ethnic responses to education policies seemed to enhance the objectives of certain interest groups, educational reform efforts tended to be functionally disintegrative. However, most scholars who examined the impact of such policies using the Chinese education
movement as their case study tended to disagree with Ahmad’s position. These scholars were mostly fixated with the idea that manipulative institutional policies were covert forms of ethnic discrimination.

For example, utilizing the development of Chinese primary schools in Malaysia from 1956 to 2000, Sia Keng Yek (2005) argued that the fears and resistance of the Chinese community towards the Ministry of Education (MOE) (when it terminated Chinese primary schools and turned them into national schools) became key factors in sustaining the movement. Sia thematically analyzed these schools’ physical development, managements and curriculums, to demonstrate their resistance. Similarly, Tan Yao Sua’s (2005) doctoral dissertation maintained that such manipulative state institutions exacerbated the conflicts of interests between the Malay majority and the Chinese minority. Tan adopted the concept of identity and framing from the social movement literature to analyze the role of Dongjiaozong as a SMO in the Chinese education movement.

There are many authors who studied independent Chinese secondary schools in Malaysia. Huang Guan Qin (1984) and Ku Hung Ting (2003) both studied the resistance of these schools against incorporation into the national system under the 1961 Education Act. With Huang providing perspectives from West Malaysia and Ku from Sarawak, they both credited the autonomy of Chinese school committees in school policymaking as the main factor behind their success in resisting the conversion.

On the other hand, Tang Tze Ying’s (2004) master thesis argued that power relationships between Chinese schools committee members and state actors influenced the reactions of Chinese schools towards the 1961 education reforms. School committee members who had a close relationship with state agencies (Chinese politicians from MCA in particular) more readily accepted the government’s call to
include Chinese secondary schools into the converted system. In fact, the diverse outcomes of Huang’s, Ku’s and Tang’s research revealed the reality of the Chinese education movement that is now divided into factions supporting or contesting the conversion. The division will be further explored and discussed as one of the causes behind the prolonged struggle of the movement in Chapter Five.

The struggles of the movement were also analyzed through political approaches, demonstrated in Lee Leong Sze’s (1999) master thesis and Cheong Yuen Keong’s (2007) doctoral dissertation. Both studied the dilemmas of Chinese political parties within the BN ruling regime and their reactions towards the Chinese community’s demands, such as the demand for better protection of the Chinese vernacular schools’ interests and better access of Chinese minorities to state resources. Both agreed that vernacular educational issues have been politicized to sustain the political interests of these political parties. Lee concluded that the politicization of vernacular educational issues widened the gap among ethnic groups, which, in turn, was one of the escalating factors that led to the 1969 riots.

Cheong, who continued his observations in the post-1969 era, however concluded that both MCA and the Malaysian People’s Movement Party (Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia, Gerakan) acted as intermediate agents, especially during general elections. Their roles have enabled parties to broker a compromise between the needs of the BN ruling regime and the Chinese education movement, and became the critical factor behind the survival of both Chinese political parties, while also preventing the movement from being terminated by the state. Such dynamic interactions between the Chinese political parties and the movement, and the political opportunities arising from such interactions, will be further elaborated in Chapter Four where we examine the role of elites, networks and brokerage.
To date, few studies have looked into the role of the Chinese education movement’s SMO in the movement struggles. An exception is Teoh Ai Ling’s (1999) master thesis that studied the institutional structure and functions of Dongzong. Her work provided rich descriptions on the functions and roles of each department within Dongzong and clearly explained the structural relationship among these departments. Nevertheless, her study fell short of analyzing the competition and contentious politics among the departments (for this, see Chapter Five). Lai Sook Kin’s (1997) master thesis was a rare academic biographical work on one of the movement leaders, Sim Mow Yu (沈慕羽). Very often, biographies of movement leaders are in-house publications written rather unilaterally with much praise and few criticisms. Lai’s thesis provided a detailed background and described the influence of Sim’s father and his family on his later active roles as a politician, educator and Chinese educationalist.

Admittedly, much light has been shed on the Chinese education movement, especially its reactions and resistance towards unjust policies. Yet, almost all studies have treated the movement as a homogenous entity. In actuality, the movement’s entities are stratified (local versus central), factionalized (converted versus independent) and divided (conservative versus reformist). In this study, the author explores the intra- and inter-relationships among movement actors, comparing the different dilemmas faced by Dongzong and Jiaozong, the changing relationship between the movement and the state, as well as the transformations of the collaborative relationships between the movement and the Chinese guilds and associations.

Additionally, most of the literature has taken for granted the resources (financial and human resources alike) that are needed to maintain and sustain the movement. Chapter Five investigates the role of SMOs, and their mechanisms that have been responsible for strategizing the generation and maintenance of resources.
This thesis is the first to cover the movement in its entirety from 1951 to 2011. The analysis of the movement in the post-1998 period is particularly important, as there is a vacuum in the existing literature in the analysis of the logic and impact of the movement’s shift from open contention to low-profile resistance. Information gathered during fieldwork, especially that related to the little known underground negotiations between the movement activists and state agencies, is a theoretical and empirical attempt to further understand the width and depth of the movement.

1.9. Research Methodology

(1) Interviews

The author collected primary data in Malaysia over the course of 11 months. A major component of the fieldwork was conducting interviews. The author conducted 74 in-depth, open-ended and semi-structured elite interviews with 65 identified interviewees, and nine follow-up interviews (see Appendix 1 for the list of interviewees with details on the time and locations of interviews). Almost all of the interviews were conducted in Chinese, with about 20% conducted in a mix of local dialects such as Hokkien (福建话) (in Penang) and Cantonese (广东话) (in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur region). The choice of conducting the interviews in the interviewees’ vernacular languages enabled interviewees to relate to and share their thoughts with the author with greater ease.

Confidentiality of identity was assured to all interviewees at the beginning and reiterated at the end of every interview. To the author’s surprise, only seven informants requested to remain anonymous. However, about 30% of the interviewees refused the

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104 February–March 2008; December 2008–February 2009; November 2009–March 2010; and July 2010. The first two trips of the fieldwork were partially financed by the National University of Singapore, while the rest were self-sponsored.

author’s request to voice-record the interview. Those who agreed tended to be uncomfortable and distracted—for example, they stared at the voice-recording machine, and enquired if the authorities would gain access to the recordings—and this seemingly caused some of them (especially those who were not familiar with academic interviews) to fail to speak their minds freely. Subsequently, the author abandoned recording interviews. To minimize the impact on verbatim content, the author depended on note-taking during the interview (with permission from the interviewees) and afterwards. The length of each interview was restricted to an average of one hour to optimize concentration for both the author and the interviewee.

Many of the interviewees had witnessed important changes in the movement and Malaysia’s transition from a colonial to a developing country. Almost all activists interviewed in this research had encountered state discrimination before, and these experiences, instead of impeding them, motivated them to participate in the movement. Despite having operated in various factions, the interviewees were—and remain to this day—well-connected with one another, and regularly share updates and information regarding the movement through small talk.

Informants can be divided into the following clusters (including both current and retired categories): local, state and central-level movement leaders; movement executive officers; schoolteachers, school principals and school committees; and lastly, other influential Chinese community leaders (beyond the framework of Dongjiaozong), including commercial, political, societal and educational leaders, among others.

No state or federal government officials agreed to be interviewed. Thus, the author had to operate with caution (such as not to mention sensitive keywords, or any anti-government sentiments) when dealing with various state agencies. The author also kept a low profile while conducting fieldwork to avoid unnecessary scrutiny.
Interviews were mostly conducted at the interviewees’ office, or at a secure location. Some interviewees offered conservative views and were less candid during the first half of the interview, but most began to shed light on the internal dynamics of the movement’s structures, functions, goals and framing strategies of issues as the interview progressed. The author has striven to corroborate all information with data from other sources. Follow-up interviews and countercheck interviews were conducted, especially with those who played critical roles in various decision-making processes.

(2) Material Collection
Primary sources included annual reports of Dongzong (1985–2009), Jiaozong (1951–2009), Lim Lian Geok Cultural Development Center (1995–2009) and Dongjiaozong Higher Learning Center Non-Profit Private Limited (1998–2009). These annual reports comprised important statements, official documents and strategies used over the years. Other vernacular sources, such as school magazines, provided insights about the schools’ organizations (including the managing committees), funding and activities.

The author also explored collections of theses, newspapers clippings and reference books in different languages to balance different perspectives. Multiple visits were made to the offices of the Chinese printed media of Sinchew Daily (星洲日报) and Kwongwahyitpoh (光华日报) for their collection of newspaper clippings. The author discovered important archival documents in the Centre for Malaysian Chinese Studies, Dongzong, Jiaozong, as well as at the university and national libraries in Malaysia and Singapore.
Field observations, especially of significant events related to the movement, have been useful for corroborating reports and obtaining an independent assessment of the relationships among actors. The author participated in the 2008 General Election campaigns; the wake, funeral and memorial services of deceased Damansara Save Our School movement Chairman Yong Yoke Song (熊玉生) in March 2008, as well as those of Jiaozong’s former Chairman Sim Mow Yu in February 2009. The author also attended the groundbreaking ceremony of Lim Lian Geok’s Graveyard Upgrading Project in March 2008 and the reopening of the Damansara Chinese Primary School in January 2009. Such events helped the author to acquaint herself with people in various networks, and expand contacts useful for the research.

1.10. Scopes and Limitations

The struggle against time had been paramount. Spending only 11 months in the field forced the author to compromise and conduct fieldwork only in the West Malaysia. Despite the Chinese population in Sabah and Sarawak constituting about 14% of the total Chinese population of Malaysia, Chinese schools in these states developed in different historical settings, which makes generalizations based upon their study difficult.\(^{106}\) Although the Sabah and Sarawak state-level Chinese schools associations are part of Dongjiaozong, and representatives of these states participate in movement’s meetings at Kuala Lumpur, they have yet to play a leading role in the movement. Readers who are interested in acquiring detailed perspectives about the development of Chinese schools in East Malaysia may refer to Liu Pak Kui (1986) and Huang Zhao Fa (2004).

\(^{106}\) 2008 Social Statistics Bulletin Malaysia.
Given the exploratory nature of this thesis, the author aims to generate useful insights and contribute to the establishment of general propositions in the field of social movement studies in Malaysia. The author is aware of the domination of the qualitative approach in the study of the Chinese educational movement in Malaysia and of social movement studies in general.\textsuperscript{107} Despite the methodological imperfections of such an approach, it permitted intensive examination of the selected case when time and resources available to the author in the course of this research were limited.\textsuperscript{108} Lijphart’s ‘longitudinal’ (cross-historical) extension helped to minimize the conceptual and analytical weaknesses of having more variables than cases.\textsuperscript{109} Moreover, the process of making observations in an empirical case study allowed the author to trace causal processes and highlight the richness of their interactions, thus enhancing the magnitude, depth and validity of this thesis’ findings.

This research includes many observations on human behavior, and unlike the precision of natural science, the ability to observe accurately the attributes of people is rather limited. Interview effects and sensitizing of interviewees to the topics in the survey process—the participants of research might guess the rationale of the study and thus adjust their behaviors or opinions accordingly—might reduce internal validity. Therefore, follow-up interviews and countercheck interviews were conducted to reduce these effects.

Within the thesis, the author would like to excuse herself from acknowledging the various social titles (such as Tun, Tan Sri, Dato), academic titles of PhD, medical doctors (M.D.) and religious titles (Haji, Hajjah), as she seeks to treat all individuals as equals regardless of their social or political background. As most of the primary and secondary data were in Chinese, the thesis applies the transcription of simplified

\textsuperscript{107} Tan LE (1997); Tan YS (2005); Weiss (2006).
\textsuperscript{108} Collier (1992).
\textsuperscript{109} Lijphart (1971: 686).
Chinese in the *hanyupinyin* (汉语拼音) system. All Chinese names are written according to the Malaysian Chinese custom of placing the surname before first names. To avoid confusion, officially registered names in the Roman script will be used, and then cited with the original Chinese characters in parenthesis on first mention for the purpose of further reference. *Hanyupinyin* is used for names when their official translation is not available, and they are marked with (*) to distinguish them.

### 1.11. Roadmap of the Thesis

This thesis consists of seven chapters. They are arranged thematically to illustrate the relationships of various institutions with social mobilization. Chapter Two draws the readers’ attention to the nation building process and the rise of the Chinese education movement in Malaya. The chapter seeks to reveal many important, yet under-explored developments that took place from the post-World War II period to 1974—the year Malaysia normalized its diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China. The main players of the Chinese education movement, *Dongzong* and *Jiaozong*, were established during the nation formation stage, and played significant roles in securing Chinese citizenship rights and the survival of vernacular schools in Malaysia. Elites—especially those from political parties and business groups—became important agents who initiated collaboration and brokered compromises between the state and the social movement until the collapse of this relational institution came about when the new elites failed to continue the intimate collaboration.

The subsequent three chapters examine the design of the structural institutions and the adaptations made by various relational institutions in facing state-imposed challenges. Chapter Three analyzes the elements of the lowest but most autonomous and fundamental units in the movement’s hierarchy, such as the school committees and
schoolteachers of Chinese schools. These include three types of Chinese schools, namely, Chinese primary schools, converted Chinese secondary schools and independent Chinese secondary schools. These schools experienced continual marginalization as a result of government educational policies—especially in funding allocation—despite the fact that Chinese schools (with the exception of independent Chinese schools) had been incorporated into the national educational system. The chapter then analyzes the role, formation and collaboration of associational capitals of state-level Chinese school committees and Chinese schoolteachers’ associations. The chapter ends with an exploration of the inter- and intra-organizational transformations in Dongzong and Jiaozong, and evaluates the changing roles and challenges faced by the central-level leadership system.

The analysis of any SMO will not be complete without an analysis of domestic contentious politics. Chapter Four explores such interactions, particularly that of social movement leaders exploiting political opportunities through the state’s electoral institutions. Many new repertoires have grown out of desperation during the process, and resulted from changing relationships and formation of alliances between the movement and Chinese guilds and associations. The chapter also presents the emergence of various campaigns such as the alliance of three in 1982, collaboration amongst the leading Chinese organizations as the Fifteen Leading Chinese Guilds and Associations since 1983, promotion of the dual coalition system in 1986, joining of the opposition party in 1990, and chairing of the Malaysian Chinese Organisations Election Appeals in 1999. The chapter also shows how the authorities deployed carrot-and-stick measures to co-opt and suppress the movement, although these efforts have failed to terminate the movement altogether.
Chapter Five extends the scope of research into the functions of two nationwide working committees of the Chinese education movement, namely, the National Independent Chinese Secondary School Working Committee and the National Chinese Primary Schools Working Committee. The chapter reveals the working relationship between movement activists at the central level and the movement’s local level supporters. The chapter also focuses on resource accumulation and mobilizational mechanisms of the movement, and the role of the professional secretariats in the process. The chapter ends by addressing the controversy surrounding the formation and maintenance of the New Era College, highlighted by tensions within the movement.

Chapter Six details the Damansara Save Our School movement to illustrate the participation of Dongjiaozong and its working relationship with the community-based Damansara movement committee, and draws crucial discussions from the previous chapters. Through examination of the Damansara Save Our School movement, the chapter highlights the potential of (and constraints on) the Chinese education movement’s social mobilization capacity beyond the traditional support base that has been limited to the Chinese-speaking community only. The chapter will analyze the factors that led to the dying out of such inter-ethnic collaboration opportunities, hopefully to provide scholars a renewed perspective of the possibility of multi-ethnic social movement collaboration in Malaysia.

In Chapter Seven, the aforementioned themes are drawn together to examine the impact of institutions on social mobilization in the Chinese education movement, and to better understand various processes, stages and structures of the SMOs. It is hoped that by analyzing the general incompatibilities found in the Chinese education movement, this research would jumpstart the discussion over their resolution and trends, so as to acquire a better understanding of SMOs in the future. Thus by
comparing them with other regional and international SMOs, this chapter concludes by pointing to general trends and summarizing the findings of this thesis.
Chapter Two
Nation Building and Formation of Social Movement

2.1. Introduction

The Chinese education movement in Malaysia was created, maintained and developed parallel to Malaysia’s domestic politics since the British colonial era. The decolonization of the Malaya Peninsula in the post-World War II years re-defined the balance of power, especially among the English-educated ethnic leaders. Although these elites dominated official state decision-making mechanisms, the Malayan state was vulnerable during its infancy and therefore allowed space for negotiation with the influential vernacular-speaking ethnic elites.

This chapter gives special attention to the role of elites as social capital in the Chinese community, namely, political parties, Chinese guilds and associations (华团, huatuan) and Chinese schools. It was these vehicles that gave rise to a series of social movements and raised political awareness among Malaya’s Chinese communities, especially in the bid to secure their citizenship rights, demand for Chinese language to be accorded official language status and ensure the survival of vernacular education.

The chapter first explores the formation of political parties such as United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) in reaction toward threats to their ethnic groups. UMNO and MCA subsequently formed the Alliance—a political coalition to make a peaceful demand for state independence from the British. MCA established a promising fellowship called the Grand Three Associations of Chinese Education (Sandajigou) with the United Chinese Schoolteachers’ Association (Jiaozong) and the United Chinese School Committees’ Association (Dongzong). This fellowship was successful in bridging the state and the
Chinese education movement actors until it started crumbling in 1960, when its pro-vernacular education leaders left MCA. From then on, the Chinese education movement began to nurture stronger bonds with *huatuans*, which laid the foundation for the movement’s trajectories in the later stage.

The efforts of nation building by the Malay-dominated state unavoidably posited it as a threat that would dilute the vernacular identities of its non-Malay communities through constitutional acts and education policies, especially after the establishment of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963. The Chinese’ resistance against the state’s assimilation attempts is best demonstrated by their overwhelming support to Dongjiaozung’s Merdeka University campaign in 1967. The chapter ends with a discussion on the impact of the implementation of New Economic Policy in 1971, and the political consequences of normalization of diplomatic relations between Malaysia and the People’s Republic of China in 1974, signaling a new era of the rise of ‘motherland’ for the Chinese in Malaysia.

### 2.2. Impact of Communist Threats

Despite the resumption of British colonial rule in Malaya after World War II, this period was characterized by a gradual transition to decolonization. Massive migration had resulted in the number of immigrants outnumbering the Malays,¹¹⁰ making it possible for immigrants to challenge the status quo of the native majority.¹¹¹ The British’s policy and practice of ‘divide and rule’ polarized the colony’s social structure. In particular, it led to a discernible economic division along ethnic lines that resulted in

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¹¹⁰ Malays are territorially allegiant to sultans, culturally to Islam. Silcock and Aziz (1953: 279).
¹¹¹ The non-Malays comprised about 50% in the Malaya total population. Among them, 62% Chinese and 50% Indians were locally born. See 1952 Report of the Registrar-General on Population, Births and Deaths, p. 2.
heightened tensions, fuelling local nationalist movements that were ethnically-oriented.\footnote{See Abraham (1997) for the impact of this policy on ethnic relations in Malaysia.}

The Malayan Communist Party\footnote{Malayan Communist Party, formed in 1930, comprised mainly Chinese migrant laborers. By 1955, the rebellion was crushed, with remnants of the party continuing military resistance against the Malaya federal government along the Thai-Malaya border until the 1989 peace treaty. See Ramakrishna (2002) for Malayan Communist Party’s struggles during the Emergency era.} and the Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army,\footnote{Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army, a political association, was controlled by the Malayan Communist Party, and was once equipped by the British. It grew from 200 in 1942 into a force of 10,000 by 1945. See Purcell (1967: 258–262) and Springhall (2000: 50).} both the backbones of resistance against the Japanese’ World War II occupation of Malaya, emerged as formidable political forces in the society after the defeat of Japan.\footnote{Pye (1957: 8).} In fact, the Malayan Communist Party briefly ruled Malaya from March to August 1945, before British authority was re-established. Aided by a power vacuum, the Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army killed some 2,500 collaborators (mostly Malays), abolished the sultanates, and attempted to make Malaya part of China.\footnote{Horowitz (1985: 398).} The Red Bands of the Sabillah (Holy War) was formed by Malays to combat the Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army. The intensity of this communal violence sealed, in the minds of many Malays, a negative stereotype of Chinese as communists and as a threat to both Islam and the Malay community.\footnote{Lomperis (1996: 204).}

After the British re-took control of Malaya in August 1945, they introduced the Malayan Union government in April 1946 as a unified and more cost-effective government structure. It was also conceived as a form of preparation for the possibility of self-rule and independence. The scheme offered full citizenship rights to Chinese and Indians born in Malaya, and dissolved the sultanates into one secular union.\footnote{The British ruled Malaya through ‘direct and indirect’ government. The entrepot trade centers of Penang, Malacca and Singapore had non-Malay majorities, which were ruled directly as crown colonies. Malay states with significant commercial activities (tin-mines and rubber plantations)—Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang—were set up as Federated Malaya States. Those states lacking in such}
imposition shocked the Malay community and promoted the emergence of the first Malay nationalist party, UMNO, founded in May 1946, to oppose the Malayan Union.

Due to strong protest and pressure from Malay aristocrats and former Malayan governors in London, the Malayan Union was dismantled and replaced by the Federation of Malaya, which reinstated the traditional prerogatives of the sultans and restored ‘special positions’ to the Malays as ‘sons of the earth’ (bumiputeras) in February 1948. It also tightened the qualification for federal citizenship by disqualifying over three quarters of the Chinese population. Thus, disparate ethnic Chinese, although initially divided by their clans, dialects, social status, political views and economic identities, were given the impetus to unite again after the painful experience of the massacres during the Japanese occupation.

Chin Peng (陈平) became the Malayan Communist Party’s secretary general in 1947 after the predecessor, Lai Tek, absconded with the party’s funds in March 1947. In a bid to empower the weakening party, Chin emulated the successful model of Mao’s revolutionary movement in China and launched an armed guerilla rebellion under the Malayan Races Liberation Army, which prompted the British to declare a State of Emergency in June 1948. The Emergency also gave the British—and their

activities—Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu and Johore—were ruled as Unfederated Malaya States. See von Vorys (1975: 22, 142); Cheah BK (1983: 441–446).

119 Bumiputera refers to two groups of people: the ethnic Malay who habitually speaks Malay, professes Islam and conform to traditional Malay customs (adat), and the indigenous occupants of the Malay archipelago.

120 Chai HC (1977: 7).

121 Only 350,000 (11%) Chinese and 225,000 (7%) Indians were eligible to become citizens of Federation of Malaya under the ‘operation of law’ condition in February 1948. See Chai HC (1977: 8).

122 Japanese military began the Kakyo Shukusei (purge through purification)—operation wartime massacres on ethnic Chinese—from December 1941 until April 1942, and continued in other forms until August 1945. The number of victims reached as high as 50,000 in Singapore and 40,000 in Malaya. See Cheah BK (1983: 23); Peattie (1996: 230–231); Hirofumi (2008).


Malay successors—justification to mobilize a significant amount of resources in their war against communism.  

As members of the Malayan Communist Party were largely ethnic Chinese, and many Chinese schools were used as centers of the Chinese Communist Party’s propaganda, the British stereotyped the Chinese in Malaya as communist supporters, or as fence-sitters in the anti-communist campaign. For example, the British believed that the many Chinese squatters who hid in the jungles during World War II had either provided supplies to the Malayan Communist Party, or had been recruited as new party members. One of the largest and most successful strategies imposed by General Gerald Templer, the new high commissioner in 1952, was the Briggs Plan. The Briggs Plan forcibly resettled almost 570,000 Chinese squatters into hundreds of new villages, which, in the end, helped to control and contain the communist rebellion.

According to Ramakrishna, “the rural Chinese were the target of government’s emergency measures: in particular individual detention and deportation, communal fines and curfews”. In total, 30,000 communist activists were jailed, and another 15,000 were deported to China. Many of them were school principals and schoolteachers recruited from China by the Malaya Chinese schools.

With the establishment of the People’s Republic of China on October 1949, most overseas Chinese communities harbored fears that the new communist state might

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126 The lengthy guerrilla war (1948–1960) cost the British (and the Malayan government) $850 million. 11,048 people were killed (6,710 guerrillas, 1,865 security forces and 2,473 civilians). See Pye (1957: 15); O’Balance (1966: 177); Stockwell (1999: 486).
129 General Templer arrived in Malaya in February 1952 to replace Henry Gurney who died in a terrorist ambush in late 1951. Templer was both high commissioner and military director of operations, and had full authority to wage counter-communist insurgency operations, using policing, intelligence and psychological warfare. See Abdul Rahman (1986: 35); Ramakrishna (2001).
130 Sandhu (1964).
131 Ramakrishna (2001: 82).
confiscate their properties and businesses, and were, therefore, reluctant to express their loyalty to the new Chinese government. This included the Chinese in Malaya, who were beginning to think of Malaya as their only hope for a permanent homeland.\footnote{Heng PK (1988: 251).}

In an attempt to alleviate the Chinese community’s dilemma, Tan Cheng Lock (陈祯禄),\footnote{MCA’s first president Tan Cheng Lock was Straits-born, English-educated and a nominated member of the Malacca Municipal Council and Straits Settlements Legislative Council, and known to British’s highest officials, such as Malcolm MacDonald and Henry Gurney. See Heng PK (1988: 67, 251); Tan LE (1988: 50–51).} with support from various huatuan, formed MCA in February 1949. Initially, the MCA sought to provide relief and welfare assistance to Chinese villagers displaced by the Briggs Plan, redirect Chinese support away from the communist, and provide an image of loyalty of the Chinese in the midst of suspicions aroused by the emergency decree against the Chinese community in general.\footnote{Roff (1965: 42–43).}

These MCA leaders were dominated by Straits-born English-educated Chinese elites who enjoyed linguistic advantages and were well accepted by British and UMNO leaders. They incorporated wings of Chinese-educated, Kuomintang (国民党)-inclined leaders, established trust, and, through networking with various Chinese associations, successfully expanded MCA membership to 250,000 by 1953.\footnote{These Kuomintang-included leaders included Sim Mow Yu, Leong Yew Koh (梁宇皋) and Lee Hau Shik (李孝式). There were about 3,000 members when MCA was formed in 1949. For more see Heng PK (1983: 291–309); Lee KH (1998: 31); Lomperis (1996: 212).} In return for the strong support from Chinese-speaking grassroots communities, MCA began to take on a more comprehensive role, such as awarding of immigrant citizenship, protecting the status of Chinese education and preservation of the Chinese identity in Malaya’s Independence Constitution.\footnote{Chan HC (1965); Heng PK (1983).}

According to Hara (1997), MCA outplayed the Malayan Communist Party and the Chinese consulates in Malaya as the most effective legitimate Malayan-oriented
organization for having successfully created a consciousness of Malayan identity within the local Chinese community, with strong support from the British.\textsuperscript{139} By August 1951, Abdul Rahman became the party president of UMNO and established a multi-ethnic political alliance, first, in 1952, with MCA,\textsuperscript{140} and then in 1954, with the Malaysian Indian Congress.\textsuperscript{141} This marked the beginning of Malaya’s national politics, characterized by compromising tactics that resulted in unintended consequences over time.

2.3. \textbf{Barnes and Fenn-Wu Reports}

Post-war and pre-Independence Malaya was a fragile plural society that lacked social integration amongst its widely divided communities and capital for nation building.\textsuperscript{142} The colonial government’s lack of interest in unifying the educational system in the Federation of Malaya had resulted in the “absence of a consistent educational policy with definite aims and objectives”.\textsuperscript{143} The formation of the British-administered Central Advisory Committee on Education came as late as in 1949.\textsuperscript{144}

The Central Advisory Committee on Education was intended to prepare an integrative and nationally-focused educational system for Malaya. There were four main types of school systems at that time: English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil. Each

\textsuperscript{139} Hara (1997: 99).
\textsuperscript{140} The Alliance of UMNO and MCA was first established during the Kuala Lumpur Municipal Election in 1952. See Abdul Rahman (1986: 35).
\textsuperscript{141} Malaysian Indian Congress was established since 1946 to support India’s independence from British. After India had gained its independence, it started to support the independence of Malaya. See Lomperis (1996: 207).
\textsuperscript{142} Furnivall (1948).
\textsuperscript{143} Yeok KY (1982: 37).
\textsuperscript{144} In 1946, the Malayan Union Council Paper No.53 marked the first official education reforms plan by the British. The plan proposed English as the compulsory subject for all vernacular school but it vanished with the rejection of the Malayan Union in 1949.
system was different in terms of its sponsorship base, cultural orientation and medium of instruction. These multi-lingual educational systems co-existed to fulfill the needs of Malaya’s diverse ethnic groups. Harboring an optimistic faith in the value of education as a primary instrument in nation building, the British perceived that an integrated national identity could be achieved by imposing a standardized educational system with a common medium of instruction. The 1951 Central Advisory Committee on Education’s Report of the Special Committee strongly proposed that English be used as the common medium of instruction in all schools in the colony. However, it was rejected by the Federal Legislative Council due to overwhelming opposition from the Malay community, which saw the proposals as undermining the primacy of the Malay language.

On the other hand, the Report of the Committee on Malay Education (Barnes Report) released in June 1951 “went beyond their terms of reference and advocated a system of National Schools in which the medium of instruction would be either Malay or English”. The report recommended “the end of separate vernacular schools for the several racial communities, and their replacement by a single type of primary school common to all”. The Chinese community reacted to the Barnes Report with uproar and rebuttal. The report also received little support from the

145 English and Malay schools received full support and control from the government. As Tamil schools were mostly located in rural areas and functioned independently like the Chinese schools, they faced more challenges to sustain the financial resources necessary to maintain the schools’ operation.
146 Chai HC (1977: 1).
147 The Special Committee on Education was chaired by M. J. Hogan in September 1951 and consisted of 11 members, of which two were ethnic Chinese.
148 Barnes Committee was commissioned in 1950; it consisted of five Europeans and nine Malays, all who had close connections to the Government Education Service. The committee inquired into the adequacy of the educational facilities available for Malays. See Mason (1954: 31) and Purcell (1954: 154).
149 Mason (1954: 31).
150 Barnes Report (1951: 75).
151 The day after Barnes Report was published in the newspapers, domestic Chinese press were filled their pages with articles attacking and accusing the Barnes Report of intention to abolish the Chinese schools and subsequently to destroy the Chinese culture. See China Press, June 12, 1951; Nanyang, June 13, 1951.
Malays, who were concerned about the subordination of the Malay language and the existing educational system to the English system.\textsuperscript{152}

Concurrently, the Report on Chinese Schools and the Education of Chinese Malayans (also known as the Fenn-Wu Report) was also published in June 1951 and released to the public a month later. Henry Gurney, the new high commissioner, invited William Fenn, an American who worked closely with higher learning institutions in China, and Wu Teh Yao (吴德耀), a Penang-born United Nations official, to the Fenn-Wu committee in January 1951.\textsuperscript{153} Both committee members had considerable experience in Chinese education, and were assigned to,

Bridge the gap between the present communal system of school and the time when education will be on non-communal basis with English or Malay as the medium of instruction and other languages offered as optional subjects, and advising on preparation of textbooks for present use with Malayan textbooks distinct from Chinese textbooks in background and content.\textsuperscript{154}

It was during the various group conferences and individual interviews conducted by William Fenn and Wu Teh Yao in Malaya between February and April 1951, that Chinese education movement supporters, leaders and schoolteachers were alerted about the implications of the Barnes Committee’s recommendations.\textsuperscript{155}

The Fenn-Wu Report proposed that Chinese-medium schools be integrated into the national education system, but that Chinese-medium schools should not be eliminated until the Chinese themselves decided that such schools were not needed. In addition to the use of Chinese as the main medium of instruction in these schools, Chinese students would also study both English and Malay. The great disparity between the Barnes and Fenn-Wu reports forced the Central Advisory on Education to

\textsuperscript{152} Ingham and Simmons (1987: 206).
\textsuperscript{153} Purcell (1954: 156).
\textsuperscript{154} Fenn-Wu Report (1951: 2).
\textsuperscript{155} Tan LE (1985).
appoint Whitfield to chair a Central Advisory Committee on Education to review the suggestions. It released the Report on the Barnes Report on Malay Education and the Fenn-Wu Report on Chinese Education in 1951, which, in essence, endorsed Barnes’ proposals.

On the other hand, the Chinese-speaking community generally felt that all these reports (Barnes, Fenn-Wu and the Report on Barnes and Fenn-Wu) failed to provide sufficient protection for Chinese education.\textsuperscript{156} Fears amplified among Chinese intellectuals over the potential closure of all 1,319 Chinese schools in Malaya. Huatuans nationwide held conferences at the state level and drafted memorandums to protest against these reports.\textsuperscript{157}

Despite continuous debates over the most appropriate educational system for the Federation, the impact of these educational reports led to the formation of the first formal Chinese education association—\textit{Jiaozong}, which later became the institution that provided chief leadership in subsequent Chinese civic movements in Malaya. In December 1950, Malacca Chinese Schoolteachers’ Association Chairman Sim Mow Yu urged that “a national organization should convene as soon as possible, in order to enhance the efficiency of Chinese education and improve the status of Malaya’s Chinese schoolteachers”.\textsuperscript{158} Despite the growing numbers of Chinese schoolteachers’ association (华人教师公会, CSTA) at the state and district level, none of them was able to command a nationwide following. Mainly due to the preference of these associations to function as welfare associations to safeguard the interest of Chinese schoolteachers at the time, the proposal to form a unified CSTA was turned down in 1950.

\textsuperscript{156} \textit{Sinchew}, July 8 and 10, 1951; \textit{Nanyang}, July 9 and 19, 1951; \textit{Kinkwok}, July 12, 1951.
\textsuperscript{157} Anti-Barnes Report gatherings were also conducted in Selangor (July 19, 1951) and Johore (August 9, 1951).
\textsuperscript{158} Interview with Sim Mow Yu, the pioneer leader of Malacca MCA, founder of the Malacca MCA Youth Division, and former \textit{Jiaozong} chairman. Interview was conducted on March 26, 2008, Malacca.
Nevertheless, the threats posed by the Barnes Report brought many CSTA into action. Shortly after the report was made public, the Negeri Sembilan CSTA proposed to hold a National Convention of Chinese School Teachers’ Associations in Malaya (全马教师公会代表大会) to unify the power of schoolteachers. This time, as the future of Chinese schools hung in the balance, the plan was quickly agreed to by the Kuala Lumpur CSTA, and received tremendous support from CSTA nationwide.

The two-day conference held from August 24 to 25, 1951 in the Selangor Hokkien Association (雪兰莪福建会馆) saw participation from representatives of CSTA from state, county and local levels. The conference rejected the Barnes Report and drafted a memorandum to the Central Advisory Committee on Education to demand the acceptance of Chinese schools in the national education system. Despite linguistic and geographical differences, the collective approach and standardization of strategy promised gains in advocating for improved welfare; this included an increase of grant-in-aid for Chinese schools. Jiaozong was formally inaugurated on December 25, 1951 at the Second Pan-Malayan CSTA Conference (全马教师公会第二次代表大会) (see list of Jiaozong’s members in Appendix 2). Jiaozong’s main objectives were to improve the standard of Chinese education, promote Chinese culture within Malaya, safeguard schoolteachers’ status and improve schoolteachers’ welfare. In the first General Meeting of Member Associations, Penang CSTA was

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159 Representatives from Johore, Penang, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak, Kedah, Terengganu, Malacca and Kuala Lumpur attended the meeting.
160 In September 1952, the representative of Jiaozong held a meeting with H. Hogan, chairman of the Select Committee on Education. See Lim LG (1965: 2).
161 Interview with Sim Mow Yu, March 26, 2008, Malacca.
162 Jiaozong Declaration (February 3, 1952).
selected as the presidential association. Penang CSTA Chairman David Chen (陈充恩) became the first Jiaozong chairman.

Nevertheless, despite Jiaozong’s efforts in lobbying support from the Central Advisory Committee on Education and MCA representatives in the Legislative Council’s Education Special Committee, the 1952 Education Ordinance was drafted based on the Barnes Report. Chinese educationalists and community leaders who sat on Chinese school committees were generally displeased with MCA’s councilors who neither spoke nor voted against the ordinance when it was unanimously passed in November 1952 by the Federal Legislative Council.

2.4. The Grand Three Associations of Chinese Education

Although social movement and the state authorities may have conflicting interests, the heterogeneous nature of Malaya Alliance coalition that is formed by three component parties that are exclusively assembled based on distinct and exclusive ethnic groups enabled the movement to pursue its goal through brokerage and collaboration with MCA, the Chinese-political party of the Alliance. This brokerage interaction has been the key factor to the movement’s survival in its early phase, as well as the ensuing

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163 The presidential association (主席区) was a system practiced by Jiaozong from 1951–1954, whereby one of the member associations would be selected and be responsible for all office-bearer positions (chairman, general secretary and treasurer). The role of the presidential association was further consolidated in 1954 to allow the same CSTA to hold the committee position without term limits. This change allowed capable leaders to stabilize the organization in the fragile early phase of Jiaozong. After more CSTAs were established and potential leaders promoted from across Malaya, Jiaozong’s constitution was amended in 1954 to enable the selection of the executive committee on a personal basis. See Teachers’ Journal (1976: 2).

164 David Chen was a graduate of St. John University in Shanghai and the principal of Chung Ling High School, one of the most reputable Chinese schools in Penang whose excellent English standard placed it on par with some of the best English schools in Malaya. He was assassinated on February 4, 1952 for his anti-communist stand. See CLHS (1952).

165 The special committee was appointed on September 20, 1951 to make recommendations for various Education Reports and draft the 1952 Education Ordinance. Chong Khoon Lin (张崑灵) and Leung Cheung Ling (梁长龄) were in the Central Advisory Committee; Lee Hau Shik and Leung Cheung Ling were in the Special Committee. See 1951 Central Advisory Committee Member for Education File No. 31/51; 1951 Selangor Secretariat File No. 2143/51.

development of non-violent interactions between the state and the social movement. It was through the efforts and intervention of Wen Tien Kuang (温典光), an active MCA member and an influential member of Selangor Chinese School Committees Association, that the first Joint Conference of Chinese School Committees and Schoolteachers in Malaya (全马华校董教联席会议) with MCA representatives was made possible in November 1952 at the Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (雪兰莪中华大会堂, SCAH).

Making MCA the conference sponsor, it gave MCA President Tan Cheng Lock an opportunity to affirm MCA’s position in supporting the joint efforts of Chinese educational organizations in opposing the Barnes Report, thus improving MCA’s political influence and collaboration with Jiaozong. By then, the latter was at the forefront of the Chinese education movement opposing the Education Ordinance. In a speech made during the November 1952 joint conference, Tan Cheng Lock delivered a charismatic and stirring speech to the Chinese education communities, which won him respect and recognition from them.

…if the Chinese do not know Chinese (language), they cannot be Chinese; they cannot be Chinese if they do not practice Chinese customs and traditions; and if they are not Chinese, they cannot be Malays or English or Indians. They will be described as pariahs.168

The conference also provided a platform for Chinese school committees’ associations to arrive at an initial agreement in forming an umbrella organization and approved the collaborative framework of the Sandajigou. Persuaded by MCA, the conference representatives entrusted Sandajigou’s working committee—Chinese Education

167 Graduated from Columbia University in America, he had been the Chinese-English translator of MCA during the 1950s, responsible for almost all documents between Jiaozong and Dongzong with MCA. He was the Selangor Chinese School Committee Association general secretary (1956–1959), deputy chairman (1960–1964), Chinese Education Central Committee secretary, and the middleman between Lim Lian Geok and Tan Cheng Lock.

Central Committee—as a MCA subordinate. It was hoped that by associating Sandajigou with a political party, it could be an asset for Chinese educationalists in their dealings with the government. In return, four Chinese educationalist representatives (two schoolteachers and two school committee members) were allocated to work side-by-side three MCA representatives in the Chinese Education Central Committee.

The second Joint Conference of Chinese School Committees and Schoolteachers in Malaya (第二次全马华校董教联席会议) held in April 1953 inaugurated the Sandajigou and its constitution, while Tan Cheng Lock was selected to head the Chinese Education Central Committee. By accumulating common grievances, MCA, with its political resources, played a bridging role between Chinese educationists and the government. Although the main actors of Sandajigou and its collaborative networks were mainly limited to economic elites and the educated class, Sandajigou remained a leading force in defending the rights of the Chinese community.\(^{169}\) The Chinese Education Central Committee also became the highest authority to decide on matters relating to Chinese education, as well as the leading vehicle of the Chinese education movement, throughout the 1950s.\(^{170}\)

Chinese school committees continued to face pressure after the 1952 Education Ordinance was implemented. Community leaders who sat on the Chinese school committees had been the main financial sponsors of most Chinese schools in British Malaya. Frustrated with the minimal financial aid distributed to the vernacular schools and increasing control by the government, and pressured by the need for a national body to represent Chinese school committees, the second primary component of the Chinese schools finalized their constitution and formed Dongzong on August 22, 1954.

\(^{169}\) Interview with Yow Lee Fung, February 17, 2009, Kuala Lumpur.

The association consisted of state-level alliance of Chinese school committees’ association (董事联合会, donglianhui) (see the list of Dongzong’s members in Appendix 3). The main objectives of these state-level donglianhui were to unify, strengthen and represent school committees in response to the government’s education policy. It also sought to promote the development of, and networking among, the various school committees, and the development of Chinese schools in Malaya.\footnote{Choong WC (2004: 42).}

In actuality, the 1952 Education Ordinance could not be fully implemented. Financial constraints due to the war on communism affected the budget originally allocated to build new national schools and train schoolteachers to meet the sharp increase in student population from the post-war baby boom.\footnote{Tan LE (1997: 283).} Additionally, the government was reluctant to take harsh measures against Chinese schools, as closing them would further alienate the Chinese and provide an opportunity for communists to recruit them.

By November 1953, a special committee headed by Education Minister E.E.C. Thuraisingham had been appointed by the high commissioner to consider ways and means of implementing the policy outlined in the ordinance.\footnote{MCA was represented by Lee Chang Jing* (李长景) and Yong Xu Ling (杨旭龄).} The report of this Special Committee—the 1954 Education White Paper (also known as Council Paper No. 67)—was published in September 1954. It reaffirmed its support for a single, multi-ethnic system. English and Malay would be taught and a common curriculum would be introduced. However, the 1954 Education White Paper strongly rooted English as the main medium of teaching in all schools. To overcome the financial constraints in building new national schools, the 1954 Education White Paper...
The 1954 Education White Paper was seen by Chinese educationalists as a scheme by the Malay-dominated government to gradually eliminate Chinese schools in the country. The Chinese Education Central Committee opposed the 1954 Education White Paper by submitting the Memorandum Opposing the Conversion of Vernacular Schools into National Schools (反对改方言学校为国民学校宣言) to the high commissioner in March 1954. It further released statements through the Chinese media to rally support from the Chinese community to protect Chinese schools. The latter included a signature campaign and a nationwide boycott of the installment of English class programs in Chinese schools. By late 1953, Malay educationalists were also opposed to the domination of English teachings in Malay schools after realizing the Malay schools were equally under the threat of being transformed into an English school. In January 1955, Abdul Rahman finally pronounced the 1954 Education White Paper policy dead.

2.5. The 1955 Malacca Meeting and 1957 Independence

The first Independence Mission in 1954 failed due to the British’s reluctance to grant Malaya independence unless there was evidence that the party that took over

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175 The memorandum claimed that schooling through the ‘mother tongue’ was a basic means of preserving one’s culture. The memorandum also clarified, for the first time, the Chinese’ demand to affirm Chinese language as an official language. It warned that Chinese and Tamils should be won over—not forced—to become Malaysians.
177 Protest at the state-level spread like wild fire, especially in November 1954. Open contention was manifested in the local Chinese communities in Perak (November 2 and 8), Batu Pahat (November 4), Johore (November 6), Perlis (November 11) and Penang (November 13).
government had the support of all the people in the colony. The UMNO-MCA-Malaysian Indian Congress alliance successfully persuaded the British to hold Malaya’s first Federal Election in 1955 after a series of political bargains was struck. Under pressure to win this election, especially after the release of the controversial 1954 Education White Paper, the Alliance coalition tried to garner support to defeat its main political opponent led by veteran Malay politician, Onn Jaafar and his Independence of Malaya Party.

In a move to solidify support from the Chinese, Abdul Rahman agreed to meet leaders of the Chinese Education Central Committee in January 1955. At this Malacca Meeting initiated by Tan Cheng Lock, Abdul Rahman endorsed that “it would not be the Alliance’s policy to destroy the schools, language and culture of any race”. The Alliance’s representatives agreed to Jiaozong’s demands to remove provisions in the Education Ordinance that threatened the existence of Chinese schools and consider providing a two million dollar subsidy to Chinese schools. However, UMNO and MCA rejected the demand to include Chinese as the second official language in their election manifesto.

Persuaded by Tan Cheng Lock, Dongzong and Jiaozong representatives softened their stand and agreed to postpone their demands on the issue of making Chinese an official language until after the election. From Jiaozong’s and Dongzong’s perspective, they only agreed to temporarily cast the issue aside for the 1955 General

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178 The first Independence Mission was led by Abdul Rahman and the delegation consisted of Abdul Razak and Tan Tiong Hai (陈东海). See Abdul Rahman (1986b: 213–216).
179 The Alliance threatens to withdraw its members from all towns, municipals and legislative councils if the British refused to accept their suggestion to hold the state and federal elections. See Abdul Rahman (1983: 33–38, 94–100).
181 Conducted at Tan Cheng Lock’s private residence in Malacca, attended by 21 people, including those from UMNO, MCA, Jiaozong and Dongzong. See MCA files PH/A/008–9 and Teachers’ Journal (1975: 26).
Election. It was perceived by UMNO and MCA that these Chinese educationalists had agreed to drop the petition, in exchange for citizenship for Chinese and inclusion of the Chinese vernacular system in the national education system.

With support from the Chinese Education Central Committee and the majority of Malays, the Alliance coalition won a landslide victory at the 1955 elections, taking 51 out of 52 elected seats on the Federal Legislative Council. The first self-government was formed on August 2, 1955, with Abdul Rahman becoming the territory’s chief minister. He was given the mandate to form a new Malayan government.182

The London Talks of January 1956 successfully won Malaya independence from its colonial rule.183 The British promised that, under possible circumstances, it would allow for Malayan independence by August 31, 1957.184 The Independent Constitutional Survey Commission was headed by Lord Reid, who arrived in Malaya in June 1956 to assess views and formulate a new constitution for the colony.185 The Alliance government submitted a memorandum to the Commission in August 1956; it represented official views of the self-rule government.

Realizing the political opportunity, the Chinese community, led by the powerful Federation of Chinese Guilds and Associations (馬來西亞華人行業社交總會) submitted an independent memorandum to press for the cause of the Chinese in the drafting of the Independent Constitution.186 The memorandum was produced without the support of MCA in April 1956 during the National Convention for the Strive for

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183 The London Talks were led by Abdul Rahman, joint by Abdul Razak, Lee Hau Shik and Tan Tiong Hai.
184 British Secretary of State, Oliver Lyttleton wrote to Abdul Rahman, “I am sure that whatever party wins the election, it will set itself with a high standard of purpose to pursue sober and progressive policies, and if it does, I have no doubt that it will enjoy the dependable support of a large number of the other nominated members”. See Abdul Rahman (1977: 25; 1984: 138–146; 1986b: 213–126).
186 The Federation of Chinese Guilds and Associations was the national union for registered huatuans. It officially registered in 1955 and was one of the leading pressure group in the Chinese citizenships, language and education movement during the pre-independence era.
Citizenship of Chinese Registered Guilds and Associations (全马华人注册社团争取公民权大会). 187 It demanded *jus soli*-based citizenship, waiver of the Malay proficiency test in determination of citizenship, citizenship rights to foreigners who have lived in Malaya for five or more years, and equal rights and responsibilities for all citizens. Above all, the memorandum suggested that Malay, Chinese and Tamil should all become official languages of Malaya. 188

The 1957 Report of the Federation of Malaya Constitutional Commission had partially included some of the suggestions proposed by the Chinese groups. This included more reasonable citizenship rights in return for recognition of the status of the Malay language as the sole national language of Malaya. The deal was finally sealed by the Alliance’s delegation, Abdul Rahman, Omar Ong Yoke Lin (翁毓麟) and Sambanthan, who departed for London in May 1957 and successfully achieved consensus on a draft constitution for independent Malaya. 189 In spite of this, the Alliance leaders continued to face challenges from their respective supporters regarding the essential elements of the Independence Compact. 190

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187 The conference was in collaboration with Selangor Chinese Assemble Hall, Ipoh Chinese Assembly Hall and *Jiaozong*, and was participated by 1,094 Chinese organizations. Lim Lian Geok, Lau Pak Kuan (刘伯群) and three other members were selected as representatives to London to put forth their appeal at last resort if the negotiations with Lord Reid failed.

188 After meeting with Donald MacGillivray in November 1952, *Jiaozong* leaders were aware that as Chinese was not Malaya’s official language, it could not be used as a medium of instruction in schools; nor would Chinese schools be recognized within the Malayan education system. Aware of the importance of gaining official recognition, *Jiaozong* began to demand for Chinese as an official language in Malaya. It was first proposed in the second Joint Conference of Chinese School Committees and Schoolteachers of Malaya in 1953, and the proposition was renewed during the 1956 National Convention for the Strive for Citizenship of Chinese Registered Guilds and Associations. See Lim LG (1966; 1988).


190 The Alliance proposed a delayed *jus soli* principle, where everyone born on or after Independence Day would be a Malayan citizen. Malays’ special privileges should be continued for a substantial period. Islam will be the country official religion and Malaya would be the official, national language. The proposal prepared by the Chinese community was dropped by Tan Tiong Hai, the sole MCA representative in the London Mission. See Abdul Rahman (1977: 31) and Heng PK (1988: 254).
2.6. Razak Report and Citizenship Registration Movement

In September 1955, a 15-member Legislative Council Committee on Education was formed to review Malaya’s educational system. It was chaired by Education Minister Abdul Razak Hussein (1955–1959). The Report of the Education Committee (also known as the Razak Report), released in April 1956, favored the interests of non-bumiputeras more than the 1952 Ordinance, mainly through efforts of MCA representatives who sat in the Razak Committee. MCA politicians such as Lim Chong Eu, Goh Chee Yan (吴志渊), Too Joon Hing (朱运兴), Leung Cheung Ling (梁长龄) and Lee Thean Hin (李天兴) were relatively more sympathetic toward Chinese educationalists and had established an intimate working relationship with Jiaozong.

With help from bilingual friends such as Wen Tien Kuang, Sha Yun Yeo (沙渊如), Ding Pin Song (丁品松) and Yan Yuan Zhang* (严元章), both MCA and Jiaozong exchanged information and conducted secret discussions to find solutions that would benefit the future of Chinese education. The education memorandum drafted by Jiaozong’s leaders was adopted by the MCA participants for negotiation with UMNO representatives in the Razak Committee. Working collaboratively, Sandajigou successfully persuaded Abdul Razak to exclude the controversial ‘ultimate objective’ of making Malay as the main medium of instruction in all schools as stated in Article 12 of the 1957 Education Ordinance.

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191 Yan Yuan Zhang (1909–1996) acquired his Doctorate in Education from London University in 1951. He was well-respected among the Chinese scholarly community and leading Chinese education activists in Malaya during the 1950s. He was deported from Malaysia in 1962, but continued his involvement in the movement from Singapore as the head of department of education at Nanyang University (1960–1965).
192 Lim LG (1990: 145).
We believe further that the ultimate objective of the education policy in this country must be to bring together the children of all ethnic groups under a national education system in which the national language is the medium of instruction, though we recognize that progress towards this goal cannot be rushed and must be gradual.\textsuperscript{194}

The Razak Report recommended that Chinese, Tamil and English primary schools be integrated within the national educational system as national-type primary schools (国民型小学). The latter would use Malay as the medium of instruction. Teaching of Malay and English would be compulsory in all primary and secondary schools, which would adopt a common syllabus and their students would be allowed to sit for common public examinations that were conducted in English and Malay.

The incorporation of vernacular schools into the national education system would allow them to receive some financial support, and, most importantly, official recognition from the government. Meanwhile, they would be administered by their respective management committees.\textsuperscript{195} These compromises, to some degree, were financially motivated. At the dawn of independence, the Malayan government was young and faced demanding tasks in nation building. The urgency to tackle issues such as strengthening national security, urban development and poverty reduction was given priority over the vernacular schools, which had been operating short on funds and manpower. Thus, sustaining these schools with support from its respective communities was seen as the most rational option during this period for both the government and its people.

The Razak Report’s second recommendation was to use either English or Malay as the medium of public examinations.\textsuperscript{196} Thus, a minimum requirement of ‘pass’ in

\textsuperscript{194} Razak Report, Article 12.
\textsuperscript{195} Heng PK (1988: 255).
\textsuperscript{196} The Lower School Certificate and Federation of Malaya Certificate of Education.
Malay was required for the award of these certificates. The exclusion of Chinese as a medium in public examinations was seen as a threat to the existence of Chinese secondary schools and the preservation of Chinese language and culture by Chinese educationalists.

After approving the Razak Report in May 1956, the government conducted a nationwide survey—the Torch Movement (火炬运动)—to register school-aged children who intended to enroll during the August–September school holidays in 1956. English schools had begun registering students since June that year, two months before the Chinese schools were informed by the Ministry of Education (MOE) of the survey.

Realizing the importance of the Torch Movement, Jiaozong alarmed Chinese schools nationwide and mobilized door-to-door visits to seek new students. Chinese schoolteachers conducted family visits to remind parents to register and enroll their children into Chinese schools, and Chinese school students were mobilized to inform their friends and relatives about the importance of the survey.

With the help and intervention of the Chinese Education Central Committee, MOE finally agreed to allow MCA branches, state-level Chinese assembly halls (华人大会堂) and more Chinese schools to operate as student registration facilities. Through wide publicity by local Chinese newspapers and collective efforts of Chinese educationalists, Chinese schools successfully obtained a stable enrollment rate and legitimated the continued existence of vernacular schools in Malaya.

Malaya gained independence on August 31, 1957, with Abdul Rahman as the first prime minister. Even so, social and political stability in the new Malaya remained

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198 MICSSWC (1992); Yuk Choy (2008: 263).
199 Only 20 registration centers were located at Chinese schools among the total 133 registration centers in Selangor, despite there being more Chinese schools than Malay or English schools. See Tay LS (2001: 375–380).
fragile, especially regarding the rights of minority ethnic groups. It was in the crucible of early independence politics and struggles over the definition of citizenship that provided the impetus for the Chinese education movement in Malaya. Once they realized there was little hope of instituting Chinese as an official language, ethnic Chinese activists focused their appeal on constitutional amendments to prevent further marginalization of the Chinese in Malaya, such as for the constitution to secure citizenship rights for the Chinese and safeguard the status of Chinese language and Chinese schools.

However, most immigrant Chinese, especially those from the working-class, focused their efforts wholeheartedly on securing their livelihoods and rebuilding homes. Thus, the concept of Malaya as an independent nation and the importance of citizenship rights were relatively new to many of them. Despite two years after the liberalization of the 1952 citizenship requirements, the non-citizen proportion of the Chinese population remained as high as 50% in 1954.\(^{201}\) In the 1955 elections, of the 600,000 Chinese declared eligible to vote, only 143,000 registered. In an effort to increase political awareness among the Chinese, the three most significant pillars of Chinese organizations at that time—schools, huatuans and MCA—jointly mobilized a nationwide Chinese citizenship registration movement between 1957 and 1958.\(^{202}\) By 1959, about 24% (50,000 out of 2.1 million) of the qualified Chinese residents in Malaya had successfully secured Malayan citizenship despite continued influx of new Chinese immigrants from mainland China.\(^{203}\)

While the negotiations between the Sandajigou and Education Minister Abdul Razak on the issues of overaged students and language medium for state examinations were ongoing, government officials continued to apply measures to

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\(^{202}\) 1957 Population Census of the Federation of Malaya.

\(^{203}\) Ratnam (1965: 84).
disqualify overaged students in Chinese secondary schools. Following independence, the 1960s witnessed the rise of more left-wing political leaders and the formation of a resistance network among the Chinese community against the Malay- and Muslim-dominated policies by UMNO.

Poverty, lack of initiative for formal education from illiterate parents and school closure during the Japanese occupation were the key factors that contributed to many overaged students still residing in Chinese schools. These students, who tended to be influenced by both nationalist and communist influences, had been seen by the authorities as troublemakers and threats to their schools and younger classmates.

Feeling frustrated and victimized by the Razak Report, a nationwide strike by Chinese students sparked in Penang on November 14, 1957, and spread like wildfire to some 20 Chinese secondary schools across the country. Students from the largest of these schools in Penang, namely Chung Ling (钟灵), Han Chiang (韩江) and Chung Hwa (中华), marched on the streets and assembled at Penang Chinese Girls’ High School (槟华女中).204

The (Penang Chinese Girls’) school field was full of students—about 2,000 boys from Chung Ling, Han Chiang and Chung Hwa. Many were overaged students and their sympathizers who were angry at the new policy. The demonstration ended chaotically when anti-riots police started firing tear gas at those of us who had just entered the school assembly hall. I ran home and learnt later that some 10 students were injured. My school was closed for one week. I faced disciplinary action when the school reopened, and I was warned about being expelled from school if I participated in any future strike activities again.205

Simultaneously in Kuala Lumpur, students from Confucian (尊孔), Kuen Cheng (坤成) and Tsun Jin (循人) schools also organized peaceful gatherings at their schools. Prompt

205 Interview with Huang CC, one of the students who participated in the Penang school strike in 1957. The interview was conducted on January 17, 2009 in Penang.
intervention by Jiaozong leaders and Chinese educationalists reassured the students and persuaded them to abandon the strikes. However, strikes continued in most parts of Perak and Johore.

Facing increasing pressure from the Chinese community and the manifested capacity of the students’ strike, the government finally agreed to compromise. It would continue the grant-in-aid for most Chinese secondary schools, extend the language medium of the national examination to include Chinese, and end the forceful expulsion of overaged students.

2.7. Lim Chong Eu and New MCA

In March 1958, Lim Chong Eu defeated Tan Cheng Lock to become MCA’s second party president. Nevertheless, the new MCA leadership was not endorsed by Abdul Rahman, who indicated his displeasure in his memoirs,

A new group of young MCA leaders took over the party from Tan Cheng Lock; and with that they also introduced a new MCA policy, which was to acquire more rights for the Chinese, and to end—what they imputed—UMNO control of the Alliance and the country, and to make Chinese language one of the official languages of the country.

During the 1958 National Convention on Chinese Education’ Expansion (全马华文教育扩大会议), Lim Chong Eu and MCA reform-faction leaders unanimously supported the demand to acquire official status for Chinese language. It was further consolidated by the Memorandum of General Demands on Chinese

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206 Liu Huai Gu* (刘怀谷), Yang Ya Ling* (杨雅灵), Chong Min Chang (钟敏章), Lim Lian Geok, Cheng Ji Mou* (陈济谋) and Wen Tien Kuang have played important roles in calming the students.


210 Sinchew, September 23, 1958.
By July 1959, tension within the Alliance coalition reached a boiling point when a letter—written by Lim Chong Eu to Abdul Rahman to demand 40 out of 104 parliamentary seats in the coming general election, along with other requests to enable the Chinese to safeguard their position within the Alliance—was released by the press. Other demands stated in this letter included a pledge to petition for vernacular schools to hold examinations in their own mediums of instruction and the government to recognize them as equivalent to national certificates, and objection to the requirement that all MCA candidates for elections be personally approved by the Alliance chairman. The ‘Alliance Crisis’, as it was dubbed by the press, came to be seen as a ‘Chinese versus Malays’ issue.

Losing almost half the contested seats (30 out of 32 seats) in the first post-independence general election held on August 19, 1959, Lim and his pro-Chinese educationalists team failed to secure unanimous support from MCA’s Central Committee, especially from pro-UMNO conservative leaders led by Tan Siew Sin (陈修信). The MCA crisis resulted in the withdrawal of radical factions led by Lim Chong Eu in December 1960. At the MCA Extraordinary General Meeting held on November 10, 1961, MCA declared its support to UMNO and appointed Tan Siew Sin to head a new MCA party, and Abdul Rahman took full control of the Alliance collaboration.

211 See the full text of the memorandum at Teachers’ Journal (1960: 6).
213 Tan Siew Sin served as MCA president from 1961 to 1974 and was minister of commerce and industry, and minister of finance, both powerful positions, from 1957 to 1974.
With most sympathizers of Chinese education leaders such as Too Joon Hing and Lim Chong Eu out of the party, Tan Siew Sin and his close aides who had now gained control over the MCA were more submissive and pro-UMNO, and dropped their uncritical support for the Chinese education movement. This was a serious blow to the movement, as MCA had been a powerful benefactor to the political negotiation in the Sandajigou collaboration. Now, MCA departed from its intimate relationship with Dongzong and Jiaozong, mainly due to lack of mutual trust and collaboration between Chinese educationalists and the newly installed English-educated MCA leaders such as Tan Siew Sin and Leong Yew Koh (梁宇皋).

The movement’s leaders were thus forced to rely heavily upon huatuans for support in their battle to preserve Chinese education in Malaya. Chinese leaders from the Federation of Chinese Guilds and Associations, with their strong networks and robust financial resources, slowly replaced the role of Tan Siew Sin-led MCA. Consequently, the Federation of Chinese Guilds and Associations, Dongzong and Jiaozong became the most articulate social mobilization vehicles of the Chinese community.

2.8. Rahman Talib Report

The Education Review Committee, chaired by Education Minister Abdul Rahman Talib, was set up to review the implementation of the Razak Report. They had little progress in implementing the use of the Malay language as the main medium of instruction in Malaysian schools and phasing out English medium schools due to the lack of qualified schoolteachers and budget to build new school facilities. Therefore,

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216 Three of the committee members were ethnic Chinese, including Leong Yew Koh, Wong Pow Nee (王保尼) and Koh Kim Leng (许金龙).
when their report—the 1960 Report of the Education Review Committee (or the Rahman Talib Report)—was published on August 4, 1960, it proposed a more aggressive move by the government. This included invoking Article 21 (No. 2), which empowered MOE to convert any national-type primary school into a Malay-medium national primary school at its discretion. \(^{217}\) Moreover, a definitive timetable was set to phase out English medium schools and convert government-aided Chinese secondary schools into Malay-medium schools. In addition, all national public exams would be conducted in one of the official languages, that is, either English or Malay.

Social movement activists saw these moves as an effort to abolish Chinese primary schools. *Jiaozong*’s Chairman Lim Lian Geok\(^{218}\) reacted angrily to the 1960 Rahman Talib Report. He led *Jiaozong* in mobilizing the community to reject the report and accused MOE of violating the constitution, infringing the Alliance’ election manifesto, destroying the spirit of the Razak Report and attempting to abolish Chinese schools in Malaya. \(^{219}\)

Another significant implication of the 1961 Education Act was the termination of the partially government-aided schools system by January 1, 1962. Most of these schools were Chinese secondary schools. The act would accord funding only to schools that converted into national-type secondary schools (国民型中学), which would use English and Malay as mediums of instruction and examination. \(^{220}\) This forced Chinese secondary schools to choose between being converted to the use of English and Malay as mediums of instruction or becoming financially independent as a private school.

\(^{217}\) A similar clause was included in the Razak Report Article 12; however, it was removed from the 1957 Education Ordinance.

\(^{218}\) Lim Lian Geok (1901–1985) migrated to Malaya in 1927 from Fujian province (福建省) of China. He served as teacher at Confucian Secondary School from 1934 until 1961, and was elected as *Jiaozong* chairman in 1953.

\(^{219}\) Lim LG (1960: 3).

\(^{220}\) Once converted, the medium of instruction in a Chinese school would no longer be Chinese, except for Chinese language and literature. Yeok KY (1982: 120–121); Heng PK (1988: 255).
In response to the government’s coercive and persuasive measures, 54 out of the 69 Chinese secondary schools nationwide accepted the government’s terms of conversion and were transformed into the national-type system in 1961 (see list of these schools at Appendix 4). This was partly due to the need for government assistance to solve the financial and staffing difficulties that had been plaguing these schools. In addition, the Alliance regime launched a pro-conversion campaign led by MCA leaders, culminating in the successful conversion of Penang Chung Ling High School. Chung Ling was the first school that accepted the government’s special allowances and full assistance on school fees, resulting in the reduction of school fees and better salaries for the schoolteachers.\(^\text{221}\)

Community-funded education can be sustained by donation from the Chinese community when the economy is good. However, when the economy is in recession and we do not have sufficient income, how can we support these schools? Therefore, we need the financial burden of these schools to be shared between the authorities and the public, especially from the annual education budget that has been collected from the people’s taxes.\(^\text{222}\)

Agreement from the Chinese school committees to accept the conversion kicked off a wave of protests from students, parents and the public alike. At its height, the ‘1123 Protest’ took place. Although most schools successfully contained the student movements with strict regulations and mediation by Chinese educationalists, Chung Ling’s principal, Wang Yoon Nien (汪永年) and executive director of the school committee, Ong Keng Seng (王景成), were frowned upon as chief betrayers of the Chinese community, a stigma which persists to this day.\(^\text{223}\)

Nevertheless, the reality of financial constraints and improvement in schoolteachers’ salary and benefits seen in the conversion of the high profile

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\(^{221}\) Tan LE (1997: 223); Tan KH (2007: 175).

\(^{222}\) Khor Peng Teng’s (许平等) comments cited in *Nanyang*, November 21, 1990.

\(^{223}\) Interview with Loot Ting Yee, March 24, 2008, Kuala Lumpur.
Chung Ling High School made it difficult for many Chinese secondary schools to resist conversion for long. MCA leaders at the time, including Tan Siew Sin, also strongly encouraged and promoted the benefits of the conversion. State-level education departments held informal meetings with Chinese secondary schools’ committees to persuade them to convert to the national-type system.224

However, it was the decision of the Ministry of Home Affairs on August 12, 1961 to strip Lim Lian Geok’s teaching permit and soon after, revoked his citizenship under the pretext of “disloyal and disaffected towards the Federation of Malaya”225 that marked the pivotal point towards conversion. Reactions from the Chinese community were, to some extent, constrained by self-censorship.226 Extreme retaliation by the government had been rare, and therefore the measures taken against Lim sent a message strong enough to strike fear in dissidents.

On September 3, at the request of Lim, Jiaozong held an emergency meeting to discuss the position of the next chairman; however, none of the attendees were willing to take on the politically precarious position. The burden, after long hours of discussion, fell on Huang Yun Yue* (黄润岳)227 as the acting chairman. Jiaozong’s Advisor Yan Yuan Zhang, who was then based in Singapore, strongly criticized the Malayan government at the meeting.

Lim Lian Geok, as the chairman of Jiaozong, has the responsibility to criticize unfair education policies, and is merely exercising his right to free speech under a democratic constitution. If this right is taken away, either it signifies the death of democracy, or that the government is against the Constitution.228

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224 Huang XJ (2002: 44).
226 Expression of support from Kuala Lumpur Chinese Teachers’ Association came as late as August 23. On August 26, Sim Mow Yu, who had just concluded his visit in Indonesia, attempted to persuade Tan Siew Sin to retract the decision, but failed.
227 He joined Jiaozong in 1958 and was the Teachers’ Journal editors since 1959.
In the end, Yan Yuan Zhang paid a high price for his speech: he, like Lim Lian Geok whom he had defended, was forbidden by law from entering Malaya indefinitely. With two Jiaozong leaders’ dissidence countered by draconian measures from the government, the rest of the Jiaozong activists were cowed into silence.\textsuperscript{229}

Converted Chinese schools used English as their medium of instruction. It was not until the 1970s that Malay replaced English. On the other hand, the 15 schools that had chosen to forsake government subsidies continued using Chinese as their medium of instruction, mainly due to the sheer insistence of the respective school committees. These schools were later referred to as independent Chinese secondary schools, will be discussed in Chapter Three.\textsuperscript{230}

\textbf{2.9. Formation of Malaysia}

Malaya merged with the British colonies of Sarawak, Sabah and Singapore to form an enlarged federation known as Malaysia on September 16, 1963. It was Abdul Rahman’s political ambition to ensure a non-Chinese majority in the new entity.\textsuperscript{231} In protest against the formation of Malaysia, Indonesia declared a policy of confrontation against it on January 1963.\textsuperscript{232} Indonesian President Soekarno voiced threats to crush what he deemed as a neo-colonial puppet state of the British. Meanwhile, the Philippines President Macapagal staked his claim on Sabah.\textsuperscript{233} It was a

\textsuperscript{229} Parliament opposition leader, People’s Progressive Party Chairman S. Seenivasagam, challenged Abdul Rahman to revoke his (Seenivasagam) citizenship too, at the October 20 parliamentary debate. Lim Lian Geok fought against the revocation for three years through judiciary prosecutions but was ultimately not vindicated at the Court of Appeals. Lim secluded himself from the society since, and spent the rest of his life writing memoirs.

\textsuperscript{230} MICSSWC (1992: 83).
\textsuperscript{231} Cheah BK (2002: 93–98).
\textsuperscript{232} Mackie (1974).
\textsuperscript{233} The confrontation ended after Suharto assumed power in March 1966. Indonesia eventually accepted Malaysia as an independent country during the Peace Talks in Bangkok on May 1966. See Mackie (1974: 318–322); Abdul Rahman (1986: 77, 81).
tense moment for the new Malaysian state, as armed conflict with its larger and more imposing neighbor, Indonesia, loomed.\footnote{For more about the controversies, see Milne (1964).}

Between 1963 and 1965, Singapore People’s Action Party leader Lee Kuan Yew provoked a debate on a ‘Malaysian Malaysia’, whereby equality before the law predicated on citizenship and no one community would enjoy special privileges. Lee’s ideology unavoidably tapped into the brewing resentment against Malays’ political domination of the new state.\footnote{Rudner (1970: 3); Cheah BK (2002: 54–55).} Lee also requested for important partnership among members of the Alliance, albeit junior partnership, in the governance of the country.\footnote{Heng PK (1988: 254).}

Following the outbreak of ethnic riots between Chinese and Malays in Singapore in 1964, Singapore was asked to leave the Federation in August 1965 by Prime Minister Abdul Rahman due to fears that the assertive Chinese minority would undermine the stability of the Federation.\footnote{Lee KH (1998: 35); Cheah BK (2002: 54–55); Keylor (2003: 252).}

With Singapore’s departure, the proportion of Chinese population in Malaysia dropped dramatically from 42% to 25% by the end of 1965.\footnote{Data extracted from Ongkili (1985: 154).} It was a significant political disadvantage for the Chinese. Despite the fact that the main opposition party, Democratic Action Party (DAP), continued to debate on the issue of Malaysian Malaysia, the Chinese community, especially its Chinese-speaking constituency, began to feel they were fighting a losing battle.

In an effort to counter this trend, huatuans nationwide attended the Huatuan Anti-Invasion National Convention (华团反侵略大会) held in June 1965, hosted by SCAH. More than 180 organizations sent some 280 representatives to attend the assembly to demand that Chinese be instated as an official language of Malaysia. However, the Convention Chairperson Lee Hau Shik (李孝式) persuaded participants
of the National Convention to entrust their appeal to MCA and wait for a more appropriate moment to seek legitimacy for their mother tongue.

The participants discovered on August 1965 that their trust had been misplaced: in the midst of widespread objections from the Chinese community, the MCA Central Working Committee (马华中央工作委员会) opted to endorse the decision of the Alliance coalition not to support the demand for Chinese to be instated as an official language. Somewhat surprisingly, MCA’s Youth Division leader, Sim Mow Yu, did back the demand, however. Sim had been a powerful leader, especially in Malacca, Ipoh and Penang. Although he was elected as the chairman of MCA Youth Division in February 1966, he voluntarily let Lee San Choon (李三春) have the position of chairman and opted to be vice chairman instead. He explained his reason for doing so as thus,

San Choon had a better working relationship with MCA’s party president, while I could work closely with the Chinese pressure groups. This would ideally achieve the greatest benefits for the Chinese community, especially in demanding for Chinese language become one of the official languages of the country.  

Nevertheless, Sim’s popularity, especially among MCA Youth Division branches and at the grassroots level, aroused much envy especially from his peers and competitors. Sim’s hope of forming a ‘San Choon and Mow Yu dream team’ was dashed in October 1966 when Sim was expelled from MCA due to having purportedly breached MCA’s and Alliance’s rules. Sim’s insistent demands to instate Chinese as an official language were not well received by MCA leadership.

As the founder of MCA Youth Division, Sim was supported by the rank-and-file of the division. Great displeasure in many MCA Youth Division branches were manifested in boycotts and the freezing of activities in protest against the central

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239 Interview with Sim Mow Yu, March 26, 2008, Malacca.
committee’s decision; some supporters even quit the party in disgust. The magnitude of the protests, which lasted for about two years, almost paralyzed MCA. The expulsion forced Sim to transform himself from a mainstream political actor into a whole-hearted Jiaozong activist.240

2.10. *Dongjiaozong* and *Merdeka University Campaign*

By 1966, *Dongzong* and *Jiaozong* formed the Chinese Education Working Committee (华教工作委员会)—a reformed collaborative body after the failure of *Sandajigou*. This marked the beginning of a closer bond between the two organizations. In November 1966, Chinese organizations drafted the Memorandum to Accord Rightful Status to Chinese Language (争取华文地位备忘录) and mobilized a nationwide petition. Despite warnings from the government to halt the campaign, the campaigners successfully obtained more than 2,000 signatures.

In 1967, calls for an independent Chinese university started to grow in response to the restrictions by MOE requiring all students to obtain a Cambridge School Certification or Malaysian Certification of Education before they could leave the country for further studies abroad.241 This regulation hit hard particularly the non-converted Chinese secondary school graduates who had only obtained a Chinese secondary school certificate. Thus, limited enrollment opportunities at local universities forced many Chinese school graduates to continue their studies at overseas universities, or quit school altogether.242

The Chinese community, led by SCAH, submitted a memorandum to the prime minister to demand that the government include Chinese as an official language under

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240 Interview with Sim Mow Yu, March 26, 2008, Malacca.
241 Announced by Education Minister Mohamed Khir Johari on September 21, 1967.
the 1966 National Language Bill. However, these efforts came to naught. Therefore, when Dongzong and Jiaozong suggested the formation of Merdeka University in an attempt to resolve the impasse, their suggestion was met by overwhelming positive response from the Chinese community nationwide.243

The collaboration of Dongzong and Jiaozong as Dongjiaozong—the defenders of Chinese education in Malaysia—was popularized during the Merdeka University Movement in 1968 and 1969. The founding of Merdeka University was initiated by Jiaozong and led by Dongzong Chairman Ye Hong En* (叶鸿恩).244 As the founding committee chairman, Ye summoned support from his fellow countrymen in his opening speech at the Merdeka University Founders’ Assembly (马来亚独立大学发起人大会) held at SCAH in April 1968.

The founding of Merdeka University has a significant meaning for the Chinese community here, and the university has a long road ahead of it. Although we will face many challenges, we shall possess the determination and courage to surmount all difficulties, and we shall not be daunted by repeated setbacks.

The Assembly was attended by 199 representatives from registered Chinese organizations nationwide.245 In this meeting, they formed the Merdeka University Formation Working Committee (马来西亚独立大学筹备工作委员会) and established a non-profit Merdeka University (Limited) Company (独立大学有限公司) in May 1969.

243 The Federation of Malaya Chinese Senior Normal Graduate Teachers’ Union (高师职总) proposed the establishment of a Chinese university in Malaysia, mimicking the format of Nanyang University (南洋大学) in Singapore on December 7, 1967. The proposal was accepted by the Jiaozong annual representative assembly the next day and engaged Dongzong’s involvement. Other names proposed for the university included Harmony and Union University (协和大学), Cheng Ho University (郑和大学), Kuala Lumpur University (吉隆坡大学), Tan Cheng Lock University (陈祯禄大学) and Tunku Abdul Rahman University (拉曼大学). It was eventually named Merdeka University to commemorate Malaya’s independence. See Sinchew, February 25, 1968 and Teachers’ Journal (1968: 18–28).

244 Ye Hong En was the founder of Perak CSTA and played a significant role in supporting Jiaozong’s formation in 1961. He was an active leader in Selangor Donglianhuì from 1958 to 1978.

245 Teachers’ Journal (1968).
Merdeka University received overwhelming support from the Chinese community, as well as from MCA’s Youth Division and Women Wings.\textsuperscript{246} The strength of its support base is most apparent in the various fundraising campaigns held to fundraise for Merdeka University’s formation in 1968, which successfully collected about two million \textit{ringgit} by May 1969.\textsuperscript{247}

Nevertheless, the project did not have the blessings of MCA’s central leaders.\textsuperscript{248} MCA President Tan Siew Sin, accused Merdeka University of being “politically motivated and it would have been easier for ‘hell to freeze’ (almost impossible) than for Merdeka University to be established in this country”.\textsuperscript{249} MCA proposed the expansion of the University of Malaya’s Department of Chinese Studies into a full faculty and set up Tunku Abdul Rahman College (拉曼学院) as palatable alternatives.\textsuperscript{250}

Flagging political strength and mounting pressure from MCA members forced MCA to finally back down and agree to work with Merdeka University Company. The registration of Merdeka University Company was approved by the government as a non-profit corporation under the Companies Act on May 8, 1969—two days before the 1969 General Election. This, however, did not save the Alliance coalition from losing two-thirds of the parliamentary majority in the May 12, 1969 elections, resulting in MCA leaders declaring that the party would pull out from the cabinet.

At the same time, opposition parties, mostly non-Malays who won the polls, celebrated their victory in organized demonstrations. The demonstrations only served to deepen the fear and mistrust amongst the Malays over the Chinese’ growing

\textsuperscript{246} UMB (1978: 75).
\textsuperscript{248} UMB (1978: 86); DDDC (1993: 21).
\textsuperscript{249} Chinese educationalists and the Chinese-speaking community perceived the comments as an ultimate act of betrayal of ethnic Chinese by English-educated Tan Siew Sin. See \textit{Malay Mail}, April 17, 1969.
\textsuperscript{250} \textit{China Press}, July 15, 1968.
influence and power in the country. The immediate eruption of the ethnic riots on May 13, 1969 involved killings between ethnic Malays and Chinese communities, resulting in hundreds of deaths.\footnote{No precise fatality figures were made public until today. Casualties counts by the police reported 196 dead, 439 wounded and 9,183 detained. See NOC (1969: 89–92).} As a consequence of the May 13 ethnic riots, the formation of Merdeka University was stalled after the subsequent declaration of a State of Emergency, with Merdeka University Company’s financial assets frozen by the government.\footnote{Zhen G (2006: 84).}

Prime Minister Abdul Rahman resigned and paved the way for Abdul Razak as the second prime minister of Malaysia in September 1970, who led the National Operation Council in governing the state with an Emergency Decree for the next 21 months. Abdul Razak’s regime sought to restructure state and society relations in Malaysia, and the centerpiece of this overhaul, the New Economic Policy, was introduced in 1971.

Aimed at restructuring state and society, the main approach of the New Economic Policy was to “eradicate poverty, by raising income levels and increasing employment opportunities for all Malaysians, irrespective of race. It also aimed at accelerating the process of restructuring the Malaysian society to correct economic imbalance, so as to reduce and eventually eliminate the identification of race with economic function”.\footnote{By 1970, Malays owned only 2% of the share capital, 22% by Chinese, 1% by Indians and 60% by foreigners. The New Economic Policy aimed to ensure 30% shares for Malays in the country’s corporate interests by 1990. See Means (1991: 19–53); Torii (2003). Citation quoted from 1971 Rancangan Malaysia Kedua, p. 2.} The first decade of New Economic Policy saw rocketing growth of state-led bumiputera capitalist development. Civil servants’ wages were increased...
and an official Islamization program was promoted to nudge Muslims on the path to capitalism in Malaysia. 254

2.11. Barisan Nasional and MCA Chinese Unity Movement

After the heavy setback in 1969, Abdul Razak broadened the three parties’ Alliance coalition and incorporated the conservative Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS), multi-ethnic (but gradually became dominated by ethnic Chinese) Malaysian People’s Movement Party (Gerakan) and the smaller, yet influential multi-ethnic People’s Progressive Party to form a new coalition known as Barisan Nasional (BN). 255

By co-opting its two main opponents, BN now re-controlled Penang (governed by Gerakan) and Kelantan (governed by PAS). It also ensured BN’s supreme leadership in the 1974 General Election. Although the expanding ranks of the ruling coalition enhanced UMNO’s political domination and procured more power in the hands of Malays, it also weakened the status of MCA as the sole Chinese representative in the government.

Following the end of the Emergency Decree in 1971, MCA launched a series of nationwide Chinese Solidarity Conventions (全国华人团结大会) to garner support from the Chinese community in an attempt to rebound from its declining political status. 256 Leaders and communities assembled at the Seminar of National Chinese Leaders in Malaya (全马华人领袖座谈会) in February 1971 in Kuala Lumpur. The seminar discussed the issues and challenges of unity among Chinese. Former MCA

255 DAP, Partai Rakyat and Social Justice Party of Malaysia refused to join BN.
256 Loh KW (1982).
leader, Sim Mow Yu, who remained influential and popular at the grassroots level after his departure from MCA, was invited to be the keynote speaker.\footnote{During the interview, Sim mentioned that he was persuaded by Tan Siew Sin and other senior MCA party leaders to be the speaker of the seminar for the sake of the Chinese. Interview with Sim Mow Yu, March 26, 2008, Malacca.}

Sim’s speech set forth seven counter-proposals to a statement issued by UMNO. The proposals included the demand to end ethnic discrimination in government policies and promote equal rights for all ethnic groups in economic, educational and cultural opportunities. The Chinese Solidarity Conventions continued a few days later in Perak, and in the next months at Negeri Sembilan and Penang.\footnote{\textit{Tongbao}, February 9, 1971.}

Unfortunately, the movement ended dramatically when prominent Chinese leaders, Sim Mow Yu and Gu Hsing Kuang (顾兴光), were arrested in April 1971 under the Sedition Act.\footnote{They were prosecuted for giving stirring speeches in Ipoh on April 29; however, Malaysian authorities dropped the case on October 27, 1972, and proposed Sim to take on a senator position; however, the invitation was declined. Interview with Sim Mow Yu, March 26, 2008, Malacca.} Despite overwhelming participation from the community in the National Chinese Alliance Movement, the movement neither reformed MCA nor improved the political status of the Chinese by means of securing the status of Chinese language and culture in Malaysia.\footnote{Lee KH (1998: 39–40); Loot TY (1997).}

In December 1971, \textit{Dongzong}, \textit{Jiaozong} and Chinese Education Central Committee jointly organized the National Convention of the Chinese School Committees and Schoolteachers (全国华校董教大会) at the SCAH to discuss approaches to persuade the government to retain the characteristics of Chinese schools. Despite this being the largest gathering of Chinese educationalists with more than a thousand attendees (including representatives from Sarawak) in more than a decade, the weakened MCA failed to achieve any breakthrough in negotiations with the government on this issue.
The normalization of diplomatic relations between Malaysia and the People’s Republic of China in May 1974 signified the end of China’s state-level support to the Malayan Communist Party.\textsuperscript{261} It also confirmed both governments’ recognition of the principle of \textit{jus soli}, rejection of dual nationality, and Malaysian Chinese as legitimate citizens of the country. Abdul Razak’s recognition and acknowledgement of China rewarded him with favorable support from the Chinese community, whose support led to his landslide electoral victory in 1974.\textsuperscript{262}

The implementation of the New Economic Policy, New Education Policy and other pro-Malay massive affirmative action programs fostered the growth of political patronage in the Malay middle-class, yet it also further polarized the dichotomy between Malays and non-Malays. Ironically, the ethnic exploitation, inequitable distribution of national wealth and deliberate marginalization of the non-\textit{bumiputeras} would become the sole factors that united the Chinese, especially in the Chinese education movement.

\textbf{2.12. Conclusion}

Anti-communism sentiments arising from the Cold War controversies of the 1960s and 1970s generally targeted Chinese as supporters of communists in Malaya, especially those who fought against the Japanese under the Malayan Communist Party-led Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army in World War II. The Chinese education movement arose in the process of the British’s efforts to fight communism in Malaya and the expansion of Malayan Chinese nationalism sentiments prior to independence in 1957.

\textsuperscript{261} Although China promised the end of state-level support towards the Malayan Communist Party, the party level ties (Chinese Communist Party-Malayan Communist Party) continued until the dissolution of the Malayan Communist Party in 1989. For more, see Chin P (2003).

\textsuperscript{262} Loh, Phang and Saravanamuttu (1981: 27–33).
The *Sandajigou* collaboration between MCA, *Dongzong* and *Jiaozong* in the 1950s marked the successful birth of the movement in Malaya’s nation building process. Although state and movement actors did not share many of the same principles, interpersonal and inter-institutional working experiences had built upon fundamental trust to become the key factors behind the support of vernacular communities of the Alliance coalition in the 1955 Malacca Meeting, which eventually led to a peaceful transition into independence in 1957.

Nevertheless, the honeymoon period was brief as elites in the top echelon changed. Pro-vernacular MCA leader Lim Chong Eu and his reformist wings did not have the blessings of Alliance Chairman Abdul Rahman. When Tan Siew Sin came into power through the help of the Alliance regime’s old guards, the Chinese education movement was forced to turn to the support of the mass from *huatuans*.

This shift expanded the magnitude of the movement to include intellectuals, financially established Chinese entrepreneurs, as well as the community who shared everyday grievances. The Chinese education movement transformed from a claim by a small organization over educational issues into a full-blown campaign to secure citizenship rights for Chinese in Malaya, along with demands for instating the Chinese’ vernacular language as an official language and forming a more comprehensive and inclusive national education system.

The events presented in this chapter form the backdrop for the establishment of various institutions in the social movement in its later stages, which will be presented in the upcoming chapters. Although Malaysia has grown from a new state in the 1950s into a successful developing country by 2011, yet the Chinese education movement, with its claim on constitutional discrimination, leaves an ugly scar on the country’s facade of political progress. The reminder by Donald MacGillivray in 1952 remains
eternal: lacking status as an official language in Malaysia, the Chinese and Chinese people will never be recognized within the Malaysia (education) system.
Chapter Three

Challenges and Adaptations

3.1. Introduction

Chapter Two detailed the formation of the Chinese education movement, its early trajectories, and the external challenges it faced during the early stages of the movement—including those from the state and resource mobilization—during Malaya’s transition from a colony into an independent state. The chapter demonstrated that Chinese elites’ personal social capital played a significant role in the social movement’s trajectories. The movement gained momentum in the 1950s through the collaboration among MCA, Dongzong and Jiaozong under the framework of the Sandajigou.

The Sandajigou collaboration proved its value in defending the interests of the Chinese schoolteachers and the Chinese school committee communities when Chinese primary schools were incorporated into the national education system under the 1957 Education Ordinance. Unfortunately, the collaboration fell apart when MCA’s leadership was reshuffled, putting the survival of these Chinese schools under threat as the state’s assimilative policies of the 1960s and 1970s took hold.

Due to the difficulty of penetrating the movement’s stronghold at the central level, the state began to impose a series of limitations and soft-coercive approaches by manipulating state agencies, such as MOE, to weaken the movement at the local level. This divide-and-attack strategy significantly limited the capacities of the movement agencies, hitting the movement’s local-central associational linkages particularly hard.

This chapter argues that through manipulating state institutional mechanisms such as education policies and distribution of financial resources, the state managed to
weaken the movement without using force. This strategy enabled the state to suppress the movement, and at the same time, secure the political interests of the non-liberal, democratic government to stay in power. Such an environment forced the social movement to learn, adapt and withstand challenges, which became the key factor to its survival.

In order to better understand such challenges, this chapter is divided into four sections. The first section presents the challenges faced by Chinese school committee communities when their traditional roles as the caretaker of Chinese schools were severely threatened and weakened by state-imposed structural constraints through educational policies and distribution of state resources. These constraints altered the character, structure and capabilities of these local agencies, resulting in changes to their involvement in the Chinese education movement.

The second section describes a critical turning point for Chinese schools in the 1970s when English-medium primary schools were phased-out by the state. Similar to the Chinese and Tamil vernacular schools, English-medium primary schools (many of them formally Christian mission schools) were incorporated into the national education system as ‘national-type’ primary schools. Although these schools can retain their original English name, they no longer enjoy the privilege to teach in the English language only.

Such phasing out of the English-medium schools resulted in a spike in student enrollment in Chinese schools, which in turn caused a revival in the role of Chinese school committees. Competition to enroll in already overcrowded urban Chinese schools saw the development of a patronage relationship between Chinese parents and school committees, which have the power to recommend candidates for enrollment into popular schools. Opaque policies in the allocation of state grants to these vernacular
schools also stimulated the participation of urban middle-class parents in the schools’ fundraising campaigns. Efforts to overcome state constraints also saw some school committees seek political intervention from MCA for assistance to obtain ‘special funding allocation’ or facilitate the relocation of the school to a more populated neighborhood to boost enrollment.

Although the phasing-out of English-medium schools provided justification for keeping Chinese school committees, it did not solve the fundamental problems faced by Chinese schoolteachers. The third section of this chapter takes on this issue. Chinese schoolteachers—who, as civil servants, were prohibited from participating in anti-government activities—were fearful and pessimistic about the future of Chinese education in the country. The lack of a broad support base from the grassroots had a magnifying effect on most CSTA at the local and state level. Facing insufficient resources and lack of new leadership, most CSTA were forced to operate under the patronage of school principals. This weakened the central institution of Jiaozong considerably.

The chapter’s final section evaluates the impact of the central agencies of the movement in dealing with the state’s strategy of co-optation. New challenges have arisen in the post-1990s period with increasingly more politically ambitious individuals seeking positions in various Chinese education associations, especially at the state-level alliance of Chinese school committees’ association (donglianhui), as a stepping-stone for their political career. These co-opted and (generally) corrupt individuals gradually made their way into the national organizations of the movement and held the integrity and independence of the Chinese education movement hostage in various accounts.
The implementation of the controversial 1996 Education Act also presented new challenges to the role of school committees and the overall sustainability of the movement. All these technical challenges and changes experienced by local level agents have a domino effect on the movement’s overall capacity and ability in mobilizing support from movement members and the Chinese community at large. The chapter ends with an evaluation of the consequences of these to the relationship between Dongzong and Jiaozong at the national level.

3.2. State Structural Control and Constraints on Chinese Schools

All Chinese primary schools were incorporated into the national education system under the 1957 Education Ordinance, and 54 out of the 69 Chinese secondary schools were converted into the national system under the 1961 Education Act. This also meant that about three quarters of the Chinese schools in Malaysia were receiving financial support from the state, and therefore, constrained under various state-imposed education policies. This left the independent Chinese secondary schools (华文独立中学, duzhong) (see Appendix 5 for the list of these schools) as the last independent standing institutions of the movement.

Although the Chinese primary schools and converted secondary schools are entitled to state funding, fierce competition for grant-in-aid with the other vernacular primary schools—the Malay, English and Tamil secondary schools, which are under the absolute control by the BN coalition government—continued to threaten the survival of these schools and the Chinese education movement at-large to this day.

A significant constraint faced by the local agencies of the movement was the implementation of the education acts. For example, the 1957 Education Ordinance regulated the selection of school committees in Chinese schools. The traditional system
of selecting members for Chinese school committees from a pool of school sponsors was replaced with the new system, which required three-to-six representatives from each of the following clusters to form a school committee: school sponsors, alumni, parents of current pupils, school trustees and MOE-appointed representatives. In particular, the inclusion of MOE-appointed representatives was a key condition for continuation of government subsidy.263

Moreover, instead of working without term limits, the 1957 Education Ordinance also imposed a tenure of three years for each term on all Chinese school committee members. Although there were no limits on the number of times one’s term could be renewed, the regulation limited continuous participation of committee members in the school. The frequent turnover in school committee members resulting from this policy produced school committee members who were weak in administrating and managing schools because of the lack of the opportunity to learn from senior committee members who could no longer participate when their term expired.

Illustratively, school committee members lacked the awareness to administrate their traditional affirmative rights, such as signing of school checks and collection of private funds derived from the rental revenue of the school canteen, profits from the school cooperative shops, and all other sources derived from the use of school property owned by the school committee. These sources of incomes had been important for meeting the expenses of school projects such as maintenance and improvement works, and student welfare, all which were not supported by the government. If the Chinese school committees were unable to defend their rights to administrate such incomes, not only is the sustainability of the respective Chinese schools at risk, but the impact

263 Interview with Kho Hai Meng, January 16, 2009, Penang.
reverberates throughout the Chinese education movement and threatens the overall survival of the movement.

In 1960, contents of the 1957 Education Ordinance was reviewed and renewed. The role of school governors was defined in the 1961 Education Act as “individuals who actively take part in the administration of the revenues or property or in the management of an educational institution” and accorded a title either as a ‘school manager’ in primary schools, or a ‘school governor’ in secondary schools and institutions for higher education. The school manager or governor (referred to as the ‘school committee’ in this thesis) was regarded by the 1961 Education Act as a trustee institution and not the owner of the school. In contrast to its powerful role during the colonial era, the school committee was no longer the sole decision-maker in Chinese schools, nor could it continue to enjoy unquestioned power to relocate or transfer the school’s property without the consent and authorization of school sponsors and MOE.

In exchange, the state agreed to provide substantial financial support to these Chinese schools in its attempt to persuade them to accept incorporation into the national education system, and as part of its larger social control strategy. However, the actual implementation and distribution of state resources were still skewed, for, in order to promote Malay-medium national schools as the school of choice for all Malaysians, vernacular schools were not given equal opportunities to access state resources due to a series of structural constraints imposed by the state.

For example, under the 1961 Education Act, schools built on government premises are categorized as ‘fully-assisted schools’ and are therefore entitled to full financial assistance for capital grants from the state for school development and

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264 1961 Education Act.
According to this regulation, schools built on non-government-owned premises are categorized as ‘partially-assisted schools’, and are only entitled to state subsidies for executive expenses and schoolteachers’ salaries. The latest data accumulated in 2008 shows that about 32% of Chinese schools are fully-assisted schools (see Figure 3.1). Not only do these schools receive less entitlement for state resources in rule, in practice, they are also allocated insufficient resources for development.

Figure 3.1  Premises Ownership of Chinese Primary Schools

Source: Compiled by the author with data extracted from MCA Central Education Bureau (2008).

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265 According to 1961 Education Act (Part 1.2), capital grant means “a payment from public funds to an educational institution for the provision of land or buildings, the alteration to or extension of existing premises, and the provision of furniture or equipment for new altered or extended premises”.

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A comparison of funds allocated under the Malaysia Plan from 1972 till 2010 demonstrated that national schools received most of the allocated budget. Chinese and Tamil primary schools received considerably less funds in proportion to the student distribution ratio in all Malaysia Plans since 1971 (for a numerical breakdown, see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Public Funding for Primary Schools under Malaysia Plans (1972–2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>National Schools</th>
<th>Chinese Schools</th>
<th>Tamil Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972–1978</td>
<td>237,118,327 (91%)</td>
<td>18,097,380 (7%)</td>
<td>5,892,660 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students in 1970</td>
<td>1,046,513 (67%)</td>
<td>439,681 (28%)</td>
<td>79,278 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal distribution</td>
<td>174,550,943</td>
<td>73,319,229</td>
<td>1,323,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth Malaysia Plan (1991–1995)</td>
<td>1,133,076,000 (90%)</td>
<td>102,726,000 (8%)</td>
<td>27,042,000 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students in 1991</td>
<td>1,845,400 (73%)</td>
<td>583,218 (23%)</td>
<td>99,876 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal distribution</td>
<td>921,623,551</td>
<td>291,338,111</td>
<td>49,882,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996–2000)</td>
<td>1,027,167,000 (97%)</td>
<td>25,970,000 (2%)</td>
<td>10,902,000 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students in 1996</td>
<td>2,128,227 (75%)</td>
<td>595,451 (21%)</td>
<td>102,679 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal distribution</td>
<td>801,221,367</td>
<td>224,193,017</td>
<td>38,624,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth Malaysia Plan (2001–2005)</td>
<td>4,708,800,000 (96%)</td>
<td>133,600,000 (3%)</td>
<td>57,600,000 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students in 2001</td>
<td>2,209,736 (76%)</td>
<td>616,402 (21%)</td>
<td>88,810 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal distribution</td>
<td>3,714,690,000</td>
<td>1,035,860,000</td>
<td>149,450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006–2010)</td>
<td>4,598,120,000 (95%)</td>
<td>174,340,000 (4%)</td>
<td>54,840,000 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students in 2006</td>
<td>2,298,808 (76%)</td>
<td>636,124 (21%)</td>
<td>100,142 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal distribution</td>
<td>3,663,838,480</td>
<td>1,013,854,230</td>
<td>159,606,290</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Ideal fund distribution = budget allocated according to student ratios.

The impact of these education acts in the 1960s and 1970s have significant consequences on the status of Chinese schools up to the present. Because education is an expensive investment, the lack of financial support from the government has seriously weakened the development of Chinese schools and other vernacular education institutions in the country alike. As many of these schools are built during the colonial era, their wooden and zinc roofed facilities are left unrepaired; as a result, many are infested with termites. The Chinese school committee community, in particular, has been frustrated with the state’s delay in executing its promises. The experience of betrayal later became the basis of the movement’s actors’ suspicion and lack of trust in the state, particularly in UMNO leaders.

The lack of trust had prevented collaboration between the movement and the state. Instead of engaging in productive, interest-based negotiation, taking a position-based stand has located them at mutually exclusive and contradicting positions instead. The deteriorating relationship was only salvaged by the outgrowths of a brokerage culture—an important role played by MCA state members—which has bridged collaboration, linked shared interests and, above all, prevented the escalation of any violent confrontations. This will be explored in detail in Chapter Four.

Other than financial and structural constraints, the state has also halted the formation of new vernacular schools since the independence of Malaya in 1957. All the slots for schools in the new housing areas have been exclusively reserved for Malay-medium national schools, resulting in a significant decrease in the number of vernacular schools (Chinese and Tamil schools) since the 1970s.
Figure 3.2  Distribution of Primary Schools (1970–2007)

Source: Compiled by the author with data provided by Dongzong.

Figure 3.3  Distribution of Primary School Students (1970–2007)

Source: Compiled by the author with data provided by Dongzong.
As illustrated in the following figures (3.2 and 3.3), the number of national schools rose from 4,277 in 1970 to 5,781 in 2007—an increase of 26% or 1,504 schools. Correspondingly, the number of students in national schools grew from 1,046,513 in 1970 to 2,286,328 in 2008, a 118% increase. In contrast, although the number of Chinese school students increased from 439,681 to 643,679 (46%) over the same period, but the number of Chinese schools was reduced by 57. The Tamil community lost 134 schools.

3.3. The Turning Point

The state’s educational policies and its control of resources successfully contained the development of vernacular schools in the 1960s and 1970s, and even to this day. However, one of these state strategies was a crucial turning point for the Chinese education movement. After the 1967 National Language Bill was passed to secure Malay as the country’s sole national language, Malay formally replaced English as the medium of instruction in all primary one classes in English-medium schools; the higher levels followed suit thereafter. By 1986, English schools in the country had been completely ‘eliminated’.

The phasing out of the English schools had a strong impact on the Chinese education movement, especially in the 1980s. It confirmed the concern raised by Dongjiaozong since the 1950s that the same fate awaited the Chinese schools. It proved to be a timely wake-up call for fence-sitting Chinese communities to defend Chinese primary schools as the fundamental institution for the instruction of Chinese language in Malaysia. Beyond being a place to learn the Chinese language, Chinese schools became a symbolic institution that secured the Chinese’ ethnic identity and prevented the continuous dilution of their rights in the country.
Hence, ironically, the government unwittingly did Chinese primary schools a favor by eliminating all English schools—the then leading and most popular primary educational institution—and converting them into Malay-medium national schools. Chinese parents who used to favor competence in English were reluctant to place their children in Malay schools. So, they began to send their children to the second best option available: Chinese schools. Compared to national schools and Tamil schools, Chinese schools are more competitive academically (especially for mastering mathematics and science), and are reputed for strict discipline. They also offered the benefit of trilingual education (Chinese, English and Malay).266

Accordingly, Chinese schools began to see a boost in student enrollment beginning in the 1970s.267 Recognition of the quality of Chinese schools went beyond ethnic boundaries, however. Over time, many non-ethnic Chinese parents, including Malays, began enrolling their children in Chinese schools. As elaborated in Figure 3.4, their numbers in Chinese primary schools rose from 17,309 students (about 3%) in 1989 to 65,000 students (about 10%) in 1999. The subcategory of bumiputera students constituted some 45,000 students (7%) by 2005.

As a consequence of their popularity and the state’s refusal to build new Chinese schools, almost all Chinese schools located in heavily Chinese-populated neighborhoods are overcrowded. The situation has forced Chinese school committees to raise funds from the public to expand the school’s infrastructure, which, in turn, led to a revival of the role of these school committees as an important mechanism and key benefactor of Chinese schools.

266 Interview with Lu SS, February 10, 2008, Penang; Interview with Lim KC, February 24, 2008, Penang; Interview with Chai Yah Han, January 17, 2009, Penang.
Chinese school committees are led by a chairman (董事长), who plays the lead role in fundraising. To this end, a ‘successful chairman’ must be able to assume the role of a ‘noble beggar’—the audacity and persistence to seek donations from communities and maintain a good relationship with them.\(^{268}\) The chairman must plan strategically by targeting donors through his personal connections. He might not be the richest, or the most generous donor, but he must be resourceful in generating money. According to Quek Suan Hiang (郭全强), a former *Dongzong* chairman (1993–2005) and the school committee chairman of Kluang Chong Hwa High School (居銮中华中学) from 1987 to 2006,

\(^{268}\) Interview with Quek Suan Hiang, March 23, 2010, Johore.
To establish a successful fundraising campaign, a chairman must start the momentum by donating a sum of money and then mobilize a few individuals who can contribute impressive amounts of donations; the more the merrier, and this will keep the ball rolling and generate waves of donations by the rest of the communities.269

To raise funds, Chinese schools organize events such as temporary amusement parks in the school compound, stage performances, dinners and other community-related activities. Through these special occasions, Chinese schools committee members also invite participation from shops and trading companies to contribute donations to the schools.270 Influential social figures, such as successful businessmen and active members of local huatuans, are also invited to grace school events so as to expand the school’s popularity and attract community participation.

Schoolteachers are responsible for organizing and training student participants in traditional performances, which are often well-received by the local community.271 To this day, these events remain as significant platforms for engaging and enhancing the bonds between schools and local communities. The success of these events reflects upon the reputation and status of the school committees, schoolteachers and students in the community.272

Because enrollment for the overpopulated Chinese schools is exceedingly competitive, recommendations from school committee members became the best means of securing enrollment for new students. In Chinese schools, each committee member is entitled to recommend a certain number of candidates into the school. This

269 Born to one of the richest Hainanese family in Malaya, Quek was the eldest grandson of Malacca Tongmenghui (同盟会) leader Quek Ju Chuan* (郭巨川) and strongly influenced by his granduncle Quek Jing Chuan* (郭镜川) who had worked closely with Sun Yat Sen (孫中山) during the Chinese revolution. Quek studied in China in the 1940s and returned to Malaya in the 1950s. Interview with Quek Suan Hiang, March 23, 2010, Johore.

270 In return for their financial contribution, donors who made large amount of donation are also entitled to name the school buildings (classrooms, school halls, and other facilities). Such ‘naming right’ has been widely practised by the Chinese schools communities in Malaysia as one of the most efficient ways to generate large donations from the public. See session 4.11 Resource Mobilization for more.


272 Interview with Yeoh Ban Eng, January 7, 2009, Penang.
demand-and-supply relationship helps to solidify committee members’ social status within the Chinese community. It also motivates important, successful businessmen to continue to involve themselves and invest their time as members of Chinese school committees.

Although the 1957 Education Ordinance has limited the maximum size of a school committee to 15, in reality, their numbers in Chinese schools may reach up to a hundred. A majority of them are “honorary school committee members who have contributed donations to the school, and used their donor-beneficiary relationship with local communities to secure their social status”\(^\text{273}\). The actual management of the school fell under the responsibility of the school committee office-bearers (such as the chairman, general secretary and treasurer).

Incomes from the school sponsorship system are important to Chinese schools because they cover expenses such as water and electricity bills, which is especially crucial for the survival of partially-assisted schools that were not entitled to full state subsidies. Due to scarce financial resources, all Chinese schools, rich or poor, are constantly under pressure to generate new ways to operate within a limited budget. According to a retired Chinese schoolteacher, Madam Huang,

although we were one of the biggest schools in the state, we often picked up used chairs and tables from the national schools to replace broken facilities in our schools. They needed to discard them anyway, and principals of the national schools did not mind that we took them because they also knew that Chinese schools received much less funding from the government than them. The national schools received funds for new tables and chairs every two to three years, but we (Chinese schools) had been using the same set of tables and chairs for decades. By recycling these valuable resources, we could save a lot of money. This also minimized the financial burden on our school committee.\(^\text{274}\)

\(^{273}\) Interview with Huang CC, January 17, 2009, Penang.
\(^{274}\) Interview with Huang CC, January 17, 2009, Penang.
The above interview is reflective of the general phenomena at the grassroots level. Although the Chinese education movement involved the conflict between ethnic ideologies represented by Chinese educationalists and the Malay state, inter-ethnic relations at the community level can be perceived as harmonious and peaceful. School communities at the national schools and Chinese schools generally know each other in their private capacity, and enjoy good interpersonal relationships. Although they do not and will not interfere with each other schools’ business, requests to share ‘used and unwanted resources’ as mentioned above, are common and often seen as a win-win situation for both parties: the Chinese schools can have ‘new’ resources, while the national schools can dispose such resources at ease.

Other than facing scarce school resources, many schools located in smaller towns have also been facing the crippling problem of diminishing community population and therefore shrinking student enrollment. As urbanization of larger cities has continued apace, many of these schools face the threat of closure. To overcome such problems, beginning from the 1980s, Chinese school committee members, many of whom were also MCA members, began to seek assistance from MCA central leaders to obtain permission from MOE to relocate these schools into highly Chinese-populated areas. Although the approval rate for relocation in the 1980s was low, MCA politicians began to widely manipulate this mechanism to gain political leverage in the 1990s.

As shown in Table 3.2, 43 out of 75 Chinese primary schools received their approval for relocation prior to a general election—a timely and strategic political move for MCA to gain support from Chinese voters. The gradual impact of political influence in the Chinese schools was not limited to relocation efforts and schools per se.

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The BN regime began to adopt the mechanism of co-optation since the early 1990s to intrude upon the Chinese education movement at the state and central levels. We return to this development in the final section of this chapter.

Table 3.2 Relocated Chinese Primary Schools (1999–2008)

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<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Schools</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>43 (57%)</td>
<td>32 (43%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author with data provided by Jiaozong.

3.4. The Taming of the Schoolteachers

While Chinese school committees survived the various challenges they faced by ably re-defining their roles, Chinese schoolteachers have not fared as well. As a leading partner of the movement in the 1950s, Chinese schoolteachers were the most outspoken critics of the state. In response, to constrain the movement, the state sought to tame the schoolteachers via a series of tough approaches.

First, the state removed their leaders. This included the revocation of Jiaozong Chairman Lim Lian Geok’s citizenship and expulsion of Jiaozong Advisor Yan Yuan Zhang in 1961, and dismissal of Jiaozong Chairman Sim Mow Yu from MCA in 1966 (as detailed in Chapter Two).

Upon the removal of influential leaders, the state exploited the unstable political situation during the Indonesia Confrontation (1963–1966) (as discussed in Chapter Two) and instilled the ‘White Terror’ (白色恐怖). The state police, for example, detained suspicious individuals, leftists and social activists by force and
without trial under the Internal Security Act. In all, the crackdown effectively ensured many outspoken critics exercised self-restraint.

Third, the state exerted control over schoolteachers by incorporating them into the civil servants system. Unlike in the old days when the salary of Chinese schoolteachers were paid by the school committee, the state now enjoyed absolute power to appoint, dismiss or regulate the posting location (such as school) of a schoolteacher. Via the 1961 Education Act, the state controlled schoolteachers’ training institutions, the registration of their teaching permits and distribution of salaries. Specifically, Part VI, Article 78 empowered the Registrar of Teachers to refuse to register (and deregister) a person if the former had reason to suspect that he or she was likely to promote unlawful activities in the school or would harm the interests of the Federation, the public or pupils.

In 1962, Jiaozong faced one of the first major divisions within the Chinese schoolteachers’ community when the Malaya Chinese Senior Normal Graduate Teachers Union (马来亚联合邦华文高级师范) was established. Jiaozong was accused of protecting the general interests of the majority members, and ignoring and sacrificing the interests of Senior Normal graduates in their negotiation with MOE over the terms of salaries for Chinese schoolteachers. Senior Normal graduate schoolteachers (about 2,000 of them) were the pioneers who received formal training from the newly established teachers’ training college in Malaya between 1948 and 1957. They enjoyed a special salary allocation from the British government for their qualification. Therefore, the Senior Normal communities were angry when the special allocation was cancelled by the post-independent Malayan government.

277 Interview with Leong Tzi Liang, February 3, 2010, Penang.
278 1961 Education Act.
279 Sinchew, October 22, 1962; MCSNGTU (1990: 1, 64–78).
The dispute proved to be a lose-lose situation when most of these Senior Normal graduate schoolteachers, who were also active members of CSTA and promising movement leaders, began to shunt Jiaozong-related activities. The state had successfully created a rift within Jiaozong by manipulating schoolteachers’ salary scheme to significantly reducing the latter’s capacity to fight back.

Consequently, dampened morale depressed the capability of Chinese schoolteachers to function as core agents for Jiaozong. Indirectly, the weakened local institutions also caused a more severe problem of leadership at the central level of the movement. Sim Mow Yu, a formerly influential MCA player who had just been forced to retire from politics, had led Jiaozong through the difficulties of the 1960s. According to Sim, when he was asked to review his years as Jiaozong chairman,

One will be famous for being a Jiaozong chairman. It is a highly respected position (among the Chinese community), but you also posit yourself at the forefront of the battle. Everything you do must be accountable to the community. At the same time, you are also risking your safety, your official ranking (as a schoolteacher), and your retirement pension. If the government targeted you, you might end up like Lim Lian Geok—whose citizenship was revoked and teaching permit stripped by the government.280

Sim also revealed that during his early days as Jiaozong chairman, secret police were stationed outside his house to observe his daily activities. Although there were no serious threats to his life and freedom until he was detained under the Internal Security Act during the Weeding Operation (Operasi Lalang) in 1987, the fear of being targeted and the risk of being detained effectively discouraged the rise of new leaders to take over Jiaozong’s premiership.

280 Interview with Sim Mow Yu, March 26, 2008, Malacca.
3.5. **Competition with the National Union of the Teaching Profession**

To make matters worse, the formation of the National Union of the Teaching Profession (*Kesatuan Perkhidmatan Perguruan Kebangsaan Malaysia*) in 1974 replaced the role of CSTA and *Jiaozong* as the schoolteachers’ clubs. The National Union of the Teaching Profession is currently the largest public service union in Malaysia, with all schoolteachers who graduated from MOE’s schoolteachers’ training program assuming automatic membership regardless of ranking, qualification, race, religion, training or political affiliation.

Moreover, National Union of the Teaching Profession is the only official schoolteachers’ union recognized by MOE. It provides important information on salary schemes, group insurance, welfare and legal assistance. Compared to CSTA or *Jiaozong*, operating under the auspices of MOE has enabled the National Union of the Teaching Profession to be more efficient in protecting and improving the welfare of the teaching profession.

Unlike during the height of CSTA’s and *Jiaozong*’s popularity in the 1950s where most Chinese schoolteachers were ‘imported’ from China, were not fully integrated into the local community in Malaya, and therefore saw CSTA and *Jiaozong* as their sanctuary. The new teachers were locally-born and did not need CSTA and *Jiaozong* to back them up. In fact, since 1948, the government has prohibited the import of Chinese schoolteachers from China, and has been replacing these imported schoolteachers with locally-born counterparts. Over time, the National Union of the Teaching Profession began to overtake CSTA as the association for schoolteachers.

The state’s determination to send a message of the force of its authority to Chinese schoolteachers was demonstrated in the fate of the outspoken *Jiaozong* Vice Chairman Loot Ting Yee (陆庭瑜). Under political pressure, MOE transferred Loot
from Kuala Lumpur to the coastal state of Terengganu in 1981 in order to reduce his participation in *Jiaozong*’s activities. In protest, Loot resisted the transfer and sued MOE. After he suffered an inevitable loss with the lawsuit, MOE revoked his teaching permit. With just two years left until his retirement, Loot lost all of his pension benefits.\(^2\)\(^8\)\(^1\)

Consequently, many schoolteachers began to refrain from engaging in open anti-government activities. Many CSTA members also exercised self-restraint and avoided making controversial statements that might endanger or draw support away from its members. Many female schoolteachers, for instance, who had been juggling school duties, household duties and motherhood, could not devote themselves fully to CSTA activities. Some were also reluctant to be more active because members were not reimbursed for the various expenses they incurred for the movement.\(^2\)\(^8\)\(^2\) Schoolteachers from *duzhong*, although unconstrained by the government civil servant regulations, were too overwhelmed by their heavy workload—which included fundraising activities—to be active in CSTA.

### 3.6. School Principals Dominated Chinese Schoolteachers’ Associations

As discussed above, the National Union of the Teaching Profession had been gradually replacing CSTA as the more successful teachers’ union. After the departure (due to old age or death) of the older and more enthusiastic generation of Chinese schoolteachers in the 1980s, the younger generation lacked either the interest or motivation to be actively involved in CSTA.

As elaborated in Figure 3.5, the randomly selected six CSTAs (out of 44 CSTAs nationwide) illustrated two general patterns in the membership growth from the late

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\(^{281}\) *Jiaozong* (1987a: 576); Interview with Loot Ting Yee, March 24, 2008, Kuala Lumpur.

\(^{282}\) Interview with Lim KC, February 24, 2008, Penang.
1980s to 2000s: a nearly flat growth for most of them (70%) to a gradual but slow climb for the rest (30%) (see the detailed CSTA membership growth at Appendix 6). Although the overall CSTA membership continued to climb, CSTA failed to cultivate new leaders who were sufficiently capable of taking over the premiership.

Facing these challenges, many CSTA committees had to be presided over by principals of Chinese primary schools who could and did use their schools as bases of the CSTA secretariats and the schools’ resources for CSTA activities. This worrying trend that began in the 1980s had a very important impact on the 1994 Jiaozong election.

Figure 3.5   CSTA Membership Distribution (1988–2009)


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284 Interview with Yeoh Ban Eng, January 7, 2009, Penang.
The lack of statutory restriction on term limits made Sim the longest serving Jiaozong chairman with 29 years (1965–1994) of service. This longevity of Sim’s term brought stability to the movement, but it did not solve the problem of a lack of new leadership in the organization. Sim tried to resign multiple times, but his resignation was repeatedly rejected by the movement’s supporters. His resignation was only ‘accepted’ in 1994. Although the soon retiring chairman openly indicated that he preferred Loot Ting Yee, who had been the vice chairman since 1965, as successor, Loot’s fiery resistance worried most CSTA leaders. Although Loot was the last schoolteacher left standing in Jiaozong’s central committee, he was defeated by the soft-spoken, non-descript MCA member, Ong Kow Ee (王超群), in the 1994 chairman election.\(^{285}\) In one of his press statements as the new Jiaozong Chairman, Ong remarked,

> We do not need to strongly disagree or become emotional to reach our objectives. This approach may be dysfunctional sometimes and does not allow you to reach your objectives… We should try to communicate directly with officials from MOE. We can also go through MCA or Gerakan to get funding for the (Chinese) schools.\(^{286}\)

At the time of writing, Ong remains as Jiaozong’s chairman. His era marks a clear preference by the Jiaozong central committee for a softer, more collaborative approach with the state. For Jiaozong and its central-level leaders, this may be their only available option given such challenges as the gradual loss of importance of the CSTA and the lack of support from most of the Chinese schoolteachers.

### 3.7. The Trojan Horse

Meanwhile, Dongzong also began to be troubled by partisan politicking activities by opportunists who sought to gain control of the Chinese school committees, state-level

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\(^{285}\) Dongzong (1995: 43); Interview with Loot Ting Yee, March 24, 2008, Kuala Lumpur.

donglianhui and ultimately, the national umbrella of Dongzong. Since the 1990s, their emergence has worried veteran Chinese educationalists. Although the membership of Chinese school committees has traditionally consisted of politically powerful individuals, most Chinese school committees exercised self-restraint and avoided mixing political and cultural interests to maintain collective co-existence. As former Dongzong Chairman Quek Suan Hiang, pointed out, “self-interest politics must be laid off from the school committees, or else they (committee members who engage in self-interest politics) should get out”.287

Attempts of these self-appointed political ‘fighters’ to enter and control state-level donglianhui are exemplified by the controversial 1994 Negeri Sembilan Donglianhui election. Negeri Sembilan MCA Deputy President and Negeri Sembilan Chinese Assembly Hall Chairman Hoo Huo Shan (胡火山) openly challenged the three-time Negeri Sembilan Donglianhui Chairman and Dongzong Vice Chairman Chin Choong Sang (陈松生).288 Many believed Hoo’s candidacy was echoing the call of MCA leaders in Selangor to ‘reform Dongjiaozong from within’ (elaborated in Chapter Five). In the end, although 70% of the 148 representatives who attended the Negeri Sembilan Donglianhui General Assembly were MCA members, Hoo gained only 61 votes.289 All the other candidates in Hoo’s faction lost the election, strongly indicating that these representatives preferred to keep partisan politics out of donglianhui.290

Facing increasing threats, Dongzong began to strengthen its internal institutions through various approaches. First, it published the Handbook of Chinese Education Workers (华教工作者手册) in 1989 and began to compile the Sample of Working

287 Interview with Tang Ah Chai, February 23, 2009, Kuala Lumpur.
Guidelines for Malaysian Chinese Primary School Committees (马来西亚华文小学董事会工作手册样本) which was published in 1998. Both publications provided detailed information on the rights and duties of Chinese school committees. The movement also republished the Chinese translation of the 1961 Education Act and distributed all these publications to all Chinese schools through *donglianhui*’s network, marking the first nationwide reform and uniform effort to modernize the Chinese school committees’ operations.

To solidify the school committee at *duzhong*—the last stronghold of the Chinese education movement—state-level *donglianhui* took turns to organize various sports activities to strengthen relations and foster closer bonds among *duzhong* communities. The activities included track and field championships (since 1987), ball games championships (since 1989), basketball championships (since 1990), science camps (since 2005) and arts camps (since 2007), among others. Although such activities focused more on students’ participation in various sports- and games-related events, the organizers, which consisted of the *duzhong* community (such as school committees and schoolteachers) from various schools, benefited from the opportunities to expand their networks with peers from the movement, and to strengthen collective solidarity and interpersonal bonds among movement communities.

*Dongzong* also tried to foster collaboration with the community of converted Chinese secondary schools. In 1997, *Dongjiaozong* organized the first National Seminar for Converted Chinese Secondary Schools Committees (全国国民型中学董事交流会) and subsequently established the *Dongjiaozong* Converted Chinese Secondary Schools Working Committee (董教总全国国民型中学工作委员会) in

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291 For the full text of the Handbook, see *Dongjiaozong* (1989); for the full text of the Sample of Working Guidelines, see *Dongjiaozong* (1998).


293 This included basketball, ping pong, volley balls and others.
1998 as a platform to promote dialogue and reconnect with the converted school faction that had ‘departed’ from Dongzong since the mass conversion exercise in 1961 (as elaborated in Chapter Two).294 However, fundamental differences in perspectives and approaches in the management of Chinese schools led to the premature dismissal of the working committee in 2001 shortly after its first term.295

In reality, the converted and independent factions were strongly prejudiced against one another.296 Many conservative Chinese educationalists refused to consider the converted cluster as part of the movement, as explained by former Jiaozong Vice Chairman Yeoh Ban Eng (杨万荣),

The converted cluster abandoned the privilege of other Chinese schools when it accepted the conversion in 1961. One must comply with three principles to qualify as a Chinese school: (1) the usage of Chinese in teaching all subjects except Malay and English language, (2) management by the school committee, and (3) the usage of Chinese as the main administrative language in the school. Schools from the converted cluster only taught Chinese language subject in Chinese, and they no longer used Chinese as the main administrative language. Therefore, they were not a real Chinese school.297

The converted cluster also refused to bow to Dongjiaozong’s pressure and maintained firmly that the converted schools system was a more pragmatic and sustainable approach for the continuity of Chinese education in Malaysia.298 The division escalated in October 2003 when the Converted Chinese School Principals’ Association—a united front of all 78 converted Chinese secondary schools established since 1994—suggested to change the name of all converted Chinese secondary schools into Chinese secondary schools (华文中学).299 Technically, the converted cluster shared various characteristics

296 Interview with Yeoh LC, January 20, 2009, Penang.
297 Interview with Yeoh Ban Eng, January 7, 2009, Penang.
298 Interview with Yeoh LC, January 20, 2009, Penang; Interview with Sim JT, January 15, 2009, Penang.
299 MPSMCM (2006: 8).
of a Chinese school and should qualify as a Chinese school within Dongjiaozong’s context (see Figure 3.6). However, these suggestions and arguments were resoundingly rejected by Dongjiaozong, which perceived the whole name-changing campaign as a move to challenge the hegemony of duzhong.

Figure 3.6 Characteristics of a Chinese School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defined by Dongjiaozong</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• School committee is the highest authority of the school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• School uses Chinese as the main medium of teaching.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Textbooks should be mostly written in Chinese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Administrative language in the school should be in Chinese.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defined by Converted Chinese School Principals’ Association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• School has a Chinese name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Chinese school song and school motto.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rules and regulations for students spelt out in Chinese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School committee plays an important role in school activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School alumni who identify themselves as “Chinese school graduates”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Chinese-qualified teachers hold senior positions in the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A school principal who speaks in Chinese during school assemblies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Majority of students come from Chinese primary schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Chinese as a compulsory subject for all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students use Chinese as the default language of communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Active Chinese cultural co-curriculum activities, such as Chinese Association, Chinese Chess Association, among others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author with data extracted from MPSMCM (2006: 8–11) and interview with Yeoh Ban Eng, January 7, 2009, Penang.

At the time of writing, the two factions remain disparate in their management and definition of Chinese schools. Their relationship has been maintained by minimizing interfering and contradicting each other. Maintaining distance is one of the key factors that led to the prolonged persistence of the Chinese education movement. Although both factions share a common interest to protect and maintain the identity of Chinese schools, pride has been preventing them from joining together to form a more powerful

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300 MPSMCM (2006: 8–11).
301 Interview with Yeoh Ban Eng, January 7, 2009, Penang.
collective representation of *Dongjiaozong*. Hurdles need to be bridged, prior misunderstandings and blame have to be forgiven and forgotten, before any future collaboration can be achieved.

The greatest challenge faced by the Chinese education movement has been the division between school principals who support *Dongjiaozong* and those who are inclined towards the MOE. In early September 1998, Selangor State Education Department demanded all Chinese school principals to ‘take over’ authority from the school committee and assume full responsibility for the tender process of school canteens and bookshops. The education department also demanded school principals to include all proceeds from both tender activities in the school’s financial account and not that of the school committee.

This new regulation not only ended Chinese school committees’ last vestige of management authority in Chinese schools, it also removed from them a significant source of income. Even though the policy was implemented in Selangor state, the potential threat that similar policies might be implemented nationwide could not be underestimated. Therefore, the Chinese education movement community paid much attention on the development of the issue.

Although many principals who implemented the orders of the Selangor State Education Department tried to uphold the traditional status and established operating culture of the school committees at the same time, there were a few who did not. The former were, to some extent, under pressure to fulfill their duty to preserve the identity of Chinese schools by resisting the changes imposed by the state’s education department, as those who had failed to do so (or sided with the authorities) faced severe criticisms from the school committee and Chinese community at large.

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302 Interview with Yeoh LC, January 20, 2009, Penang.
Pressure from Selangor Donglianhui and Dongzong forced Deputy Education Minister Fong Chan Onn (冯镇安) to intervene. Fong later explained that there was a misunderstanding and the regulation would be implemented in all schools in the country with the exception of Chinese primary schools.\(^{303}\) Six years later, the ‘takeover exercise’ returned to threaten the existence of the Chinese school committees—this time by the Penang State Education Department in September 2004.\(^{304}\) Penang Donglianhui protested and demanded intervention by the Penang Gerakan state government.\(^{305}\) The confrontation was quickly resolved by Education Minister Hishamuddin Hussein, who explained that Chinese school committees should have their rights on the disputed issues, and stressed that Chinese schools were excluded from the new regulation.\(^{306}\)

One of the reasons that lead to the education minister’s rapid response was overwhelming pressure from the ethnic Chinese-dominated Penang Gerakan government. Most of the school committees in Penang are traditionally more influential, and have been able to resist and overwrite decisions made by the state’s Education Department through their social and political influence. It is believed that the new Education Minister Hishamuddin Hussein who had just been appointed to his position since March 2004 saw no gain in making more enemies out of these influential and potentially beneficial counterparts.

Although most Chinese school committees successfully resumed their power by 2005, the controversy continued at Kuala Lumpur Chen Moh Chinese Primary School (吉隆坡精武华文小学). Chen Moh school’s bookshop, which was managed by Pustaka Matu Company, had received its tender from school principal Ye Xia Guang.*

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\(^{303}\) Sinchew, November 3, 1998.


\(^{305}\) Kwongwah, September 22, 2004.

who executed the state education department’s order. Although the order was later recalled and cancelled, Pustaka refused to withdraw from the school. Chen Moh’s school committee established another bookshop, which offered more competitive prices for its items. Facing competition from the school committee’s store, Pustaka demanded that Principal Ye remove the ‘unauthorized store’.307

The conflict peaked in November 2005 when Chen Moh school committee Chairman Wang Guo Feng* (王国丰) pointed to evidence which suggested that corruption might be involved: Ye had failed to explain the whereabouts of four checks (total sum of RM20,000) issued by Pustaka for the Chen Moh school development project.308 Furthermore, it was revealed that the two other companies that had supposedly competed with Pustaka for the tender of the school bookshop were in fact phantom companies.309

Wang and the school committee successfully pressured the Selangor State Education Department to transfer Principal Ye to another primary school in January 2006. Ye was the third school principal to be transferred out of the school since May 2003 after Wang took over chairmanship of the school committee.310 In defense of his fellow school principals, Kang Siew Khoon (江秀坤), who was chairman (2004–2006) of the National Union of Heads of Schools (全国校长职工会), blamed the frequent change of school principals in Chen Moh as a consequence of Dongzong’s call for school committees to seize the tender rights of the canteen and bookshop back from

307 Oriental, November 17, 2004; Interview with Chai Yah Han, January 17, 2009, Penang.
310 The previous principals who were forced to leave were Li Yi Qiang* (李毅强) in July 2004; Lin Yu Lian* (林玉莲) in March 2005 and Ye Xia Guang* in January 2006; Merdeka Review, February 27, 2006.
MOE, which put Chinese primary schools principals in a exceedingly difficult position.311

Kang’s comment infuriated Chinese educationalists, especially (and predictably) school committee members, who were displeased with school principals who did not side with the school committees on this matter. Many were angrier with Kang for brushing aside a more serious issue: corruption by a school principal, for the evidence, if proven to be true, suggested that Ye might have been receiving bribes through tenders and pocketing the earnings from the sales of school magazines and extra school tuition classes.312

The tip of the iceberg began to melt and the issue became a national debate when Malaysia’s cable media Astro Asian Entertainment Channel’s weekly Chinese forum program aired a four-episode coverage on the issue of (Corrupt) Business Opportunities in Chinese Primary Schools (华小处处商机) in February 2006.313 Facing increasing attacks and accusations of corruption, the National Union of Heads of Schools Deputy Chairman Yang Qing Liang* (杨清亮) publicly reiterated that “Dongzong should stop oppressing school principals and deliberately making things difficult for school principals on the issue of the rental rights of school canteens”.314 In response, Dongzong Chairman Yap Sin Tian (叶新田) released a stinging press statement, which was splashed across the front page of the Nanyang Shangpao (南洋商报), one of the largest Chinese newspaper in Malaysia, entitled ‘Enmity

313 The program (就事论事), invited three guest speakers: Dongzong chief executive officer Bock Tai Hee (莫泰熙), DAP Sungai Pinang state assembly member Teng Chang Khim (邓章钦) and Selangor Petaling Jaya District Chinese Primary Schools Parents Association Vice Chairman Teh Hon Seng (郑云城). Merdeka Review, March 9, 2006.
between Dongzong and the National Union of Heads of Schools’ (董总校长职工会交
悉). In this statement, Yap said,

To those individuals or organizations that have accommodated the state’s attempts to erode the legitimate rights of Chinese schools by undermining the sovereignty of the school committee for whatever reason—consciously or voluntarily—I would like to warn and advise them to stop acting as the paws of the tiger and stop assisting the enemy in violating the general interests of the Chinese community, or you will be cast aside by the Chinese community.315

Badmouthing from both sides continued until Kang was replaced by the more soft-spoken Pang Chong Leong (彭忠良), thus narrowly averting the destruction of the National Union of Heads of Schools-Dongzong relationship.316

This incident reflected fundamental problems of the Chinese education movement. Throughout the period in which this controversy unfolded, Jiaozong, with many of its core supporters also National Union of Heads of Schools’ members, sat on the fence on the issue of corrupt school principals. Moreover, the weakened Jiaozong leaders were neither able to constrain nor persuade some of the Chinese school principals from taking an antagonistic stand against the school committees, or to stop them from damaging the interests of Chinese schools.

As a direct consequence of the conflicts with the National Union of Heads of Schools and its earlier problems with the Selangor and Penang states’ education departments, Dongzong launched a working committee in March 2006 to compile a Management Handbook for Chinese Primary Schools (华小管理机制指南) and an Awareness Campaign for Chinese Primary Schools’ School Committees (华小董事觉醒运动).317 The former was a set of guidelines, jointly compiled by

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315 Dongzong press statement (February 19, 2006).
317 For the full text of the Management Handbook, see Dongjiaozong (2006).
representatives from school principals, school committees and parents, which aimed to enhance awareness within the school community about their roles, rights and responsibilities in the management of Chinese schools. While the handbook provided detailed basic information on the dos and don’ts, it lacked the legislative machinery and judiciary power to take action—for instance, conduct investigations and take disciplinary action on those alleged for wrongdoing—should one fail to comply with the guidelines. The awareness campaign encouraged school committees to register with MOE and acquire the certificate of registration as requested under Section 88 of the 1996 Educational Act. However, the community remained very critical of Dongzong’s failure to prevent the implementation of the law in the first place.

The fundraising dinner, (known as the Chinese Education Self-Improvement and Unity Dinner, 华教自强团结晚宴), was held in conjunction with the awareness campaign in May 2007. It raised RM1,269,956 in donations and attracted more than 4,000 Chinese educationalists but failed to convince the Chinese community of the reasons why school committees had to comply with the state’s new structure for schools, in particular regarding the acquisition of a certificate of registration by school committees.

In reality, many school committees still had not registered themselves as they see this as bowing down to MOE’s authority. Many school committees felt that MOE should instead regard them as independent partners, and appreciate the Chinese school committees which had been providing the necessary infrastructure for schools run by MOE.

Throughout the whole awareness campaign, Jiaozong’s participation remained passive and conservative. Other than attending formal events and meetings, their

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318 Interview with Shum Thin Khee, February 27, 2009, Selangor.
319 Interview with Leong Tzi Liang, January 17, 2009, Penang.
contribution to these awareness campaigns remained minimal, not to mention their passivity also in mobilizing support and participation from Chinese school principals communities. By 2009, the awareness campaign had been terminated and replaced by the Campaign to Strengthen the Role of School Committees in Chinese Primary Schools (强化华小董事会运动).\textsuperscript{320}

\textit{Jiaozong}’s soft-spoken leaders and conservative strategies have severely threatened its collaboration with \textit{Dongzong}. As a sister organization, the weakening of \textit{Jiaozong} has become a burden to \textit{Dongzong}, which has to bear the brunt of the operational and execution work for both organizations. It was clear that the two ‘siblings’ of the Chinese education movement were moving in different directions. In a press statement in October 2006, \textit{Dongzong} explained that,

\begin{quote}
We (\textit{Dongzong} and \textit{Jiaozong}) have built strong consensus and mutual understanding with regard to the larger direction of the movement. However, being two independent organizations, having different strategies and approaches in certain issues should be considered as normal.\textsuperscript{321}
\end{quote}

Despite \textit{Dongzong}’s official pronouncement of unity, a comparison of the collective strength of the movement over time shows that both organizations have weakened significantly since the 1960s as a result of the structural constraints imposed by the state. The fact remains that the movement’s top office-bearers in the central institutions of \textit{Dongzong} and \textit{Jiaozong} can only represent the respective group’s interests with support from the larger community of Chinese school committees and schoolteachers.

The weakened local agencies not only affected the negotiation power of top office-bearers in their interactions with the state, shrinking membership (a critical problem faced by \textit{Jiaozong}) also prohibited the central institutions from justifying their

\textsuperscript{320} Interview with Choong Ee Hoong, July 27, 2010, Selangor.
\textsuperscript{321} \textit{Dongzong} press statement (October 14, 2006).
authority in representing the collective interests of the group, thus making it even more
difficult for the movement to achieve its ultimate aim in securing fair and just treatment
for Chinese schools in Malaysia.

3.8. Conclusion

By exploring the challenges faced by various levels of the movement’s institutions and
agencies, this chapter has covered three key issues that tended to be overlooked by the
social movement literature. First, the non-liberal, democratic state is a unique and
complex entity. The state has proven its creativity in manipulating its legitimate power
to constrain and suppress social movements through various soft-coercive approaches,
exemplified by its education acts and the distribution of resources for education.
Through these approaches, the state avoided taking extreme measures to contain and
weaken the movement’s local supporters, in particular schoolteachers and school
committee communities.

This chapter’s second finding is that the presence of internal factions hampered
the movement. The incorporation of Chinese primary schools and two-thirds of
Chinese secondary schools into the national system significantly limited local
members’ capacity and flexibility in participating in movement activities. Jiaozong
suffered a massive drain in human and financial resources after Chinese schoolteachers
became civil servants. As civil servants, the latter enjoyed a more secure salary scheme
and better welfare coverage, thus removing their incentive to participate in
anti-government activities. More restrictions were also placed on their participation in
the movement as employees of the state.

Fortunately, the closure of English primary schools in the 1970s reversed the
crisis for the Chinese education movement. It even made Chinese primary schools the
most sought after academic institutions in the country. Fierce competition in enrollment into Chinese schools opened up another source of sustainable income—for making sponsorships and donations guaranteed entry to one of these popular schools. Schools in rural and less populated areas, however, suffered from low enrollment and faced the threat of closure, which led many to seek assistance from politicians to be relocated to urban areas.

Although formal and institutional rules are important, but when these structural elements are weakened by the state, cultural and historical sentiments became core incentives for movement actors. The third finding of this chapter is that the strong cultural sentiments that Malaysian Chinese attached to their ethnic identity became the force that drove the continuous involvement of the Chinese community in the Chinese education movement. The foundation of cultural sentiments differed, however. It was divided between the conservatives (represented by the central committee of the movement) and the moderates (largely those from converted Chinese schools). Most of the former insisted that the movement should remain exclusive and maintain its narrowly defined objectives and principles at the risk of losing collective support.

The relationship between Dongzong and Jiaozong has also been transformed from one of co-existence into a symbiosis. Jiaozong’s capacity in leading the Chinese education movement plunged significantly as a result of fading participation from the Chinese schoolteachers at the local level. Strong institutional bonds between these sister organizations based on shared identity and strong inter-leadership collaboration sustained the movement and helped it to survive state oppression.

However, Jiaozong’s weak capacity in mobilizing and sustaining its movement organizations and supporters is also becoming a burden for the movement. Not only has it been hijacked by political players who have held it hostage against Dongzong’s
open criticism of MOE or the government; it has become (and will continue to be) a potential threat to the continuity of the Chinese education movement. If the movement’s current leaders continue to deny that their institutions are crumbling internally or pass it off as a ‘normal’ process in collaboration, this could become the single major factor leading to the termination and failure of the movement.
Chapter Four

Leaders, Alliances and Politics

4.1. Introduction

While Chapter Three focuses on the challenges and adaptations of the local agencies of the movement and the complexity of the inter-movement collaboration, this chapter studies the movement’s momentum at the national level and the role of movement leaders in engaging alliances and in sustaining the dynamics of movement mobilization within a larger political context. Due to limited access to political institutions, social movements of non-liberal, democratic state tend to rely on strong leadership and inter-agency capital to share information, build coalitions, strengthen networks, motivate support from the larger community and mobilize collective resistance against the state.

The capacity of a leader is primarily concerned with the bureaucratic ability to implement and consolidate a movement’s organizational principles, and the effectiveness of tactical decision-making.\(^{322}\) Despite differences in ‘styles’ and ‘preferences’ in movement campaigns, all movement leaders must rise above given constraints in order to sustain the movement through alliances with various agencies and organizations. The mergence of different social movements or organizations into a unified alliance enables movement leaders to maximize pre-existing social structures to facilitate the movement’s development. These inter-agency coalitions and inter-organization alliances may lead to new identities, changes in membership base

and goals, enrichment of shared resources, enhancement of public visibility, and coordination of plans, while keeping organizational identities distinct.\(^{323}\)

This chapter argues that these inter-agency and inter-organization relationships are based on the leaders’ capacity to gain and sustain trust through their extensive personal ties rather than through formal structural arrangements. Moreover, all movement repertoires and interactional experiences between movements, as well as between social movement and state authorities alike, are learnt and adapted, and then evolve into survival mechanisms to increase the chances of attaining one’s ultimate objectives, and, at the same time, reduce future risks and losses.

In this regard, this chapter begins by analyzing how movement leader, Lim Fong Seng (林晃升), made use of grievances arising from the implementation of 1971 New Economic Policy to build an injustice frame and adopt highly conventional ways of mobilizing support from the Chinese community. These include the revival movement of independent Chinese secondary schools (1973), Merdeka University’s petition (1978) and Merdeka University’s lawsuit (1980–1986).

The chapter then analyzes the movement’s transformation whereby it moved out of its comfort zone to form strategic alliances in reaction to the increasing discriminative and assimilative policies imposed by the state. The second section of the chapter studies Dongjiaozong’s role in mobilizing the alliance of three campaign (三结合) (1982), the establishment of the the Fifteen Leading Chinese Guilds and Associations (十五华团领导机构, 15-Huatuan) alliance (1983), the 1987 national Chinese primary schools sit-in protest, and the promotion of dual coalition system (两线制) with opposition parties in 1990.

Although these campaigns were successful in terms of their mobilization capacity, they failed to achieve the movement’s ultimate goal. The third section of the chapter illustrates the shift of movement repertoires from resistance to a more collaborative approach when Chinese education movement leaders change their strategies—from mobilizing resistance to mobilizing resources—to establish the movement’s infrastructures and its headquarters’ facilities.

The final section of the chapter looks into the impact of new political opportunities within the Malaysian context after the Reformasi movement (1998). The chapter analyzes the failure of Malaysian Chinese Organisations Election Appeals (华人社团大选诉求, Suqiu) (1999) and relates it to the changes in inter-huatuan alliance after the state introduced progressive co-optation strategies in the 1990s. The weaker alliance forced the movement to adopt a less confrontational stance in their interaction with the state, and to channel more efforts on securing underground collaboration with the respective government ministers.

Movement leaders continue to change and adapt the movement’s repertoires along with the liberalization and democratization processes that were taking place in Malaysia’s political arena, especially after new movement leaders came into the power and the official retirement of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in 2003. The chapter thus ends with an analysis of contemporary movement dilemmas, especially after the political tsunami of 2008, and asks if these new opportunities may lead to ultimate success, or if they mark the beginning of the movement’s devastation.

4.2. Political Pressure, Process and Opportunities

When Abdul Razak Hussein became the second prime minister of Malaysia (1970–1976), he embarked on social engineering programs through the New Economic
Policy (1971). For starters, he geared the government toward the creation of a ‘new political culture’ with the formation of BN coalition in 1973.\textsuperscript{324} State bureaucracy was expanded to sustain the tremendous growth of quasi-public enterprise. However, the pro-bumiputera policies and ‘Malayanized’ civil services inevitably and undeniably marginalized minority groups.\textsuperscript{325} Amendments to the national constitution and the implementation of Article 153 made it an offence to question existing provisions on the Malay language, Malay special rights, position of the Malay rulers and the citizenship rights of the immigrant races.\textsuperscript{326}

Facing increasing assimilative measures from the state, the minority communities grew increasingly insecure about their ability to defend and preserve their ethnic and cultural identities. It was during these extraordinary times that saw the rise of ordinary people to become extraordinary leaders of the movement. A mining businessman from Selangor, Lim Fong Seng, was selected as Dongzong chairman in 1973 and soon became the movement’s most contentious leader. Addressing his supporters at the Selangor Donglianhui meeting in March 1973, Lim framed the education movement within the larger political scene,

\begin{quote}
The problems we face at Chinese schools are political problems. The future of Chinese schools and Chinese education depends on the country’s political developments and the way to save Chinese education is not to sit around, wait and do nothing. We must fully mobilize, prepare ourselves adequately, and be effective advocates for our cause.\textsuperscript{327}
\end{quote}

On that note, Lim transformed the successful Perak independent Chinese secondary schools (duzhong) revival movement (see Chapter Five) into a nationwide duzhong revival movement. In this connection, he established the Dongjiaozong Working

\textsuperscript{324} NST (1976: 58).
\textsuperscript{325} Ho KL (1988).
\textsuperscript{326} 1971 Parliamentary Debates on the Constitution Amendment Bill, pp. 1–7.
\textsuperscript{327} Dongzong (1988: 30); Zhan YD (2001: 301).
Committee for the National Development of Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools (*Duzhong*-WC) in December 1973 (see Chapter Five).

While *Duzhong*-WC was successful in reforming a new curriculum and academic system for *duzhong* in the country, Lim did not forget the delayed Merdeka University project (as was discussed in Chapter Two). In March 1974, Lim, as the chairman of Merdeka University Company, proposed the formation of a smaller and less expensive Merdeka College (*独立学院*).\(^\text{328}\) The government rejected this application on the ground that the primary language of instruction, Chinese, was contrary to the 1971 National Educational Policy and contravened sections 11 and 13 of the 1971 Universities and University Colleges Act.\(^\text{329}\)

The failure to launch Merdeka College forced Lim and his followers to concentrate on and defend *duzhong*-related affairs.\(^\text{330}\) In 1975, Lim confronted Mahathir Mohamad, the then education minister (1974–1978), at the launch of the Unified Examination Certificate (*华文独中高中统一考试*, UEC). UEC is a nationwide examination that assesses *duzhong* students’ academic performance and provides a reliable academic credential to passing candidates. On October 27, 1975, two months before the UEC, Mahathir Mohamad summoned *Dongjiaozong* representatives and demanded cancellation of the examination on the ground that UEC might disrupt the status-quo of mainstream national education, causing unnecessary ethnic tensions. After negotiations, *Dongjiaozong* was given two months to respond.\(^\text{331}\)

An emergency meeting was held at Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (SCAH) on November 30, 1975. The meeting was attended by 142 representatives from

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\(^{328}\) DDDC (1993: 24).

\(^{329}\) Announced by Education Minister Musa Hitam on September 17, 1978 during UMNO Annual National Assemble.

\(^{330}\) The issue was also discussed during the National *Duzhong* School Committees and School Principals Joint Meeting (全国独中董事及校长联席会议) in August 10, 1974.

donglianhui, CSTA and Chinese school alumni association. At this meeting, they concluded that the UEC was intended as an internal examination for duzhong students and thus should share equal legal status with the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Qualifying Examination, which offered recognition in accountancy. As such, Dongjiaozong took a firm stand and insisted that it was not contravening the law and thus it was not necessary to seek approval from MOE for UEC. 332 Despite warnings and pressure from Mahathir Mohamad, UEC was successfully conducted at 42 locations nationwide (including Sabah and Sarawak) in December 1975.

The boldness of Lim Fong Seng and his fellow supporters from Dongjiaozong to openly challenge the state’s warnings and attempts to limit the expansion of the movement was motivated by both frustration and need—the frustration of being suppressed and marginalized by the state through various authoritative regulations after the 1969 ethnic riots, and the need to protect and defend Chinese identity from the state’s Malayanization assimilation policies. The success of campaigns, especially in the establishment of the UEC, became one of the key factors that led to the creation of sustainable incomes for the Chinese education movement (see Chapter Five).

4.3. **Merdeka University Lawsuit**

Motivated by the triumph of the UEC dispute, Lim Fong Seng invited a group of enthusiastic ethnic Chinese lawyers, such as Kerk Choo Ting (郭洙鎮), Soo Thien Ming (苏天明), Low Sik Thong (刘锡通) and Ngeow Yin Ngee (饶仁毅), among others, to be his legal advisors. Coming from professional and middle-class, these lawyers enriched the central leadership of the social movement in a fundamental way. The collaboration between traditional Chinese school committee (many of whom

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are businessmen) and schoolteachers in the Chinese education movement made the movement more progressive and dynamic with the participation of these members of the professional class. These lawyers were given direct access to the movement’s central decision-making process as members of the appointed committee, and continue to exercise their influence on the movement’s leaders up to this day.

One of the major reasons Lim invited the participation of these lawyers into the movement was to enhance the movement’s legal capacity to challenge the state’s structural institutions, especially in terms of the limitations imposed by the revised Federal Constitution after the 1969 ethnic riots. In 1977, Dongjiaozong decided to put up a last fight. These lawyers carefully studied various limitations imposed by the National Education Policy and the Universities and University Colleges Act, and drafted the Petition for Incorporation Order for the Establishment of Merdeka University. Dongjiaozong mobilized support from 4,238 huatuans to sign the petition, which was submitted to the King in January 1978. However, the King rejected the petition.

Dissatisfied with the outcome, Dongjiaozong filed a suit against the government and challenged the rights of the Chinese community to establish Merdeka University on constitutional grounds. The One-Person, One-Dollar for Merdeka University Legal Fee (一人一元独大法律基金) campaign launched in November 1978 successfully collected RM292,713 over two years.333 Supported by the Chinese community, especially grassroots members who suffered from the implementation of New Economic Policy, the campaign generated donations through fundraising dinners, charity bazaars, charity performances and likewise events.334

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The financial resources enabled *Dongjiaozong* to hire Michael Beloff, a Queen’s Counsel, supported by a team of 10 Malaysian Chinese lawyers, to file their case at the Kuala Lumpur High Court in September 1980.\(^{335}\) The hearing began a year later but the court eventually ruled against the establishment of Merdeka University in November 1981 on the following grounds:

1. The proposed university was contrary to the National Education Policy, since the medium of instruction would be in Chinese;
2. It would be set up by a private organization;
3. It would only be admitting students from independent Chinese secondary schools;
4. It violated the 1971 Universities and University Colleges Act, whereby any university, public or private, is a ‘public authority’ and as such, has to use *Bahasa Melayu* (Malay language) for official purposes, which is consistent with the Constitution, Article 152 (1).\(^{336}\)

In July 1982, the Federal Court ruled against the appeal. Four judges vindicated their decision citing that Merdeka University is a public institution and therefore had no right to use Chinese language as its official language. The fifth, and the only ethnic Chinese judge, held a dissenting opinion and opined that the usage of Chinese language was not against the Constitution. A subsequent attempt to appeal the case through the Privy Council in London was unsuccessful due to the involvement of the Constitution, which is beyond the statutory powers of the Privy Council, thus marking the end of the whole court battle.\(^{337}\) During a speech addressing *Dongjiaozong*’s supporters in 1993, Lim Fong Seng commented,

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\(^{335}\) These lawyers included Ker Kim Tin, Soo Thien Ming, Tan Chek Yoke, J.C. Bernatt, Soo Lim Pang, Lee Shan Too, Ong Tin Kim, Low Sik Thong, Ngeow Yin Ngee and Siew Yew Ming.


\(^{337}\) *Dongzong* (2002: 7–8).
The founding of Merdeka University causes disputes (in Malaysia) because it is a struggle between ethnic rights activists versus political opportunists and racist politicians; it (Merdeka University) was banned, proving the suppression of vernacular language and education in this country. The lawsuit demonstrated Merdeka University Company’s determination to uphold civil rights and the rule of law. The verdict served to expose the flaws of the constitution’s ability to protect the status of Malaysian people’s vernacular languages. It is a setback to the civil rights movement in Malaysia.338

*Dongjiaozong* may have lost the verdict, but the Merdeka University lawsuit won applause from both the Chinese community and the government for its persistence and courage in defending its goal. In addition, Tunku Abdul Rahman College, which was under MCA’s patronage, was established as the feeder college for the needy Chinese community in direct response to the Merdeka University episode. The Tunku Abdul Rahman College became the most affordable and accessible tertiary education institution for Chinese secondary schools graduates until the liberalization of the National Education Policy in 1990 that saw the formation of the first Chinese community-funded college, Southern College (南方学院) (see Chapter Five).

### 4.4. The Alliance of Three

The lawsuit that Merdeka University brought against the ruling government demonstrated the cabinet’s power in controlling the executive, legislative and judiciary branch. *Dongjiaozong* needed political support to attain its objective, and it was this consideration that prompted Lim to participate in electoral politics in 1982. The conservative faction of the movement opposed Lim’s ambitious plan, however; *Jiaozong* Chairman Sim Mow Yu referred to Lim’s plan as naive and questioned the

338 DDDC (1993: 3).
logic of an education movement organization getting involved in contentious party politics.\textsuperscript{339}

Despite internal disagreement, politically ambitious members who wanted to use \textit{Dongjiaozong} as a platform to embark on their political careers supported Lim’s plan.\textsuperscript{340} According to movement veteran Loot Ting Yee, Lim and his supporters were tempted to form a \textit{Dongjiaozong} political party. Due to resource constraints, they opted for collaboration with existing political parties.\textsuperscript{341} The campaign aimed to unite the political power of the ruling Chinese political parties, the Chinese dominated-opposition parties and Chinese social organizations to defend the rights of the Chinese community.\textsuperscript{342}

However, MCA, the strongest ethnic Chinese party in the ruling government and DAP, the strongest opposition party at the time, showed little interest in the collaboration. On the contrary, MCA-turned-Gerakan politicians Chen Wing Sum (曾永森) and Lim Keng Yaik (林敬益) were keen to collaborate with \textit{Dongjiaozong}. After a majority vote from \textit{Dongzong} committees, the deal was sealed with Gerakan to launch the alliance of three campaign.

Four Chinese educationalists, namely, Kerk Choo Ting, Ong Tin Kim (王添庆), Koh Tsu Koon (许子根) and Kang Chin Seng (江真诚), participated in the 1982 General Election under Gerakan—better known as the Battle of the Four Gentlemen of Chinese Education (华教四君子之战). They pledged the slogan of Join BN, Rectify BN (打进国阵, 纠正国阵).\textsuperscript{343} However, among the four candidates who participated in this campaign with \textit{Dongjiaozong}’s support, only Kerk was an active member in

\textsuperscript{339} Sinchew, August 21, 1990; Li YY (2006: 56).
\textsuperscript{340} Interview with Sim Mow Yu, March 26, 2008, Malacca.
\textsuperscript{341} Thock KW (1994a: 21–27; 1994b); Hew KY (1997); Interview with Loot Ting Yee, March 24, 2008, Kuala Lumpur.
\textsuperscript{342} Koh TK (1986).
\textsuperscript{343} Chian HK (1994: 82).
Dongzong committee. The other three ‘gentlemen’ had only brief encounters with Dongjiaozong. Kang was a newly appointed member of Duzhong-WC’s subcommittee; Ong was one of the lawyers in the legal team in the Merdeka University lawsuit. Koh was totally new to Dongjiaozong—he had been invited by Lim to participate in the campaign.

During the 1982 elections, Kerk was assigned to contest in Kepong constituency against DAP candidate Tan Seng Giaw (陈胜尧). Local Kepong Gerakan branches boycotted Kerk’s election campaign, accusing him of being a ‘parachute candidate’. Reluctant to leave him in the lurch, Dongjiaozong’s leaders and supporters came forward and supported Kerk’s election campaign relentlessly, despite their differences over the rationale of the alliance of three campaign. Although Kerk lost the election, the fervent effort put in by the various Chinese educationalists in the campaign was inspiring.

In Penang, Koh defeated DAP candidate Chian Heng Kai (陈庆佳)—also a Chinese educationalist—with 834 majority votes in Tanjong parliamentary constituency. DAP suffered the humiliation of losing its traditional stronghold of Tanjong constituency and a disastrous electoral setback with its parliamentary seats reduced from 15 in 1978 to six seats in 1982. DAP blamed Dongjiaozong’s alliance of three campaign for contesting against DAP and stirring up intra-ethnic disharmony by using Chinese educationalists against Chinese educationalists, thereby causing factions among the Chinese communities.

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345 Zhen G (2006: 202); Interview with Loot Ting Yee, March 24, 2008, Kuala Lumpur; Interview with Sim Mow Yu, March 26, 2008, Malacca.
347 LimKS Speech (March 10, 1985).
Although Gerakan won the most number of parliamentary seats in the party’s history in the 1983 elections, the dream of rectifying BN was badly shattered when all ‘four gentlemen’ were ‘reformed by BN’. Not only had they failed to prioritize, deliver and defend the interests of the Chinese education movement within the BN government, the desire to accumulate individual political capital within the reality of intra-party power struggle had muted these gentlemen from criticizing the state’s marginalization policies.

Their loose engagement with Dongjiaozong weakened their commitment to Chinese education, and gradually they began to put the interests of Gerakan and politics before those of Chinese education. Lacking a shared political goal among the four also made it impossible for them to overcome the domination of UMNO within BN, despite holding important positions within Gerakan. It was not until 1990 that Lim Fong Seng admitted publicly that the campaign was ‘immature’ and failed his expectations.

4.5. Alliances with the Chinese Guilds and Associations

The Mahathir Mohamad-led BN government imposed a series of Malay-dominated policies in the 1980s to enhance the Malay language and cultural legacy in Malaysia and to expand the assimilation process. The government, for instance, began to implement the narrowly-defined National Cultural Policy (Dasar Kebudayaan Negara) in 1981 by prohibiting activities that were perceived as contradictory to Malay culture.

349 Dongjiaozong backfired Kerk Choo Ting as “no longer took an active interest in Chinese education matters since being appointed a deputy minister”. Dongzong Newsletter (March 15, 1987), pp. 15–17.
and Islam. Notably, from 1982 to 1990, the police refused to release permits for Chinese lion dance performances other than during Chinese New Year; the authorities also limited the usage of Chinese text on commercial signboards.353

To make Bahasa Melayu the dominant education medium in the country, the English-medium Higher School Certificate was replaced by the Malay-medium Malaysian Higher School Certificate (Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia) in 1982.354 In 1983, the Malaysian National Primary Syllabus (Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah) was implemented.355 All these new policies and other acts of discrimination fuelled insecurity in the Chinese community, especially among the post-independence-born generation who regarded Malaysia as their homeland and believed that all Malaysian citizens should enjoy equal rights.356

In response, SCAH activist Chong King Liong (张景良)—supported by SCAH Chairman Khoo Seong Chi (邱祥炽) (1982–1986)—began to lobby for the support of huatuans in drafting the Memorandum on National Cultural Policy (国家文化备忘录) as a countermeasure against the official, Malay-dominated version of the National Cultural Policy. Among others, it demanded more inclusive and multi-cultural representation in national cultural policies.357

With full support from Lim Fong Seng (Dongzong chairman) and Sim Mow Yu (Jiaozong chairman) from the Chinese education movement, Chong King Liong progressively pushed for a historical coalition among the Chinese community in Malaysia. In March 1983, the first Chinese Cultural Congress (全国华人文化节) was organized in Penang as a platform to embark on the formation of the 15-Huatuan—an

356 Interview with Leong Tzi Liang, February 3, 2010, Penang.
alliance of state-level Chinese Assembly Hall, Chinese Chamber of Commerce, 
*Dongzong* and *Jiaozong* (see Map 4.1).

**Map 4.1** The 15-*Huatuan* Alliance

![Map 4.1: The 15-*Huatuan* Alliance](image)

Source: The author.

Chinese Assembly Hall is the highest state-level *huatuan* authority, while states without a Chinese Assembly Hall (such as Malacca, Kedah, Perlis and Pahang) are under Chinese Chamber of Commerce. In total, these two organizations have about 5,000 *huatuans* nationwide under their umbrella. While early *huatuans* were exclusively divided according to members’ regional identity in China, with distinct linguistic and kinship differences, inter-*huatuan* collaboration became more frequent.

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and important after independence, especially in defending the common interests of the Chinese community.\textsuperscript{359}

At the 1983 Chinese Cultural Congress, 15-\textit{Huatuan} and its allies at the state level endorsed the Memorandum on National Cultural Policy and submitted it to Anwar Ibrahim, the Minister of Youth and Sports (1983–1984) three days later. Anwar rejected the Memorandum, citing that the National Cultural Policy had been finalized, and thus there was no need for reflection.\textsuperscript{360} Facing the UMNO-dominated BN regime which refused bottom-up input in its policymaking highlighted the importance of creating and maintaining strong associational bonds between the minority communities to boost one’s force.

By August 1984, the National \textit{Huatuan} Cultural Working Committee (全国华团文化工作委员会) had been established as a platform to strengthen bonds between organizations in the 15-\textit{Huatuan} alliance. It promoted sharing of resources (information and money), enabled routine interactions and built intimate working relationships among leading activists within the alliance. The strengthening of associational links increased 15-\textit{Huatuan}’s capacity to launch a series of exciting Chinese civic movements in the mid-1980s.

Beginning from October 1984, more pro-\textit{bumiputera} policies were implemented, causing mounting grievances in the Chinese community. Malay language became the sole medium in all primary schools—at assemblies and during curriculum activities—eventually eroding the status of Chinese language in Chinese primary schools. The Integrated Schools Project (\textit{Rancangan Sekolah Integrasi}) introduced in August 1985 proposed the establishment of integrated schools, hosting Chinese, Tamil and national primary schools sharing the same school premises. This

\textsuperscript{359} Yen CH (1981: 62–63; 2000: 3).
\textsuperscript{360} SCAH (2004: 63).
project suggested that by sharing school facilities such as canteen, library and school hall, integrated schools would promote integration among students from different ethnic groups. Although each school could maintain their own administration and medium of instruction, the lack of a written guarantee on the preservation of authority within vernacular schools themselves worried Chinese educationalists. Chinese educationalists generally thought the project was a pretext to slowly transform all vernacular schools into national schools to achieve the objectives of the 1957 Education Ordinance (Article 12), that is, to make Malay the main medium of instruction in all schools.\(^{361}\)

Frustrated by all these policies and the worsening economic situation, 15-Huatuan established the Chinese Resource and Research Centre (华社资料研究中心) in January 1985 as a Chinese think tank, whose first and most important contribution was to draft the Joint Declaration of National Huatuans (全国华团联合宣言). The Declaration, endorsed by 27 leading huatuans at the national level, demanded political reforms and greater democratization in the country. It also demanded just opportunities and equal rights for all Malaysians, ending discrimination based on ethnic, religion or gender differences.

The 15-Huatuan rose to become the most outspoken political pressure group in the 1986 General Election. It established the National Chinese Civic Rights Committee (全国华团民权委员会) in January 1986. This committee, led by Chong King Liong and Lim Fong Seng as deputy, spearheaded the formation of the dual coalition

\(^{361}\) The first Integrated School was established in Johore Kota Tinggi in August 1985 hosted a Chinese primary school, a Tamil school and a national school on the same campus. The school was renamed as Kompleks Sekolah-Sekolah Teloh Sengat forcing the deletion of the original identity of the vernacular schools. Strong opposition from the Chinese community persuaded the MOE to replace the Integrated Schools Project with a less controversial Student Integration Program (Rancangan Integrasi Murid Untuk Perpaduan) in 1986 that only required extra-curriculum activities to be conducted together. See Dongzong (2000: 2–8; 2001: 189–219).
system—promotion of competitive opposition political alliance—as “a more effective way to counter racism, uphold democracy and ensure all ethnic groups are treated with equality”. The 15-Huatuan also demanded support from political parties to adopt the 1986 Implementation of the Joint Declaration of National Huatuans memorandum (贯彻华团联合宣言).

Nonetheless, DAP refused to form an opposition alliance with PAS, which insisted upon an Islamic country in its party’s manifesto. Fragmented opposition political parties and lack of support from Chinese-base political parties from the BN ruling regime resulted in the failure of 15-Huatuan’s ambitious campaign. Moreover, BN, which sowed seeds of fear among Chinese voters of PAS’ proposal of an Islamic country, successfully decertified the 15-Huatuan campaign and secured 148 out of 177 parliamentary seats contested in the 1986 General Election.

Despite the setback, the 15-Huatuan continued their lobbying efforts and tried to bridge better understanding between the Malay-dominated PAS and Chinese communities. In September 1985, Lim Fong Seng engaged in a Dialogue of Understanding between Dongjiaozong and PAS, and prompted the formation of the PAS Communities Consultative Council. However, the Dongjiaozong-PAS collaboration was received with mixed responses by the Chinese education movement’s supporters, who were exclusively Chinese and non-Muslims.

In order to regain the confidence of Dongjiaozong’ supporters, Lim announced in September 1986, after an internal evaluation meeting over the Dongjiaozong political strategies in 1982 (alliance of three) and 1986 (dual coalition system), that:

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362 Nanyang, September 1, 1986.
364 Interview with Sim Mow Yu, March 26, 2008, Malacca.
Dongjiaozong will uphold the principle of ‘going beyond political party but not beyond politics’ (超越政党, 不超越政治). This will allow us to accommodate different political views, and, at the same time, remain alert in critiquing and influencing policymaking. Dongjiaozong shall not restrict itself to any political party but it shall not be apolitical, as doing so will detach itself from the reality.\textsuperscript{365}

4.6. Tianhou Temple Assembly and Operasi Lalang

It was at the Tianhou Temple (天后宫) assembly of October 12, 1987 that the country witnessed, for the first time, the political strength of Chinese solidarity. More than 3,000 representatives from the nation’s huatuans and Chinese political parties gathered at Tianhou Temple in Kuala Lumpur in protest against MOE’s appointment of more than 100 non-Chinese-speaking Chinese teachers to take over senior positions in Chinese primary schools.

The event—Protest Assembly of National Chinese Huatuan and Political Parties (全国华团政党抗议大会议)—had an all-star turnout, with Chinese leaders and representatives from the ruling government, opposition parties and huatuans nationwide participating. Chong King Liong (SCAH), Mah Cheok Tat (马卓达, Penang representative), Lim Fong Seng (Dongzong), Sim Mow Yu (Jiaozong), Lim Kit Siang (林吉祥, DAP), Xu Min Yan* (余明炎, Malacca representative), Hou Heng Hua* (侯亨桦, Social Democratic Party), Huang Zhen Bu* (黄振部, Parti Sosialis Rakyat Malaysia), Ong Tin Kim (Gerakan), Lee Kim Sai (李金狮, MCA) and Loot Ting Yee (Jiaozong) took turns giving speeches. They were some of the most ardent critics from the Chinese community; one after another, their speech wooed the audience within the hall. Together with supporters, they uniformly demanded the government to resolve the controversy by removing non-Chinese qualified

\textsuperscript{365} Li YY (2006).
schoolteachers within three days, or face a nationwide strike of Chinese primary schools.\textsuperscript{366}

Recognizing the assembly’s power, Mahathir Mohamad relented. He appointed Deputy Prime Minister Ghafa Baba (1986–1993) to head a mediation committee, which comprised cabinet members Anwar Ibrahim, Lee Kim Sai, Lim Keng Yaik, Samy Vellu and Najib Razak, to put an end to the stalemate. Lee Kim Sai and Lim Keng Yaik, who acted as the government’s ‘bridge’, successfully persuaded the Chinese leaders to compromise and delay the strike. They failed, however, to terminate the movement at the grassroots level, where anti-government emotions were running high.\textsuperscript{367} School strikes were carried out in Penang (46 schools), Malacca (seven schools), Kuala Lumpur and Selangor (seven schools) and Perlis (one school) on October 15. Subsequent strikes spread like wild fire, with at least a quarter of Chinese primary schools in Malaysia joining the strike.\textsuperscript{368}

In response, Najib Razak, Acting Chief of the UMNO Youth Division, organized an anti-Chinese protest with some 7,000 demonstrators at the Merdeka Stadium.\textsuperscript{369} Mounting ethnic tensions created an opportunity for Mahathir Mohamad to carry out his infamous \textit{Operasi Lalang} “to contain escalating political tension”.\textsuperscript{370} The police detained 107 political activists under the Internal Security Act in late October, 1987. Four activists from 15-\textit{Huatuan}, namely, \textit{Dongzong} Chairman Lim Fong Seng, \textit{Jiaozong} Chairman Sim Mow Yu, \textit{Jiaozong} Vice Chairman Thuang Pik King (庄迪君) and Kua Kia Soong (柯嘉逊) from the Chinese Resource and Research Centre, were detained for “continuously playing on various topics and fanning

\textsuperscript{366} Xinwanbao, October 4, 1987; Dongzong (1988: 9).
\textsuperscript{368} Dongzong (2001: 243); Interview with Sim Mow Yu, March 26, 2008, Malacca.
\textsuperscript{369} See Case (1996: 197) on the UMNO internal conflicts.
anti-government sentiments in the Chinese community, thus endangering national security.\textsuperscript{371}

The Ministry of Internal Affairs also temporarily revoked the publishing licenses of three newspapers, namely, the English-medium \textit{The Star}, Malay-medium \textit{Watan} and Chinese-medium \textit{Sinchew Daily}, on the grounds that they publicized sensitive issues and ignored the possible impact of these issues on the peace and harmony amongst ethnic groups and on state security.\textsuperscript{372}

The 15-\textit{Huatuan}'s leader, Chong King Liong, who narrowly escaped from detention, sought to mobilize support from \textit{huatuan}s nationwide to demand the release of detainees. However, crippled by fear of a second wave of \textit{Operasi Lalang}, most people hesitated. \textit{Dongzong} General Secretary Low Sik Thong, who was second-in-line to lead the organization, refused to take over leadership, thereby forcing Selangor social activist and Selangor \textit{Donglianhuai} committee member, Lim Geok Chan (林玉静), to be the acting chairman.\textsuperscript{373}

BN detainees were released fairly quickly and the cabinet proposed a ‘Four-One Resolution’ in April 1988 to end the controversy. The resolution suggested that all four senior positions in Chinese primary schools—school principal, first and second deputy principals, and head of the afternoon session—must have Chinese qualifications, while the chief of curriculum activities could be exempted. In June, Lim Fong Seng and Sim Mow Yu were released, followed by Thuang Pik King and Kua Kia Soong. The last to be released was the DAP father-and-son team, Lim Kit Siang and Lim Guan Eng, in April 1989.\textsuperscript{374}

\textsuperscript{372} These newspapers received a new operation permit in March 1988. DAP (1988: 116–117); Freedman (2000: 83).
\textsuperscript{373} Interview with Sim Mow Yu, March 26, 2008, Malacca.
\textsuperscript{374} \textit{Dongzong} (1989: 26–30).
4.7. Reform and Reconciliation

The 1987 mass arrest changed both Dongjiaozong and Mahathir Mohamad’s government. For the former, Dongzong’s central institution was reformed in 1989 by introducing the position of deputy chairman, vice chairman and assistants to the general secretary and treasurer to back up the core leaders whenever necessary. Its constitution was amended in 1989 to strengthen its internal management by regulating the term of office for all committee members to two years, without a limit on the maximum number of terms. These changes thus allow greater direct participation from outlying states.375

For Mahathir Mohamad, using the Internal Security Act was his last resort. In order to quell anti-government sentiments and to appease opponents, the BN government invited 150 representatives from political parties, minority groups and social organizations to take part in the National Economic Advisory Council (Majlis Perundingan Ekonomi Negara) established in January 1989.376

Despite knowing that the invitation was “more political than economic”,377 three leading members of 15-Huatuan, namely Dongzong, Jiaozong and SCAH, joined the council.378 Among the suggestions they proposed included the replacement of the ethnic quota in national universities by a merit system, and demanded transparency in state decision-making processes.379 However, these suggestions were ‘purposely excluded’ from the council’s report. In response to the manipulation of the meeting reports and verbal insults by the officers incapacitating meaningful participation of the representatives, 15-Huatuan withdrew from the council in August 1989.380

379 Dongzong (1990: 3).
A year later in August 1990, MOE invited Dongzong, Jiaozong, SCAH, Nanyang University Alumni Association of Malaya (马来亚南大校友会) and Federation of Alumni Associations of Taiwan Universities of Malaysia (马来西亚留台校友会联会总会) to sit in the Education Act Negotiation Council. Representatives of these groups accepted the government’s invitation with mixed feelings.

In fact, for a very long time, the government had refused to acknowledge the status and qualifications of Nanyang University and university graduates from Taiwan. This forced many of them to remain exclusively in Chinese-based companies, industries and educational institutions. Nanyang University alumnus played a key role in the efforts to establish Merdeka University during the 1960s, and 40 out of 61 duzhong principals in Malaysia were former Nanyang University graduates. Some of them, such as Chin Choong Sang, Lim Chong Keang (林忠强), Bo Sun Zhong* (博孙中) and Low Sik Thong, held important positions in various Dongzong working committees.

The Federation of Alumni Associations of Taiwan Universities of Malaysia, formed in 1974, had been harnessing the collective power of its 27 member associations to pressure the government to recognize degrees obtained from Taiwan. More than 1,000 such graduates served as schoolteachers and principals in duzhong.

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381 In actuality, this association is only the Kuala Lumpur branch, and not the national umbrella organization. Due to political constraint, Nanyang University alumnus in Malaysia has yet to successfully establish a national association. The state alumnus organizations (Selangor, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Johore, Perak, Malacca and Sarawak) operate at the state level. The Kuala Lumpur branch has been the default representative of Nanyang University alumnus in various Dongjiaozong related activities. See Nanda (1982: 83, 87–102); Lee YL (2004: 421).
383 Interview with Low Hing King, February 23, 2009, Kuala Lumpur.
384 In 1996, the government finally acknowledged the degrees in medicine, dentistry and pharmacy from eight Taiwanese Universities. Interview with Yau Teck Kong, February 18, 2009, Selangor.
The Chinese education representatives submitted the Proposals on the Draft of 1990 Education Act (对 1990 年教育法令草案的修改建议) in March 1991 to the government.\footnote{Dongzong (1992b: 21–28).} Not surprisingly, none of their suggestions were included in the Act. Accumulated frustration with the government motivated Lim Fong Seng to go one-step further—to participate directly in the 1990 General Election. Lim, despite having led the Chinese education movement into an era of dynamism, his resistance-oriented strategies failed to achieve the ultimate goals of the movement. More ironically, in spite of the overwhelming success of the 15-Huatuan collaboration in the 1980s, the state was successful in co-opting key huatuan leaders in a very short time and significantly eliminated the influence of this alliance. Lim’s decision to participate directly in the 1990 General Election—although justified by his frustration of the deadlock between the movement and the state at the time—became one of the riskiest decisions made by this very ambitious but not so lucky leader.

4.8. The Dual Coalition System

Improved relationship with Lim Kit Siang during the 1987 Internal Security Act detention and motivated by pro-DAP Dongjiaozong activists such as Kua Kia Soong, Lee Ban Chen (李万千) and others enticed Lim Fong Seng to join DAP in the 1990 General Election, and once again, yield to the formation of the dual coalition system.\footnote{The other pro-DAP activists included Ngeow Yin Ngee, Yang Pei Keng, Ng Wei Siong, Chong Joon Kin and Lim Soon Hong. See Nanyang and Sinchew, August 9, 1990. Also, see Huayan (1990) for the major newspaper cuttings and articles written on the Dual Coalition System campaign; Thoch KW (1994a; 1994b) for the impact of this campaign.}

Although the decision was also embraced by other senior members of Dongjiaozong, such as Dongzong General Secretary Low Sik Thong, Negeri Sembilan Donglianhui Chairman cum Dongzong Vice Chairman Chin Choong Sang and others,
there were mixed reactions from other Dongjiaozong leaders. They included Duzhong-WC Treasurer Lee Han Kee and Perak United Alumni Alliance Chairman Thong Yee. See Nanyang, July 26, August 1 and 4, 1990.

389 They included Perak Donglianhui Chairman cum Dongzong Deputy Chairman Foo Wan Thot (胡万锋); Jiaozong Vice Chairman Loot Ting Yee and Jiaozong Vice Chairman Thuang Pik King. See Nanyang, August 3, 6, 7, 8, 1990; Tongbao, August 7, 1990; China Press, August 15, 1990; Sinchew and Nanyang, August 18, 1990.


392 This coalition ends in 1996 after the withdrawal of Parti Bersatu Sabah and the dissolution of Semangat-46. See Sinchew, August 8 and 17, 1990; Lim KS Speech (August 18, 1990); Duzhong (1991: 37); Case (1992: 183–205).

political manifesto and rejection of *Semangat-46* by the Malay community prevented People’s Coalition from toppling the BN ruling government’s two-thirds majority in the Parliament.

Furthermore, as part of PAS’ strategy to appease the Chinese community of its pro-Islamic state governance, PAS Kelantan state government, which regained control of the Muslim-dominated east coast state in the election, introduced a series of pro-Chinese policies. Notably, it allowed Chinese schools to buy Malay-reserved land (*Tanah Simpanan Melayu*) as new school premises, extended land title deeds unconditionally to all Chinese schools, granted 50% discount on local council tax, allocated an annual grant of RM20,000, and donated a piece of land measuring 1,000 acres to Kelantan Chung Hwa Independent High School (吉兰丹中华独立中学)—the sole independent Chinese secondary school in Kelantan state.

4.9. **From Resistance to Negotiation**

Lim Fong Seng’s legacy in DAP soon ended with his withdrawal in early 1991 over disagreement on DAP’s approach on the Chinese education.\(^{394}\) In June 1991, Foo Wan Thot (胡万铎), a former MCA Perak state activist, was selected as the new *Dongzong* chairman. Foo emphasized a negotiation-oriented approach as a more effective way to solve the problems on Chinese education. In response, Lim remarked,

> Some had characterized my era as an era of confrontation while Foo’s was one of negotiation. *Dongjiaozong* was a pressure group not because of its leaders’ objectives or decisions, but rather, the subjective factors influencing decisions at the time.\(^{395}\)

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\(^{394}\) Lai XJ (2001).

Foo’s diplomatic strategy began with friendly official visits and closed door conversations with Gerakan and MCA.\(^{396}\) Accompanied by General Secretary Yap Sin Tian, Treasurer Chew Saw Eng (周素英), executive officers Bock Tai Hee (莫泰熙) and Ong Swee Kok (王瑞国), the meeting with MCA President Ling Liong Sik (林良实) (1986–2003) was particularly promising. Both leaders agreed to re-establish collaborative efforts in the development of Chinese education. MCA also promised to help find funds for duzhong and gain recognition for UEC as a Tunku Abdul Rahman College entrance qualification.\(^{397}\)

Foo’s sincere efforts to improve relations with the MCA were, however, overshadowed by the 1992 controversy of Lick Hung Chinese Primary School Committee (力行华小事件).\(^{398}\) Lick Hung School was shifted to Subang Jaya a year earlier due to shortage of students from its old premises at Bangsar. The move created confusion over the legitimacy of the school committee. Attempts by Lick Hung School’s principal (on the order of the Selangor Education Department) to replace its school committee with a financial management committee (lembaga pengurus kewangan)—a less powerful school authority that commonly existed in national schools only—resulted in fears that the move was a ploy to transform the Chinese primary school into a national school.\(^{399}\)

The controversy was complicated by a dispute between the original school committee Chairman Chew Saw Eng (who was supported by Dongzong) and school committee Deputy Chairman Wang Wen Han* (王文汉) (who was backed by MCA Selangor Branch). Both claimed that they were the legitimate leaders of the new school

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\(^{396}\) Sinchew, October 16, 1991.
\(^{397}\) Sinchew, October 16 and 17, 1991.
\(^{398}\) Interview with Chew Saw Eng, February 17, 2009, Kuala Lumpur.
committee. The dispute consequently led to the establishment of a ‘twin’ school committee for the new school. 400 Intervention by Gerakan Deputy President Kerk Choo Ting was rejected by MCA supporters because he was not a member of MCA. This further escalated the conflict into a stalemate among Gerakan, MCA and Dongzong.

Debates in the main Chinese newspapers were intense, and by November 1992, Selangor and Kuala Lumpur state-level MCA leaders proposed that MCA members, who constituted about 70% of the Chinese school committees, should form a ‘new Dongjiaozong’. 401 There were also calls to ‘Enter Dongjiaozong, Rectify Dongjiaozong’ and remove Loot Ting Yee and Chin Choong Sang who had been sowing the idea that MCA was the mastermind of the controversy. MCA President Ling Liong Sik’s timely intervention prevented further escalation. 402

As a gesture to quell the heated dispute, Foo Wan Thot attended the launch of MCA Langkawi Project in February 1993, much to the displeasure of his fellow Dongjiaozong colleagues. Many of Foo’s colleagues felt that the Langkawi Project, which involved fundraising for the Chinese new villages and duzhongs nationwide, was yet another political attempt to use and replace Dongjiaozong in the long run. 403 Foo, however, insisted on his pro-MCA strategy, which subsequently cost him more unpopularity within the Chinese education movement.

This episode is an example of discredited legitimacy of the leader. Foo’s willingness to compromise both the policy and political stand of the movement for the sake of strengthening Dongjiaozong’s relationship with MCA was not welcomed by the movement communities. His decision was also opposed by former leader

Lim Fong Seng’s followers, who preferred to resist the state and collaborate with the opposition party. These former Lim Fong Seng followers, who also dominated the movement’s executive branch, refused to collaborate with Foo during his tenure, which will be discussed in Chapter Five. More importantly, Foo also failed to legitimize his tactics to Dongzong’s core supporters at the local level, who were largely MCA members. Lacking support from most of the movement communities, Foo became one of the shortest serving Dongzong chairman in the movement’s history. He was replaced by Quek Suan Hiang in 1993.

4.10. Formation of Tanglian and Challenges of Chinese Unity

The Lick Hung School incident and the call to establish an alternative Dongjiaozong demonstrated the reality of diversity within the Chinese education community. The situation worsened since the 1990 as a result of the state’s progressive co-optation strategies. Since then, an increasing number of politically ambitious, pro-BN Chinese individuals began to gradually take over the leadership of huatuans, forcing the fragile Chinese community to face both external suppression from the state and internal threats. Most importantly, this phenomenon resulted in the dichotomization of the political culture of Chinese communities: the collaborative ‘politics of collaborative’ and the confrontational ‘politics of pressure’; and these politics continue to influence the strategies adopted by the Chinese education movement after the formation of Tanglian.404

Attempts to establish the Unified Federation of Malaysian Chinese Assembly Hall (中华大会堂联合会, Tanglian) were proposed by the 15-Huatuan since 1982. However, the BN regime delayed its establishment until October 1991, soon after MCA

404 Ng TE (2003: 93).
had gained control of almost all state-level Chinese hall associations.\textsuperscript{405} Conflicts between the collaborative versus the confrontational factions of the former 15-\textit{Huatuan} community became furious during the first \textit{Tanglian} election in December 1991.

Those involved at the confrontational front did not want the pro-collaborative SCAH President Lim Geok Chan—also \textit{Dongzong} acting chairman from 1987 to 1988—to win the presidency uncontested. So, they lured Sim Mow Yu—then \textit{Jiaozong} chairman and Malacca Chinese Assembly Hall president—to compete. Lim Geok Chan, however, won handily (130 votes to 40) and saw the pro-collaborative rift gradually dominating \textit{Tanglian}’s central leadership. However, Chinese education movement leaders were dragged into the politics of \textit{Tanglian} directly and this resulted in the deterioration of relationship between \textit{Dongjiaozong} and \textit{Tanglian}. Subsequently, \textit{Tanglian} leaders began to claim \textit{Tanglian} as the principal \textit{huatuan} representing all Chinese in Malaysia and openly marginalize \textit{Dongzong} and \textit{Jiaozong}.\textsuperscript{406}

During the negotiation on the division of the former 15-\textit{Huatuan} ‘properties’ (as shown in Figure 4.1), \textit{Dongjiaozong} was only assigned to take over the Chinese Resource and Research Centre and the National \textit{Huatuan} Education Policy Committee, while \textit{Tanglian} dominated the other three committees. More importantly, \textit{Tanglian} had the authority over the Industrial Index (工商指南)—an annual publication produced by the Chinese Resource and Research Centre—and a key financial resource of the former 15-\textit{Huatuan}.\textsuperscript{407} In addition, personnel from the three committees that were assigned to be under the care of \textit{Tanglian} refused to surrender their authority because “\textit{Tanglian} had not been able to clear the financial distribution among the two leading alliances”.\textsuperscript{408}

\textsuperscript{405} SCAH (2004: 59).
\textsuperscript{406} \textit{Nanyang}, February 13, 1992.
\textsuperscript{408} The personnel who refused to surrender their authority included the more ‘outspoken’ members, such as Kua Kia Soong, Lee Ban Chen, Ngeow Yin Ngee and others. \textit{Nanyang}, May 25, 1992.
The Dongjiaozong-Tanglian relationship reached its nadir when the former withdrew from the Tanglian-led committee on the drafting of the National Huatuan Cultural Program (全国华团文化工作总纲领) in 1996. Dongjiaozong representatives were dissatisfied with attempts by Tanglian members to amend some of the principles in the 1983 Memorandum on National Cultural Policy and the Joint Declaration of National Huatuan.\(^{409}\) Dongjiaozong saw these changes as “sacrificing Chinese’ interests and the independence of Chinese organizations”. \(^{410}\) In contrast, Tanglian accused Dongjiaozong of being a ‘disruptive guest’ who attempted to destroy the contents of the Tanglian’s memorandum.\(^{411}\)

This incident marked the beginning of the different paths that the two organizations, although once close and in strong alliance, would take due to their different strategies. Although Dongjiaozong adopted a mixture of soft-resistance and negotiable strategies in their interaction with the states, these Chinese education movement community have insisted upon defending the original 15-Huatuan demands.

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\(^{410}\) Quek SH Speech (June 29, 1997).
\(^{411}\) FAATUM committee meeting (March 9, 1997).
On the other hand, vested economic interests and intimate relationship with MCA saw most Tanglian leaders unconditionally supporting the authorities, thus making it difficult for Dongjiaozong to continue trusting its former partner. As a result, Dongjiaozong eventually distanced itself from Tanglian and formed new coalitions, which will be discussed in Section 4.13. The division within the Chinese community also significantly reduced its power as forces to contend in the eyes of the authorities.412

4.11. Resource Mobilization

The Chinese education movement stepped into a new phase when politically neutral Quek Suan Hiang was selected as the new Dongzong chairman in 1993. Among the first tasks Quek faced was the ambitious development of 8.5 acres of land in Kajang. This piece of land was originally owned by the Kajang Fah Kiew Chinese School Premises trustees (加影华侨学校产业受托会) who rented it to the Merdeka University Company as the future campus for the Merdeka University in 1974.

However, the land was reclaimed by the UMNO-led Selangor state government for the development of low cost housing in 1978.413 After a series of interventions from various Chinese societies and politicians, the land was ‘returned’ to the trustees in 1981.414 Driven by the fear of losing the land and the imperative to boost the spirit of Chinese educationalists after the 1987 Operasi Lalang, Lim Fong Seng proposed (in 1989) the development of new administrative building on the Kajang premises.415

To facilitate the development project, the land was formally transferred to Merdeka University Company by Fah Kiew trustees in 1989 and was leased to

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413 Dongzong (1992b: 331).
Dongzong for 30 years at RM1 per annum starting June 1991.  

A large campaign was launched then to raise funds for the construction of a four-storey administrative building. Commemorating the new milestone, a nationwide Torch Relay (华教火炬行) was jointly organized by national and state-level Chinese educationalists. It raised nearly RM2,000,000. Symbolically, the months-long relay spread the flame of hope for the Chinese education movement over 37 duzhongs throughout West Malaysia, stretching from its eastern tip of Kelantan, Kedah, Penang, Perak and Selangor. A second torch, lit in Johore, was carried through Malacca, Negeri Sembilan, arriving at the new Kajang premise on October 31, 1992 to mark the unification of the movement.

Donations were also generated by other means, including charity performances of Chinese stage drama on legendary Princess Hang Li Poh (汉丽宝公主), charity food sales and singing contests. The most successful campaign was the Room Adoption Program, whereby donors had the privilege of naming a room or floor for which their donation contributed. RM500,000 ‘sponsor’ one floor; RM20,000 for a room.

Quek’s openness towards all donations generated positive responses from Chinese-dominated political parties. Gerakan (RM527,561), MCA (RM500,000) and the Hope Foundation (RM1,000,000) each had a floor named after their respective names. The large donation by the Hope Foundation—a charity organization patronized by the Chairman of Malayan United Industries Khoo Kay Peng (邱继炳)—was delivered by Khoo in person to Dongjiaczong in a high-profile

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416 Interview with Lee Hing, July 28, 2010, Selangor.
421 Interview with Quek Suan Hiang, March 23, 2010, Johore.
ceremony witnessed by Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim in May 1994. Anwar was the highest-ranking UMNO politician to attend Dongjiaozong activities. Anwar’s presence was an unofficial but significant assurance of the state’s tacit acceptance of the movement. This occasion rallied high profile coverage by the Chinese press.

Construction of the administrative building was completed in December 1993. It was celebrated with more fundraising events, such as charity sales and a tree-planting ceremony (百万松柏献华教) that symbolized the efforts to maintain Chinese schools for future generations. More than 2,000 pine trees were planted, generating almost RM2,500,000 in donations. In the same evening, a fundraising dinner (风雨同路为华教万人宴) collected another RM4,3600,000. Another milestone during Quek’s era was the establishment of New Era College; this will be detailed in Chapter Five.


Other than financial resources, Quek Suan Hiang also engaged a collaborative lobbying approach in his interactions with the state. The collaboration produced mixed results and were often strongly influenced by the interpersonal relationship between the leaders and the politicians, and the larger political milieu at the time. The best example of such collaboration was that with Najib Razak during his term as the Education Minister (1995–2000), brokered by Deputy Education Minister Fong Chan Onn (1990–1999).

Najib had responded favorably to Dongjiaozong’s request for dialogues to discuss the proposals and memorandums submitted by the movement. Subsequently,

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426 Interview with Quek Suan Hiang, March 23, 2010, Johore.
warm-spirited negotiations became the norm between *Dongjiaozong* and the authorities during Najib’s term and such collaborative approach convinced MOE to grant permanent school registration status to 21 *duzhongs* in 1996. Najib also instructed MOE to organize special schoolteachers’ training programs during the 1999 school holidays to overcome the shortage of Chinese primary schoolteachers.

Above all, the impact of these ‘soft approaches’ were magnified by the strong brokerage facilitation by the MCA ministers—in particular, the Deputy Education Minister, a ‘traditional’ cabinet position held by MCA politicians—who have been critical in coordinating a common agenda and promoting direct dialogues between the state agents and the social movement leaders. For example, Deputy Education Minister Fong Chan Onn brokered the interest of *Dongjiaozong* and those of the MOE has resulted in constructive follow-up. Fong capitalized on his authority in the MCA National Education Bureau—which has a better relationship with senior officers from the MOE—and enabled an alternative channel for memorandums and proposals from *Dongjiaozong* to reach these policy-makers directly.

Over the years, it successfully brought the following issues to the fore: urgent problems faced by Chinese primary schools (first discussed in July 1996 and followed-up until April 1998) and general problems of Chinese primary schools (first discussed in May 1997 and followed-up until August 1999). Memorandums submitted to the cabinet included one on the Declaration on Vernacular Education (*母语教育宣言*) (August 1999) and another on the Establishment of New Independent Chinese Secondary Schools (*申办华文独中备忘录*) (October 1999).

*Dongjiaozong* wisely applied the ‘soft but determined approach’ in managing the Vision Schools project (*Rancangan Sekolah Wawasan*) controversy in 2000.\textsuperscript{427}

\textsuperscript{427} Ng TE (2005: 184–204).
First proposed under the Seventh Malaysia Plan (1995–2000) in 1994, the government recycled the 1985 Integration Schools Project blueprint (discussed in Section 4.5) to place vernacular and national schools on the same premises—now renamed the Vision Schools—with the goal of promoting ethnic integration among schoolchildren.428

Mahathir Mohamad’s determination to implement the Vision Schools project in 2000 invited strong opposition from Chinese educationalists who questioned the rationale whether a forceful, top-down government-imposed integration was the best way to achieve national unity. Previous bad experiences with the state’s education policies, and fear of the elimination of Chinese schools saw Dongjiaozong bombard the Vision Schools project through press releases, submissions of memorandums and demands to conduct dialogues with the Education Minister.

Strong opposition from the Chinese community forced MOE to arrange a closed-door dialogue with representatives from MCA, Gerakan, Dongjiaozong and Huazong429 (previously known as Tanglian prior to 1997) in November 2000.430 However, it failed to convince Dongjiaozong to accept the controversial Vision Schools project. Subsequently, Dongjiaozong successfully pressured, lobbied and persuaded school committees from all five short-listed Chinese primary schools to reject the MOE’s invitation to join the Vision Schools project.431

Lacking participation from the existing Chinese schools, MOE resultantly launched its first Vision Schools Complex located at Subang Jaya on December 2000

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429 Tanglian (中华大会堂联合) was renamed as Huazong (Federation of Chinese Associations Malaysia, 中华大会堂总会) in 1997. See Dongzong (2000: 2).
431 These schools included Soon Jian Chinese Primary School in Alor Setar, Kedah (循然华小); Khing Ming Chinese Primary School in Kuala Kubu Bharu, Selangor (竞明华小); Ladang Hillside Chinese Primary School in Negeri Sembilan (丘晒园华小); Eng Ling Chinese Primary School (永宁华小) and Wai Sin Chinese Primary School in Perak (维新华小); Segamat Central Site Chinese Primary School in Johore (中央华小).
on a new building. Although the Subang Jaya Vision Schools seemed promising with a sustainable student enrollment, nevertheless, all subsequent four pilot projects failed to impress the MOE or the people. The Johore version was terminated due to the presence of too many national schools, while the Vision School in Pundut was troubled by the controversy between the national school’s and Tamil school’s administration. All these failures eventually led the MOE to stop building more Vision Schools since 2002.

The ability of the Chinese education movement leaders to persuade (or pressure) the Chinese school committees to resist state policies were crucial. Such collective actions not only justified the continued existence of the movement as essential to protecting the interests of Chinese schools, it also increased the negotiation capital of the movement leaders with state agencies.

4.13. Reformasi and Suqiu

In September 1998, the political scuffle between Anwar Ibrahim and Mahathir Mohamad resulted in the former’s expulsion from his political appointments and his arrest on (trumped up) charges of corruption and sodomy. The cloud of conspiracy and despotism surrounding Anwar’s overnight political demise led to the birth of an anti-Mahathir Reformasi movement. It is ironic that the movement was led largely by a new Malay class who were a generation of Malay capitalists and Malay

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432 The Subang Jaya Vision School Complex house the Datuk Jaafar Onn National Primary School, Tun Tan Cheng Lock Chinese Primary School (陈祯禄华文小学) and Tun Sambantan Tamil Primary School. The other four Vision Schools Complexes were located at the Pekan Baru (Parit Buntar, Perak), Taman Aman (Alor Setar, Kedah), Tasik Permai (Penang) and Pundut (Seri Manjung, Perak). See Nanyang, December 10, 2000.
436 For Reformasi pictorial and chronology, see Kamarudin (2001); analysis of Reformasi movement and its post-impact on Malaysia politic see Freedman (2000: 52); Loh and Saravananuttu (2003); Ganesan (2004: 72).
middle-class engineered through various state-sponsored schemes and programs created during Mahathir Mohamad’s 22 years’ reign. Many from this new Malay class turned on their patrons—namely, UMNO and the BN coalition government—and supported Anwar’s wife in forming the National Justice Party (Parti Keadilan Nasional, PKR) in 1999, which contested as part of the Alternative Front opposition coalition the 1999 General Election.

With the Malay voters divided into the pro- and anti-Mahathir Mohamad faction, BN was forced to depend on the votes of non-Malays to sustain its political domination. This political opportunity was exploited by the SCAH Civic Rights Committee, which initiated the Malaysian Chinese Organisations Election Appeals Committee (Suqiu). Quek Suan Hiang explained the process of his nomination as Suqiu chairman,

Because the demands of Suqiu were related to the interests of the nation’s Chinese community, they needed an organization leader at the national level to take up the position. Although SCAH Chairman Ngan Ching Wen (颜清文) was interested, he was only a state level leader. Huazong being the largest alliance of huatuan in Malaysia, should have undertaken this responsibility, but they did not want to offend the government. In the end, I, as chairman of Dongzong, was selected to lead the committee.

Suqiu suggested a reform program of 17 themes. Some included the removal of the bumiputera and non-bumiputera dichotomy especially in the implementation of government policies, the abolishment of the ethnic quota system and to be replaced with a meritocracy, among others. However, only some 2,098 huatuans endorsed Suqiu, about half from the total force as compared to the 1983 Memorandum on National Cultural Policy (discussed at Section 4.5). The split also saw Huazong and

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437 On the new Malay class (Melayu Baru) see Khoo BT (2003: 195–199).
439 Interview with Quek Suan Hiang, March 23, 2010, Johore.
other business-oriented huatuans, such as the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (马来西亚中华总商会) refused to participate in the appeal on the ground that the demands were too aggressive and it would infuriate the Malays.441

Despite Mahathir Mohamad’s criticism of Suqiu as “not having the support of all Chinese in Malaysia”442 and being deployed as “a means to pressurize the government”,443 the leaders of BN Chinese political parties (MCA, Gerakan and Sarawak United People’s Party) announced in September 1999 that “the cabinet, in principal, accepted Suqiu demands”.444 BN’s timely response to contain the Suqiu demands managed to salvage its support from the Chinese community. Despite facing tremendous pressure for political reform and liberalization from the 1998 Reformasi movement and challenges by PKR, BN maintained its two-thirds majority at the polls, despite losing the states of Kelantan and Terengganu to PAS, and a considerable decline (from 65% in 1995 into 56% in 1999) in its overall popular vote totals.445

The fact that UMNO failed to win Malay-majority support in the 1999 General Election has threatened its status quo as the party with the most number of parliamentary seats.446 A leading Malaysian studies scholar Khoo BT correctly pointed out that in his attempts to recapture Malay support, Mahathir Mohamad resultant played the card of “the contrivance of a Chinese threat to Malay rights” by attacking Suqiu.447 A series of events in August 2000 supported Khoo’s observation. It begins with the anti-Suqiu demonstration participated by about 200 UMNO Youth Division

441 Sinchew, August 27 and 29, 1999; Nanyang September 9, 1999; Ng TE (2005: 198); Loh KW (2009).
442 Sinchew, September 14, 1999.
443 Berita Harian, September 21, 1999.
444 Nanyang and Sinchew, September 24, 1999.
members who protested outside SCAH headquarters. Protesters demanded the withdrawal of Suqiu’s petition and an apology to the Malay community.448

The protest was followed by Mahathir Mohamad’s open condemnation of the Suqiu committee in his 2000 National Day speech as being “not much different than communists who tried to destroy the special status of Malays in the country and shared a similar approach to Al-Maunah”.449 Overwhelming political pressure forced Suqiu to rescind seven of its appeals after a series of closed-door negotiations with UMNO and Suqiu Chairman Quek Suan Hiang bore the blame of ‘bowing down to UMNO pressure’ although he was not the progenitor of the demands.450

The Suqiu setback was a wake-up call for Dongjiaozong to the division and weakening alliance with Huazong. In early 2002, the establishment of the Seven Chinese Education Related Guilds and Associations (华教界七华团, 7-Huatuan) saw closer collaboration between Dongzong, Jiaozong, Federation of Alumni Associations of Taiwan Universities of Malaysia, Nanyang University Alumni Association of Malaya, United Chinese School Alumni Association (华校校友会联合会总会), Malaysian Seven Major Clans Association (七大乡团协调委员会)451 and Huazong.

The 7-Huatuan alliance led by Dongzong consisted of more Chinese educational-based huatuans. It also consisted of the Malaysian Seven Major Clans Association which was led by a more vocal leadership that was dissatisfied with

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448 The event was widely covered (in different perspectives) in both Chinese and Malay newspapers. For the pro-Suqiu coverage see Nanyang and Sinchew, August 19–23, 2000; pro-UMNO coverage see Utusan Melayu, August 18–23, 2000.
449 Mahathir Mohamad Speech (August 31, 2000).
450 Interview with Quek Suan Hiang, March 23, 2010, Johore.
451 This association comprised of custodian-based clan associations, guilds, occupation- and region-based huatuans: Malaysian Federated San Kiang Association (马来西亚三江总会), Federation of Hainan Association Malaysia (马来西亚海南公会联合会), Guangxi Association Malaysia (马来西亚广西公会总会), Federation of Hakka Association Malaysia (马来西亚客家公会联合会), Federation of Teochew Association Malaysia (马来西亚潮州公会联合会), Federation of Hokkien Association Malaysia (马来西亚福建社团联合会) and Federation of Kwangtung Association Malaysia (马来西亚广东会馆联合会).
Huazong’s failure to represent the Chinese in various issues.\textsuperscript{452} Even though Huazong was named as one of the members of the alliance, its participation has more symbolic than pragmatic meaning. Compared to the 15-Huatuan, the capacity of 7-Huatuan in mobilizing the Chinese community has been far weaker and less impressive. More about the influence of 7-Huatuan alliance in the Chinese education movement will be elaborated in Chapter Five.


Prior to Mahathir Mohamad’s retirement from premiership in 2003, he introduced the Teaching and Learning Science and Mathematics in English Program (Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik dalam Bahasa Inggeris, PPSMI) in May 2002. The program was scheduled to be implemented in all primary schools by January 2003. Although there was national consensus on the urgent need to raise English proficiency in Malaysian schools, the policy simultaneously threatened the status of mother tongues as the main teaching medium in all primary schools. In addition, there was insufficient infrastructure and trained schoolteachers available to implement this policy. The effectiveness of raising English proficiency through knowledge-based subjects such as mathematics and science was also questionable.\textsuperscript{453}

Chinese educationalists opposed the policy strongly, and although the Chinese-based political parties openly worried about its effectiveness, Mahathir-led UMNO was reluctant to concede too much to their demands.\textsuperscript{454} The Chinese-based parties of BN (MCA, Gerakan, Sarawak United People’s Party, Sabah Progressive Party and Liberal Democratic Party) enacted a political compromise of

\textsuperscript{452} Ho KL (1992: 5).
\textsuperscript{453} Collins (2006: 315).
\textsuperscript{454} Sinchew, August 8, 2002; Nanyang, August 10, 2002; Malaysiakini, October 21, 2002.
‘Two-Four-Three Resolution’ in October 2002.\textsuperscript{455} The formula, where two periods would be used for teaching English, and four and three periods would be used to teach mathematics and science in English, respectively, was implemented in all Chinese primary schools from January 2003.\textsuperscript{456}

The implementation of PPSMI had the greatest impact particularly on students in the rural areas. These students had had little exposure to English language and could hardly follow what their mathematics and science subjects schoolteachers were saying when they switched to teaching in English overnight. Students in the urban areas, in contrast, were able to attend tuition classes to help them manage the transition. Expectedly, the academic performance of rural students deteriorated significantly from bad to worse as compared to their urban counterparts.\textsuperscript{457}

These grievances turned into hope when Abdullah Badawi succeeded Mahathir Mohamad as the prime minister in November 2003. His amicable ‘Islamic credentials’ through civilisational Islam (Islam hadhari)\textsuperscript{458} won support from the rural Malay electorate, and his publicized war on corruption by arresting and charging several high-ranking officials convinced the public of his determination to shape a new and more transparent administration. Thus, the timely upturn of the economy after the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome crisis in early 2003 and the constituency delineation of electoral boundaries exercise in April 2003 also significantly maximized BN’s political strength in the 2004 General Election.\textsuperscript{459} These factors ensured a landslide victory of more than 90% of the contested parliamentary seats for Abdullah Badawi.

\textsuperscript{455} See Sinchew, October 10, 2002.
\textsuperscript{456} Nanyang, October 31, 2002.
\textsuperscript{458} Islam Hadhari is an approach that emphasizes development consistent with the tenents of Islam. See Badawi (2006: 1–29); Malaysiakini, April 28, 2001.
\textsuperscript{459} Liow J (2005: 909–912).
New leadership in the Chinese education movement also came into power in June 2005, when Yap Sin Tian succeeded Quek Suan Hiang as Dongzong chairman. Yap’s active involvement in Dongzong since 1990 allowed him to build strong networks and collaborate with other movement actors. As a former Internal Security Act detainee, he had garnered significant support from the leftist faction of the Old Friends Association (老友联谊会) and the Twenty-First Century Old Friends Club (21世纪老友)—the behind-the-scenes power brokers within the movement.

In the ensuing year, the new state leaders and the Chinese education movement were preoccupied by power struggles within their own institutions. As shall be elaborated in Chapter Five, Yap engaged in one of the nastiest fights within the movement with the executive branch of Dongzong; meanwhile, his collaboration with MCA’s new party leaders flopped as the latter were similarly preoccupied with internal party factions. Unlike earlier MCA leaders, the new MCA leader, Ong Ka Ting (黄家定) (2003–2008) was unable and unwilling to mediate or bridge demands from Dongjiaozong with MOE. Ong and Deputy Education Minister Hon Choon Kim (韩春锦) (1999–2008) also showed little support towards Dongjiaozong’s calls to manage the Damansara Chinese Primary School crisis (elaborated in Chapter Six).

In addition, power struggles within UMNO—especially with the rapid rise of Khairy Jamaluddin, the son-in-law of Abdullah Badawi, as the deputy chief of UMNO Youth Division—had posed a considerable challenge to Hishammuddin Hussein’s political position as chief of UMNO Youth Division. Hence, in his attempts to assert his

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460 Back in 1999, contentions between MCA President Ling Liong Sik’s team A (supported by Ong Ka Ting) and Deputy President Lim Ah Lek’s (林亚礼) team B (supported by Chan Kong Choy, 陈广才) over the nomination of their respective protégés for the presidential post had to be temporarily frozen by Mahathir Mohamad’s ‘peace formula’. Both Ling and Lim had not sought re-election and had agreed to retire in May 2003, paving the way for Ong and Chan’s appointment to full ministerial positions. Although Ong won the party president election eventually, the resultant bad blood between the two factions destabilized the party enough to dilute its decision-making influence within BN.
domination and superiority, Hishammuddin refused to meet any Dongjiaozong representatives in public or respond to the memorandums on Chinese education movement submitted during his early term of office as the education minister (2004–2009).461

This roadblock forced Dongjiaozong to explore and garner new support especially through inter-ethnic collaboration. In early 2007, Dongjiaozong engaged the Tamil Foundation of Malaysia, which equally dissatisfied with the PPSMI policy. Both vernacular organizations jointly submitted 100,000 anti-PPSMI postcards signed by petitioners and a Memorandum for the Return of Vernacular Education (还我母语教育各忘录) to the prime minister. Two years later, Dongjiaozong conducted dialogues with Hassan Ahmad, chairman of the Malay advocacy group—Movement to Eliminate PPSMI (Gerakan Mansuhkan PPSMI)—regarding joint strategies to demand the government to withdraw PPSMI.462 However, complicated internal politicking among Hassan Ahmand-led movement activists and UMNO factions and lack of agreement from the former to revert the medium of teaching back to vernacular language (but replace it instead with Malay) prevented the collaboration from making any meaningful progress.463

4.15. The 2008 Political Tsunami

The political storm that struck Malaysia in 2008 had been brewing steadily. Although Abdullah Badawi’s administration had made a glorious entrance into politics,
Malaysians were getting progressively more impatient and disappointed with the administration’s inability to fulfill its campaign promises.

By November 2007, Coalition for Clean and Fair Election (Gabungan Pilihanraya Bersih dan Adil)—a coalition of some 60 NGOs (such as Suara Rakyat Malaysia, Women’s Development Collective and Writers Alliance for Media Independence) and five leading opposition political parties (PKR, DAP, PAS, Parti Sosialis Malaysia and Sarawak National Party) launched in 2006—mobilized one of the largest anti-government ‘gathering’ since the 1998 Reformasi movement. More than 40,000 civilians, NGOs and political parties’ supporters, across ethnic groups and lingual groups gathered at downtown Kuala Lumpur to demand for reform of the country’s political system, as well as to demonstrate the people’s growing dissatisfaction with Abdullah Badawi administration.464

Meanwhile, the Hindu Rights Action Force—a coalition of 30 Hindu- and Tamil-based NGOs—had been gaining support from the Indian community in defending its rights, which had been deteriorating in the country. The Hindu Rights Action Force also mobilized shared grievances of the community over the failure of Sami Vellu and his Malaysian Indian Congress in efficaciously representing the interest of Indian community. 465 On the Chinese front, the community was increasingly disappointed over the prolonged internal conflicts in MCA and dissatisfied with the failure of new MCA leaders to represent its interests within the BN coalition; the community hence began to withdraw its support.

Above all, it was the rise of Anwar Ibrahim, after his release from prison in September 2004 that provided a de facto leader to form a strong inter-ethnic opposition political coalition under People’s Alliance (Pakatan Rakyat, PR). The result was a

switchover of an overwhelming number of votes to PR at the 2008 General Election, breaking BN’s traditional two-thirds dominance of parliament. The parliamentary margin was narrowed significantly for the second time since independence.

At the state level, PR gained control of five states (four after BN controversially regained Perak in February 2009).466 The formation of a significant, albeit rather unstable, dual political coalition system for the first time in Malaysia’s history was welcomed with a mixture of excitement and anxiety.467 BN’s weakened political domination was further threatened by Anwar Ibrahim’s landslide victory in the Permatang Pauh parliamentary by-election in August 2008, after he had fulfilled the legal bar to hold political office. The victory marked a stunning comeback for the opposition leader.

The BN-PR competition was intensified after Najib Razak succeeded as the prime minister in April 2009. Najib Razak sought to revive his party and BN coalition by launching the ‘One Malaysia’ campaign that promised economic reforms through the New Economic Model.468 BN and PR also adopted more accommodative principles toward the demands of various pressure groups, including those from the Chinese education movement.469

PR state governments engaged in ‘friendly’ relations with *Dongjiaozong* by offering, for instance, to waive land taxes for schools, allocate land and provide financial resources from the state budget to vernacular schools in their respective states. The Penang government, led by DAP, allocated RM1,000,000 in 2009 and

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466 Better known as the ‘Perak Constitutional Crisis’, BN regained control of Perak state after three PR state assembly members quit their parties and became a BN friendly independent assembly member, leaving both BN enjoying a slim majority of 31 over 28 seats. See Harakah, September 23, 2010.
467 For analysis on impact of the post-2008 General Election, see Tan and Lee (2008).
468 Guided by three principles–high income, sustainability and inclusiveness–the Model hope to progress the country’s economic growth in capital and productivity for all Malaysian. NEAD (2010: 3–30).
RM2,000,000 a year later to five *duzhongs* in Penang. PR Selangor government, led by PKR, donated RM4,000,000 to the state’s Chinese primary schools and RM2,000,000 to the *duzhongs*. The Kelantan state government, led by PAS, donated 2,229 acres of land to Kelantan Chung Wah Independent High School. Perak government similarly donated 1,000 acres of land to all nine *duzhongs* in Perak.

BN government also tried to woo the Chinese community by putting an end to the prolonged stalemate over Damansara Chinese Primary School. The school was reopened in January 2009 (see Chapter Six). The government also agreed to revert to teaching Mathematics and Science in vernacular language in all primary schools with effect from 2012. Najib Razak’s administration responded positively to various demands by the activists of the Chinese education movement. For instance, UEC holders are now allowed to apply for the state education loan starting from May 2010. Chinese classes have also been introduced in the national schools, marking the formal entrance of Chinese education into Malaysia’s mainstream education system.

Yap Sin Tian also used the opportunity to foster closer collaboration with key MCA ministers, demand for gradual recognition of UEC and to upgrade *Dongjiaozong*-funded New Era College into a full university. Nevertheless, the controversy that had shrouded New Era College since 2008 caused activists of the Chinese education movement to be divided over the best approach for exploiting this political opportunity to the fullest. Intensifying conflicts within *Dongjiaozong*, elaborated in Chapter Five, will mark the movement’s struggle with internal challenges, while at the same time seeking to reach its ultimate objective of raising the status of Chinese education in the country.

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472 *News Staits Times* and *Sinchew*, July 9, 2009.
4.16. Conclusion

The opportunity for movement mobilization varies with the transitioning realities of political circumstances, especially those constrained under a non-liberal, democratic political context and suppressive state authorities. Due to limited political access, the success of movement strategies is often determined by critical factors of leadership, brokerage and external networks.

The leadership of the Chinese education movement has been selected through a bottom-up democratic process, and therefore has enjoyed legitimacy in mobilizing its supporters and launching various campaigns in resisting state suppression. Strong leadership is not inherited naturally but is structurally created through the leaders’ ability to gather think tanks, utilize his social capital in engaging support from leaders of other organization, engage with MCA leaders for critical information, and took advantage of his position as a Dongjiaozong leader to mobilize appropriate strategies.

Most importantly, leaders must outlive the external political constraints and sustain the movement’s goals by adapting its repertoires according to the changes in its supporters’ mentality, and according to pressure from the state. The impacts of these factors have been shown in this chapter, in particular the shift of movement repertoires adopted by movement leaders, which varied from resistance- to negotiation-oriented approaches.

Chinese educationalists led by Lim Fong Seng resisted the state through a series of mass collective action and participation in politics (directly and indirectly) as a means to achieve their movement objectives in the 1970s and 1980s. However, these efforts failed to garner sufficient support from movement supporters, which were divided by their various political affiliations, with many of them viewing such attempts
to be too costly, as the state had the power and tendencies to manipulate its law
enforcement system to crack down movement supporters.

Learning from past consequences, Lim Fong Seng’s successor, Foo Wan Thot,
softened the movement’s approach in 1991 and fostered closer collaboration with
MCA. However, Foo’s pro-MCA strategy was also poorly received by the movement
supporters. Subsequent leaders such as Quek Suan Hiang and Yap Sin Tian revised
their strategies into a politically neutral, collaborative and negotiation-oriented
approach. Instead of having a pro-MCA position, Quek was able to work amicably with
the authorities through brokerage and facilitation from MCA ministers. Such indirect
collaboration was better received by supporter, and the Chinese education movement
was also able to deliver its demands for changes effectively. The impact of these
lobbying efforts went beyond policymaking, but also at the policy-executing level, and
has provided promising rewards for the movement.

The movement has also relied on the support of its alliances through networking
with other *huatuans* in the country. It is best exemplified by the 15-*Huatuan* alliance
that was formed in the 1980s in the face of increasing assimilation threats from the
state. The Chinese education movement leader Lim Fong Seng and Sim Mow Yu
collaborated with leading *huatan* activist Chong King Liong to form a formidable
alliance of 15-*Huatuan* and led a series of Chinese civic movements in the 1980s. The
cause of the Chinese education movement in this era was framed as one beyond
vernacular education rights, as a fight for the values inherent in a democracy and for
human rights; thus, its frame laid an important foundation and structure for
cross-societal political collaboration.

Facing mounting challenges from the Chinese community, the state reacted by
deploying a series of carrot-and-stick measures. Through cohesive suppression
(Operasi Lalang) and co-optation (formation of Tanglian), the state successfully weakened the influence of Dongjiaozong by splitting the latter’s relationship with Tanglian. As the once influential 15-Huatuan alliance entered into a decline, it forced the movement to establish new alliances with the other huatuans and non-Chinese organizations. Although support from the non-Chinese communities may promise powerful momentum for the movement, yet the exclusive nature of the Chinese education movement has hindered the blossom of this collaboration.

After 2008, the dual coalition competition between BN and PR has provided valuable political opportunities for the Chinese education movement. BN leader, Najib Razak who became the Malaysia prime minister in 2009, has adopted more accommodative principles toward demands from the Chinese education movement. At the same time, PR controlled state governments also have provided various pro-vernacular education policies and allocated financial resources to the Chinese schools in their states.

However, facing the mounting internal factionalism within the movement, movement leaders have shifted their concentration to manage and resolve internal movement problems rather than exploiting these political opportunities. Perspectives and impacts of these internal factionalizations will be discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter Five

Mobilization Machinery

5.1. Introduction

Chapter Four elaborated the fluctuation of movement’s trajectories from collaboration to resistance and from resistance to maintenance under the influence of different leaders. It argued that such external interactions and long-term antagonism with state authorities have been strongly influenced by the movement leaders who had risen through the grassroots and empowered by legitimacy to represent the movement in its interactions and negotiations with state authorities. After covering much of the movement’s external relationships, this chapter concentrates on the movement’s internal institutions in the form of mobilization machinery.

This chapter first explores the strengths and weaknesses of two of the movement’s key thematic working committees, namely, the *Dongjiaozong* National Independent Chinese Secondary School Working Committee (董教总全国发展华文独立中学工作委员会, *Duzhong-WC*) and the *Dongjiaozong* National Chinese Primary Schools Development Working Committee (董教总全国发展华文小学工作委员会, *Huaxiao-WC*). The former was launched in the 1970s as a platform to revive and reform the dying *duzhong*. *Duzhong-WC* and its strong executive branch have been playing the role of ‘People’s Education Ministry’ since its establishment. The formation of this ‘second track’ education institution for the Chinese community enabled the movement to recruit individuals with professional capabilities to inject new insights and ideals into the movement. Input from academics and experts assisted the formation of a unified curriculum and examination system, and expanded
the Duzhong-WC with sustainable financial resources from Duzhong-WC, enabling Dongzong to dominate the Chinese education movement.

The Huaxiao-WC and its executive branch was introduced and based at Jiaozong in the 1990s with assistance from Dongzong. Although the Huaxiao-WC also established working committees and hired paid staff to execute various movement activities like Duzhong-WC, such arrangement failed to generate significant success for Jiaozong. Although inter-organization collaboration helped to sustain the weaker sister organization and further strengthened the dominant role of Dongzong in the Chinese education movement, however, over time, the imbalance in the development of the two organizations transformed the relationship from one of symbiosis into a synnecrosis.

The later part of the chapter focuses on the establishment of the Dongjiaozong Higher Learning Center Non-Profit Private Limited (董教总教育中心非营利有限公司，HLC) in 1994 and the successful establishment of a tertiary academic institution, the New Era College (新纪元学院) in 1997. The milestones were celebrated with expanding international collaboration through the Southeast Asian Chinese Language Teaching Convention (东南亚华文教学研讨会) and various universities in China, Taiwan and elsewhere. The increasing economic value of the Chinese language was also an important factor that led to the Chinese education movement into a transnational movement.

The Duzhong-WC, Huaxiao-WC and the HLC have been important components of the mobilization machinery of the Chinese education movement. They are important institutional processes that have helped to establish recognition and acknowledgement from the public and the authorities as the legitimate voice for the movement. Such machinery also characterizes the movement’s hierarchy of decision-making, which came from the managerial level (led by the elected
committees) and operative level (led by the salaried executives). The chapter will thus explore in detail the internal dynamics and working styles adapted by each machinery overtime. These machineries follow a bureaucratic system that is predominantly agent-based (人制) and formulated around loosely-defined rules and regulations that are system-based (体制). Although professionalism eventually grew out of this hybrid system, their impact and outcomes varied according to the relationship between the managerial and operative personnel.

Currently the movement is taking on an ambitious and costly project: the upgrade of New Era College into a full-scale university on a piece of land donated by the politically well-connected Hong Leong Group. Nevertheless, eruption of conflict between the movement’s committees and the executive officers—such as the Yap Sin Tian and Bock Tai Hee disputes in 2006, and the New Era Collage controversy in 2008—had divided the movement into two (or more) confronting factions. The division challenged the overall solidarity of the movement, making the movement more vulnerable to external challenges, in particular those imposed by the state.

5.2. Duzhong Revival Movement

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the implementation of the 1961 Education Act saw most Chinese secondary schools transform into converted Chinese secondary schools. The management authority of the schools’ buildings and facilities was also surrendered to the MOE. Only 15 schools upheld Jiaozong’s call for survival through self-reliance (自立更生) to fiercely defend the dignity of traditional Chinese schools and resist the conversion. Most of the schools from the converted cluster also set up an affiliated duzhong branch within the shared school campus to accommodate overaged
students and dropouts. MOE approved these affiliated schools in 1961 as a measure to appease angry Chinese communities and to protect the social interests of the school committees that had acceded to the conversion project.

_Duzhong_’s development began to regress significantly during the period from 1963 to 1972. The number of students in national secondary schools rocketed after the government abolished the Malayan Secondary School Entrance Examination in 1963, resulting in the automatic enrollment of all primary school graduates into secondary schools. Subsequently, the implementation of nine years of free education for all citizens beginning in 1964 also drew new enrollment away from _duzhong_, which collected school fees. Government subsidies that allowed schools to provide better pay for schoolteachers in the national schools also caused a drain of schoolteachers from _duzhong_.

Perak, the state with the highest number of _duzhong_, faced the greatest challenge in sustaining these dying schools. Having failed to surpass these constraints, five out of 14 of Perak’s _duzhong_ shut down in 1969. The remaining nine _duzhong_ s hosted merely about 1,500 students before their impending closure. This nationwide phenomenon threatened the survival of _duzhong_ and the continuity of the Chinese education movement at large.

One month after the Emergency Decree was lifted, the _Sandajigou_ (discussed in Chapter Two) hosted a nationwide meeting in July 1972 and established the _Duzhong_ 476

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473 By 1998, 21 converted schools had set up affiliated _duzhong_, sharing school facilities such as library, school hall, school fields and canteen with their converted counterparts. The number of _duzhong_ eventually rose from 16 in the 1961 into 61 nationwide by 2008. A majority of dropouts from the Chinese converted schools were those who failed to pass the English-medium Lower Certificate for Education after completing form three, and therefore did not qualify for enrollment into form four. The list of _Duzhong_ in Malaysia is available in Appendix 5. See Shen T (1975: 8); Tay LS (1998c: 266, 271–273).

474 Interview with Sim Mow Yu, March 26, 2008, Malacca.

475 Leong and Tan (1997: 308).

476 These _duzhong_ included Yik Ching (育青), Shen Jai (深斋), San Min (三民), Tsung Wah (崇华), Nan Hwa (南华), Hua Lian (华联), Pei Yuan (培元), Poi Lam (培南) and Yuk Choy (育才).
Development Committee (独中发展小组) to strategize ways to salvage the plunging status of Chinese schools in Malaysia.\(^{477}\) In Perak, Zeng Dun Hua* (曾敦化) and Shen Ting* (沈亭) from Poi Lam Duzhong (培南独中) facilitated the first gathering of all nine duzhong school principals on November 25, 1972. Carefully planned by Shen, a dedicated schoolteacher, and utilizing Zeng’s influence as chairman of Poi Lam’s school committee and a well-respected businessman in Ipoh, the gathering successfully laid the groundwork for cross-duzhong collaboration in Perak.

A second gathering held the next month saw extended participation from various chairmen of duzhong school committees. By the third gathering in April of the following year, the collective collaboration had been going so well that Perak Donglianhui also agreed to conduct a fundraising campaign to revive duzhongs throughout Perak. This marked the beginning of the Perak duzhong revival movement (吡叻州华文独中复兴运动) and it subsequently became a nationwide campaign.\(^{478}\)

Led by Chairman Foo Wan Thot, Perak Donglianhui reacted positively. They formed the Perak Duzhong Development Working Committee (吡叻州发展华文独中工作委员会) and launched the Perak duzhong revival movement with a fundraising campaign on April 15, 1972. The campaign gained momentum after the organizers perceptively began to highlight the concept of yi (义)—a voluntary and righteous behavior to protect the weak. Donations were generated through charity campaigns involving sales of food, fishing, trishaw-riding and ‘One-person, One-dollar’ donation, among others.\(^{479}\)

The campaign garnered support from the Chinese community in Perak and nationwide, particularly from those who had suffered under the Emergency Decree and

\(^{478}\) Sinchew, April 10, 1975.
who were unsatisfied with the New Economic Policy system. The RM1,000,000 target was reached by 1972, and the money was used for the expansion of school buildings and facilities, hiring of more schoolteachers and setting up of scholarships and loans for duzhong students.480

In addition, the successful campaign restored in parents the confidence to send their children to duzhong for education. Student enrollment increased from about 2,500 in 1970 to roughly 5,100 in 1976 in the nine duzhongs in Perak.481 As importantly, these duzhongs began to collaborate in drafting a unified school curriculum and uniform textbooks. Each school was responsible for developing a designated subject textbook—for example, the Chinese language textbook was developed by Pei Yuan (培元独中), English language textbook by Yuk Choy (育才独中) and Malay textbook by Nan Hwa (南华独中).482

5.3. Duzhong-WC Organization

Over the same period, Selangor Donglianhui organized the Duzhong Seminar (华文独中研讨会) in March 1973 and successfully gathered Chinese educationalists from Selangor state to draft the Guiding Principles of Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools (华文独立中学建议书, Duzhong Proposal). This document, which was completed in August in the same year, was promoted as the blueprint for national reform of duzhong during the Dongjiaozong National Conference for Duzhong Development (全国发展华文独中运动大会) in December 1973.483

481 Shen T (1975).
482 There were also textbooks developed for mathematics (by Hua Lian 华联独中), history (by San Min 三民独中), geography (by Yik Ching 育青独中), commerce (by Shen Jai 深斋独中) and science (by Poi Lam 培南独中). See Zhen G (1996: 82) and Lim GA (2004: 6–19).
The dominance of Selangor Donglianhu leaders in the Dongzong central committee resulted in the use of Selangor’s version of the duzhong proposal, despite the fact that Perak was the leading state in the reform efforts. In the same 1973 conference, Duzhong-WC was established. In addition, they also established the Dongjiaozong Duzhong Development Fund (DDDF) and the Educational Affairs Working Committee. The latter was divided into the Unified Curriculum Subcommittee and the Unified Examination Subcommittee. These committees became the key elements in mobilizing the nationwide Dongjiaozong duzhong revival movement (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 Main Elements of Duzhong-WC

Source: The author.

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484 Jiaozong (1983c: 26).
The Unified Examination Subcommittee was responsible for planning and executing the Unified Examination Certificate (UEC) as a reliable academic assessment and credential tool for *duzhong* students. The subcommittee was assisted by full-time executive staff at the Department of Examination. Open only to *duzhong* students, the UEC was divided into the senior level, junior level (since 1973), vocational and technical examination (since 1987). As demonstrated in Figure 5.2, UEC (senior level) candidates rose dramatically (216% in 35 years) from 1,993 students in 1975 to 6,305 students by 2009. Those who sat for UEC (junior level) also increased 150% over the same period, from 4,150 students in 1975 to 10,396 students in 2009. Comparatively, the number UEC (vocational and technical) candidates climbed slowly (52% growth in 17 years), from 167 students in 1993 to 254 students in 2009. From 1975 to 2009, an accumulative total of 445,270 candidates had taken the three category of UEC.

**Figure 5.2   Distribution of UEC Candidates (1973–2008)**

Source: Compiled by the author with data extracted from *Dongzong* (2010: 87).
UEC has been a proud benchmark for *Dongjiaozong* since its implementation, with its qualification widely acknowledged by universities worldwide today. For instance, UEC students are exempted from entrance examination by all universities in Singapore and are recognized as having completed up to 12 years of high school education in the United States. The UEC is also rated as an examination equivalent to a level between General Certificate of Education’s ordinary level and advanced level in Britain. With International English Language Testing System qualification, it is also accepted by universities in Australia, New Zealand and Scotland as an entrance qualification. Since 1994, the Beijing Language Institute has been waiving UEC holders from the state’s Chinese Proficiency Test for enrollment into China’s universities.\(^{485}\)

Although Malaysian authorities had been reluctant to recognize the UEC as an academic qualification for entry into its national universities in the 1970s and 1980s, signs of compromise were apparent in 1998 when University Telekom—the largest partially state-sponsored private university in Malaysia—began to accept it as an entrance qualification. Continuous lobbying and internal negotiations through the MCA began to bear fruit. In May 2010, the government agreed to qualify UEC holders enrolled in local private universities for the government university loan known as the National Higher Education Fund Corporation (*Perbadanan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional*).\(^{486}\)

Another important element of the *Duzhong*-WC was the unified curriculum. As early as 1976, Kerk Choo Ting headed the first Unified Curriculum Subcommittee. Through the collective contribution of *duzhong* schoolteachers and academics who worked in universities (mostly in Singapore and Taiwan), they successfully compiled a *duzhong* lower-secondary textbook in 1979 with a syllabus following the MOE

\(^{485}\) *Dongzong* internal document (December 3, 2009).

curriculum closely but adapted to *duzhong* and UEC requirements. These textbooks became an important and reliable source of knowledge, as most schools had been using different versions of Taiwanese textbooks, which were predominantly written in traditional Chinese script (繁体字), and often out of stock.\(^{487}\) The subcommittee, with administrative collaboration from the Department of Curriculum at the executive branch has developed more than 280 types of textbooks by 2010.\(^{488}\) The sale of these textbooks was one of the most important source of income for the Chinese education movement, which will be discussed later.

The third element of *Duzhong*-WC was the DDDF. A nationwide DDDF fundraising campaign was launched in March 1974, collecting almost RM3,000,000 within the first year it was introduced. The speed and extensive mobilization power demonstrated by the supporters surprised state authorities, who subsequently prohibited all media (Chinese newspapers in particular) from covering DDDF news after 1975. This subsequently caused the sharp decrease of DDDF donation incomes.\(^{489}\) Donation income had become an important source to *Duzhong*-WC, especially for hiring full-time committee members as well as for purchasing facilities and hardware (such as computers, printers, photocopy machines and printing machinery) for the UEC and for textbook printing.\(^{490}\)

As *Duzhong*-WC was largely funded through the DDDF mechanism in its early phases, the committees had invested part of the donation fund on properties and in shares to retain its monetary value. For instance, about RM60,000 was used to purchase two shop-houses in 1977. With the flood of donations from the DDDF campaign, it was

\(^{489}\) Interview with Sim Mow Yu, March 26, 2008, Malacca.
\(^{490}\) *Dongzong* (1987d: 616).
deemed necessary to establish a DDDF Investment Committee (独中基金投资小组) after the launch of the second DDDF in 1985.491

Selangor Donglianhui key member Lim Geok Chan confident guaranteed of at least 20% annual return (or Lim will pay back all the losses of incomes to DDDF) had successfully persuaded the DDDF Investment Committee invested RM1,000,000 in Lim’s Wembley Activated Clay Private Limited in 1985.492 The share was sold in 1987 with a profit of RM2,000,000 from this successful investment, albeit the conflict of interest.493 In 1989, Lim persuaded the Standing Committee to invest another RM3,000,000 into the establishment of Wembley Rubber Products Private Limited. This time, Dongzong Treasurer Wong Sue Kau (黄仕寿), who saw the investment as a high-risk project, refused. Although the investment was eventually made after an emergency meeting, the incident polarized the financially aggressive and conservative factions within the committee.494

The Duzhong-WC also introduced the Duzhong-WC Sponsorship Program (全国华文独中发展基金常年赞助人) since 1984 to channel public participation and donation.495 These sponsors had to make a minimal annual donation of RM100 and were entitled to participate in the annual sponsors meeting, which enabled them to monitor the planning of Duzhong-WC’s annual activities and financial budget. These sponsors also received a certificate of appreciation, newsletter on the Chinese education (华教导报), annual reports, and were rewarded as members of the Chinese Education Card (华教卡), which allowed them to enjoy discounts on Dongjiaozong’s publications.

492 The DDDF Investment Committee later appointed the Klang Nominees Private Limited to manage this investment. The shares in Wembley Activated Clay were later shifted into Innovest Private Limited.
494 Dongzong (1990: 42).
As demonstrated in Figure 5.3, the average number of donors prior to 1997 has been maintained at an average of about 350 donors per year. However, the number has increased from a mere 382 donors in 1996 to 1,796 donors in 1997 after Duzhong-WC introduced the ‘direct-sales’ networking strategy in 1996 to recruit more donors into the program. The same trend can also be observed from the total donation received. The average total donation received from 1985 to 1996 was about RM39,000. The total donation skyrocketed from about RM36,000 in 1996 into almost RM168,000 in 1997. Such successes continue to generate important financial resources to support the various activities of Duzhong-WC to this day.

**Figure 5.3  Duzhong-WC Sponsorship Program (1985–2009)**

As demonstrated in Figure 5.4, nationwide duzhong enrollment increased from 28,318 students in 1973 to a high of 59,773 in 1994. Although there has been a slight sign of reduction in student enrollment after 1994, the total enrollment numbers has remained above 53,000 since. Beginning from 2005, there has been a gradual increase in student enrollments and the total student population reached an all time high of 60,690 in 2009.

Overall, the Dongjiaozong duzhong revival movement partly achieved its objectives. While most duzhongs in the central and southern region of West Malaysia have stabilized annual students’ intakes, there are 24 middle-scale (with 300 to 1,000 students) and 14 small-scale (less than 300 students) duzhongs nationwide—most of them located at the northern region of West Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak—which
continue to face scarcity in terms of student enrollments and financial resources. The revival movement also has yet to successfully re-establish duzhong in the state of Perlis, Terengganu and Pahang, which have yet to host a duzhong.

In 2005, the Guiding Principles of Educational Reform of Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools (独中教育改革纲领) was introduced to replace the 1973 Du zhong Proposal to establish a more comprehensive, quality-oriented education, and a less exam-oriented academic environment. Drafted in 1999 after a series of working seminars, the Guiding Principles drew from case studies and references on the latest trends and secondary school systems from Japan, the United States, Korea, England, China, Sweden and Germany. The ambitious efforts to revive and reform duzhong also slowly transformed the Chinese education movement into a full-fledged, academic institution, and these efforts were still being sustained at the time of writing.

5.4. The Subcommittees

As Du zhong-WC was not registered under the 1966 Society Act, it was placed as a subordinate of Dongzong in 1975 to secure the operation and safeguard its financial resources and properties. Organizationally, Du zhong-WC consisted of committee members working on a voluntary basis; these committees are assisted by a full-time and salaried executive branch.

Du zhong-WC’s committee is divided into (1) the General Committee, (2) the Standing Committee (which bears the responsibility for all major decision-making, with key positions such as the chairman, treasurer and general

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498 Interview with Choong Wei Chuan, March 17, 2008, Selangor.
secretary reserved for Dongzong central leaders) and (3) the Subcommittees (Unified Examination, Unified Curriculum, Scholarships and Loans, Teachers’ Education, Technical Education and Physical Education). The Unified Curriculum Subcommittee is further divided into various subject committees, as illustrated in Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5  *Duzhong*-WC Committees and Organization

Source: The author.
The *Duzhong*-WC Working Guidelines (董教总全国华文独中工作委员会组织细则) was the organization’s highest written rules; however, the two-page document only consisted of general guidelines. It left the implementation of work, decision-making and selection of committee members loosely defined and subject to individual discretion. As such, the Standing Committee could appoint ‘enthusiastic’ individuals on Chinese Education as members of the committee. The quality and background qualifications of these potential individuals were seldom clarified. Appointed committee members have been mostly scholars and (retired) *duzhong* schoolteachers or principals with special expertise in academics, or *huatuan* activists with influential networks.

The logic of not having clear and well-defined rules has been common across the Chinese education movement, and, to a larger extent, among *huatuans* in Malaysia. The movement was started by a group of individuals with shared grievances; the inaugurated group was small in numbers—many of them friends—and highly familiar with the abilities, characters and limitations of one another. Therefore, the appointment of committee members was based on familiarity; the intimate interpersonal connections also secured bonds and prevented free riders among its members.499

The gradual expansion of *Duzhong*-WC and specialization of work from the 1980s saw the inaugurated group begin to introduce and recommend potential candidates from their social networks.500 The General Committee recommended persons fit for assuming office as the heads of various subcommittees, while the latter was responsible for identifying and recommending members to join their respective subcommittees. The size of each subcommittee varied, but all recommendations must be approved and

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499 Interview with Choong Wei Chuan, March 17, 2008, Selangor.
500 Interview with Lim Kee Song, July 27, 2010, Selangor.
appointed by the Standing Committee. All committees of Duzhong-WC work on a
biannual basis but are renewable without limits on their maximum terms of service.

Relational capital, such as strong recommendations, social reputation and
commitment to Chinese education, became the key factors for considering someone for
appointment to office. Nevertheless, overreliance on relational capital stunted
institutional development, for the degree of flexibility soon became an internal
loophole of the institution and was easily corrupted by individuals with hidden
agendas. Dongzong’s senior executive officer Lim Kee Song (林纪松), gave a rather
practical response to the problem. He said,

Even if we could set up the criteria, I do not think we could execute it. Duzhong-WC and the larger Dongjiaozong worked based on sensible reasoning (情理法) and not on a standard set of rules.

The appointment of many committee members has been renewed every term simply
because “they have been in the position for so many years, it is very difficult and
impolite to ask them to go”. Attempts to include more members from periphery
regions to provide bottom-up input of the needs of local duzhong to the central
decision-making unit also faced difficulty in which the new committee was unable to
carry out its roles. The lack of written guidelines, burnout (as a result of members’
teaching duties), physical proximity and time consumed for travelling affected the
functional capability of non-Selangor and Kuala Lumpur committees.

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501 Interview with Sim Mow Yu, March 26, 2008, Malacca.
503 Interview with Lim Kee Song, July 27, 2010, Selangor.
504 Interview with Choong Ee Hoong, July 27, 2010, Selangor.
5.5. The Executive Branch

The executive branch of Duzhong-WC was, in practice, also the executive branch of Dongzong. One of the first salaried-staff of the movement, Li Da Ting* (李达庭) was the sole general officer who served Dongzong from 1953 to 1973.\textsuperscript{505} The success of UEC and production of duzhong textbooks saw an increasing need for staff to assist in administrative work. From the late 1970s, Dongzong Chairman Lim Fong Seng, began to employ ambitious young (mostly in their thirties) university graduates as full-time executives of the movement.\textsuperscript{506}

Besides conducting everyday administrative work, these executive officers—in particular Lee Ban Chen, Kua Kia Soong, Chong Joon Kin (张永庆) and so on—participated side-by-side with the movement’s central leader Lim Fong Seng in implementing new strategies to achieve their goal of procuring the rights for vernacular education for the minorities in Malaysia. As discussed in Chapter Four, Lee, Kua, Chong followed Lim Fong Seng in joining the DAP during the dual coalition system campaign in 1990, and have been perceived as being ‘anti-government’ and ‘resistance-oriented’ due to their antagonistic stance against the BN regime.

Such a demanding and resistance-oriented stance veered away from the traditional approach of seeking compromises with MCA, and has challenged the political role of MCA, who had been acting as the key broker between the movement and the UMNO state men. The influence of this group of executive officers, better known as executives of Lim Fong Seng’s era, returned to Dongjiaozong after the failure of the 1990 campaign. This ‘resistance-oriented’ faction began to exert their influence on the executive branch to procure their continuous role within the movement, and,

\textsuperscript{505} Most smaller huatuans, even up to this day, have only one general officer (坐办) to manage all the operational and administrative duties. Dongzong (1987b).

\textsuperscript{506} Interview with Dong SA, July 22, 2010, Selangor.
arguably, utilized *Dongzong* as a platform for achieving their political goal. The antagonist reality within the executive branch is best proven via a few incidents during the post-Lim Fong Seng era. For example, Lim’s successor, the pro-MCA Foo Wan Thot was forced to step down after only one term in office due to his “inability to collaborate with the powerful executive team”.507

Another infamous example, involved the contradictions between Chief Executive Officer Bock Tai Hee and *Dongzong* Chairman Quek Suan Hiang. Bock, a Nanyang University graduate and a former detainee under the Internal Security Act, joined *Duzhong*-WC in 1981 as an officer for coordinating chemistry textbooks through the recommendation of then head of *Duzhong*-WC executive officer Lee Ban Chen. Bock was promoted as Lee’s successor in 1985, and Bock became the fifth and longest serving head of the executive branch.508

As Quek was residing at Kluang, Johore, he was unable to personally oversee movement’s daily work at the movement headquarters in Selangor. Therefore, Quek empowered Bock to manage the executive branch, subordinate only to the *Duzhong*-WC Standing Committee.509 However, as most committee members were also busy with their own full-time occupation, and only visited the office to sign documents. Eventually, the role of the Standing Committee eroded from that of a decision-maker into a ‘rubber stamp’.

Bock exercised his power as chief of the executive branch to the fullest, gradually influencing the contents of press statements (released under the name of the movement chairman), recommendations and appointments of *Dongzong* and *Duzhong*-WC Standing Committee members, and, most importantly, the preparation and allocation of annual budget. The shift in the balance of power from the

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507 Interview with Loot Ting Yee, March 24, 2008, Kuala Lumpur.
committee to the executive branch enabled Bock to control staff appointments, salary scales and distribution of benefits. Dissatisfaction from among the committee was muzzled by the desire for ‘unity’ and ‘face-saving’, and reluctance to be involved in any form of open conflict internally.

During his term of office, Bock and his team established one of the most extensive executive branches among *huatuans* in Malaysia.\(^{510}\) The expansion of the executive branch reached its peak both in size and in power during the Dongzong chairmanship of the Johorian Quek Suan Hiang from 1993 to 2005. The number of *Duzhong*-WC staff reached a high of 123 in 2006, as demonstrated in Figure 5.6.\(^{511}\)

**Figure 5.6   The Growth of the Executive Branch of *Duzhong*-WC (1953–2009)**

![Graph showing the growth of the executive branch of *Duzhong*-WC (1953–2009).](image)


\(^{510}\) Interview with Choong Wei Chuan, March 17, 2008, Selangor.

\(^{511}\) *Dongzong* (1987b: 208; 1987c: 381, 616).
Enjoying the upmost authority, Bock firmly controlled the movement’s executive branch and began to be more powerful than the committee. In 1996, Bock successfully persuaded the committee to grant him access to RM20,000 petty cash per month.\footnote{Dongzong (1999: 22).} Bock also influenced the Standing Committee to provide members of the executive branch with health insurance, educational subsidies for their children—for example, discount for school fees and free textbooks at duzhong—salary increment, 21 days of annual leave and annual bonuses.\footnote{Dongzong (1997: 21).} As the chief executive officer, Bock also introduced new system, such as the punch card system, nametags, dress code, salary ranking system and staff training programs to build team spirit and a better working environment.\footnote{Interview with Dong SC, July 27, 2010, Selangor.}

The executive branch housed predominantly younger and more qualified staff. As shown in Table 5.1, about 75% were under 40, and almost 45% were university graduates. There were about eight married couples among the staff, many of whom had met while working in the executive branch.\footnote{Interview with Dong SE, July 29, 2010, Selangor.} One important feature of the working environment within the executive branch is the relatively flexible and trusting culture. Work commitment depends solely on one’s own dedication and capability to accomplish the duties appointed onto him.\footnote{Interview with Lim Kee Song, July 27, 2010, Selangor.} Such flexibility has been manipulated by free riders from time to time, and, inevitably, the situation became worse over time, especially after the eruption of the New Era controversy in 2008, which will be further elaborated in the next section.

Table 5.1 Distribution of Duzhong-WC Executive Branch Staff by Academic Qualification, Age and Years of Service (1995–2009)

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**Academic Qualification**

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**Years of Service**

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2  
*Duzhong-WC* Executive Branch Salary Scheme (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Qualification (Salary, RM)</th>
<th>Increment based on Years of Service (RM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
<td>(5,650)</td>
<td>(5,950)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(首席行政主任)</td>
<td></td>
<td>PhD (6,250)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Chief Executive Officer</td>
<td>(4,030)</td>
<td>Master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(副首席行政主任)</td>
<td></td>
<td>PhD (4,550)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>(2,935)</td>
<td>Master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(行政主任)</td>
<td></td>
<td>PhD (3,655)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Executive (高级执行员)</td>
<td>(2,240)</td>
<td>Master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PhD (2,780)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Officer (执行员)</td>
<td>(1,950)</td>
<td>Master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Officer (助理)</td>
<td>(1,760)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Administrative Officer (事务助理)</td>
<td>(1,230)</td>
<td>Certificate (1,425)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk (事务员)</td>
<td>SPM (965)</td>
<td>Certificates (1,075)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UEC (1,020)</td>
<td>Associate Degree (1,255)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Another feature that attests to *Duzhong-WC*’s powerful financial capacity is its ability to provide a more attractive salary scheme for the executive staff compared to other *huatuans* or NGOs in Malaysia. *Duzhong-WC* uses eight units in its salary scheme, divided according to academic qualifications and years of service (see Table 5.2). A senior officer such as the chief executive officer who has served more than 15 years could earn up to RM9,000 per month. All heads of department enjoy a special allowance of RM500 per month. High salaries encourage staff retention and loyalty, thus strengthening the continuity and stability of the movement.
Nevertheless, as promotion is based on the review by one’s superior, maintaining good interpersonal relationship with one’s superior became critical, and has gradually become the sole factor for one’s promotion. Those at the bottom of the salary scheme often have heavy workloads, yet their grievances have been in large part ignored by higher officers in hierarchy. The top-down and leader-centric working relationship within the Duzhong-WC Standing Committee and the executive branch begin to erode with abuse of power whenever conflict of interests arose. The term, “I am the most senior (in position) here, so my word is the ultimate order” (这里我最大，我说了算) best described the actual implementation of orders.

5.6. Executive Branch Departments

Departments within the Duzhong-WC executive branch are divided into two sections, the general affairs and the education affairs (as summarized in Figure 5.7). Their functions are overseen by the operational decision-maker in the general secretariat office. The general affairs section is further divided into five main departments. The Department of Association Affairs, for example, arranges the meetings and the receptions of visitors, while also preparing formal speeches. Publicity and propaganda of the movement are conducted by the Department of Promotion through the circulation of the newsletter.

Other departments include the Department of Finance and Department of Personnel. After moving into the Dongjiaozong administration building in Kajang in 1994, the Department of Maintenance was established to control expenses on

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517 Interviews with Dong SC and Dong SD on July 27, Selangor; Interview with Dong SF on July 29, 2010, Selangor.
519 Dongzong (1997: 13, 26).
stationery, maintenance of organization facilities, usage of photocopy machine, fax, telephone and air-condition.\textsuperscript{521}

**Figure 5.7  Duzhong-WC Executive Branch**

![Diagram of Executive Branch]

Source: The author.

For education affairs section, there are eight departments: (1) Department of Examination, (2) Department of Curriculum, (3) Department of Students Affairs, (4) Department of Teachers’ Education, (5) Department of Vocational and Technical Education, (6) Department of Physical Education, (7) Department of Publishing and (8) Department of Resource and Information.\textsuperscript{522} A Department of Computer was added in 1996 to promote the use of information technology in networking in *duzhong*; however, due to the lack of expertise, the department only provided website maintenance and computer repairs services.\textsuperscript{523}

As listed in Table 5.3, the Department of Examination has been the largest department by its staff strength (22 staff) followed by the Department of Curriculum

\textsuperscript{521} Dongzong (1996: 8–14).

\textsuperscript{522} Duzhong-WC (1990).

\textsuperscript{523} Interview with Lim Kee Song, July 27, 2010, Selangor.
(15 staff). Albeit the number of staff members may vary each year, however these two departments have been generating about 40% of the total annual income of Duzhong-WC (see Table 5.4) through the sales of duzhong textbooks and from the collection of UEC examination fees, which is about RM300 to RM400 per candidate (see Table 5.5).

Data from Table 5.3 also clearly indicated that Department of Examination has been the sole profit-generating department within the Duzhong-WC executive branch. Therefore, income from this department has been important to sustain the expenses of other non-profit making departments, especially the departments which serve to maintain the everyday operational needs of the movement headquarters (such as the Department of Finance and Department of Computer), facilitating meetings for the movement central committees and working committees (such as the Department of Association Affairs and Department of Promotion). Such inter-dependent relationships have allowed the movement organization to grow into one of the most mature and complicated organizations within the Chinese community in Malaysia.
Table 5.3  Number of Staff Members and Expenditure of Each Department in the Executive Branch of *Duzhong-WC*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>April 2009</th>
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<th>April 2010</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of</td>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>No. of</td>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>(RM) (Profits/</td>
<td>Members</td>
<td>(RM) (Profits/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Losses)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Losses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>358,618 (3,752,485)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>414,794 (3,864,126)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>537,510 (−362,510)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>516,680 (−162,069)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Affairs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>320,836 (−65,505)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>288,028 (−114,811)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ Education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27,567 (−26,532)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>74,863 (−38,168)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational and Technical</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36,053 (−36,053)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32,423 (−32,423)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14,022 (−14,022)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29,484 (−29,484)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>300,932 (60,719)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>311,825 (−28,075)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource and Information</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>86,718 (−86,549)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>95,374 (−95,141)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70,227 (−68,444)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>82,045 (−78,160)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association Affairs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>156,448 (−133,293)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>118,247 (−110,747)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>113,300 (−111,740)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>86,152 (−84,984)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Personnel</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>111,821 (−33,008)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>123,991 (−40,577)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintainence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>111,483 (−111,333)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>126,604 (−124,157)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Executive Office</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100,645 (−100,645)</td>
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### Table 5.4  Top Ten Sources of Income for Dongzong (2007–2008) (RM)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Sources of Income</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sales of Textbooks</td>
<td>3,516,668</td>
<td>4,010,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>UEC Examination Fees</td>
<td>3,506,350</td>
<td>3,446,416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fixed Deposit Interest</td>
<td>418,331</td>
<td>496,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chinese Higher Education Exhibition</td>
<td>354,367</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Seminar Registration Fees</td>
<td>323,707</td>
<td>99,988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sales of Majalah Pelajar</td>
<td>311,818</td>
<td>321,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sales of UEC Past Year Papers</td>
<td>300,437</td>
<td>368,141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sales of Books</td>
<td>291,287</td>
<td>301,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Advertisement Incomes from Majalah Pelajar</td>
<td>110,710</td>
<td>153,124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Australia Mathematics Competition</td>
<td>98,034</td>
<td>120,256</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Compiled by the author with data extracted from Dongzong Statement of Income and Expenditure (2008: 10).

### Table 5.5  UEC Examination Fees (2008)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Registration Fees (RM)</th>
<th>Examination Fees (RM)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For Malaysians</td>
<td>For Non-Malaysians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Level (高中)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60 +100 (extra fee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational and Technical (技术科)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60 +100 (extra fee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who sit for both senior level and the vocational examinations need only to pay the registration fees for the senior level only.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Level (初中)</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130 +100 (extra fee)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author with data provided by Dongzong Department of Examination.
5.7. Departure of Bock

At 55 years of age, Bock reached his retirement age in 1999; his contract subsequently was renewed on an annual basis. In a semi-retired mode, Bock spent most of his time delivering talks on Stories on the Chinese Education Movement at duzhong nationwide beginning from 2001. The seminars aimed to generate awareness among the duzhong students on the history of the Chinese education movement and to sow the seeds of the movement in future generations.

Committed to ‘story telling’, Bock has been away most of his time in the 2000s. This has created opportunity for some senior staff within the executive branch to engage in office politics in the competition to become the next chief executive officer. Free riders and opportunists have exploited their close relationship with Bock for access to resources; they have asserted their official and unofficial power in bids to eliminate competitors. Bock’s originally peaceful retirement plan came unglued when Quek’s successor, Yap Sin Tian (Dongzong treasurer since 1991 and deputy chairman since 1997), came into power in June 2005 and sought to reinstall the balance of power from the executive officer to the Standing Committee.

Fearful of the changes that Yap would introduce after Bock’s retirement and vying for the chief executive officer position, some executive members exploited Bock’s retirement as an issue to attack Yap. The incident was resolved after Yap compromised and agreed to establish a three-person committee comprising senior officers from the executive branch to take over the duties of the chief executive officer.

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524 Interview with Quek Suan Hiang, March 23, 2010, Johore.
525 Dongzong (1999: 17); Bock and Huang (2006).
526 Interview with Dong SD, July 27, 2010, Selangor.
for six months during the transition. Bock left Dongzong in January 2007 and served as the acting principal of Kelantan Chung Hwa Independent High School until 2008.

After the transition period, Yap quickly consolidated his position by installing soft-spoken Kuang Hee Pang (邝其芳) as the chief executive officer, accompanied by implementing a series of major changes in the executive branch’s working style. The heads of departments in the executive branch must report directly to the chairman of Duzhong-WC, making Yap the key–and no longer a phantom–decision-maker. These changes effectively reduced the executive branch to a subordinate body within the Duzhong-WC system. It also undermined the confidence and limited the performance of the staff members. Staff morale was low as they felt they were treated as ‘salaried staff’ and no longer appreciated as ‘contributors’ to the movement. In response, five heads of department and more than 30 staff members resigned in year 2007.

Yap Sin Tian also revamped and eliminated the Department of Chief Executive (established by Bock in 2005) into three smaller departments (Association Affairs, Promotion and Maintainence). In order to strengthen the control over the executive branch, Yap appointed his close aids to key positions in these newly established departments. For instance, Wan Jia An* (万家安) was made the head for Department of Maintainence in April 2009; Lai Soon Keat (赖顺吉), a former Jiaozong executive officer in the 1980s and a former active member of Gerakan, joined the executive

527 Members of this three-person committee included Li Yue Tong* (李岳通) (Head, Department of General Affairs), Choong Pai Chee (庄白绮) (Head, Department of Meeting and Organization) and Zhang Xi Chong* (张喜崇) (Head, Department of Curriculum). See Dongzong (2008: 35).
529 Interview with Dong SE, July 29, 2010, Selangor.
530 Interview with Choong Woei Chuan, March 17, 2008, Selangor.
531 The heads who resigned were Zhang Xi Chong* from Department of Curriculum, Liang Sheng Yi* (梁胜义) from Department of Student Affairs, Chen Li Qun* (陈利群) from Department of Personnel, Li Hui Jin* (李惠徯) from Department of Teachers’ Training and Lin Mei Yan* (林美燕) from Department of Technical Education. *Oriental*, December 10, 2007.
532 Dongzong (2007: 40).
branch in September 2009 and, shortly thereafter, was promoted as the Head of Department of Association Affairs.\textsuperscript{533}

Yap’s right-hand man, Shum Thin Khee (沈天奇), was appointed as head of the Chief Executive Office, reestablished in 2010, which executed all orders from Yap. By the time of writing, Shum was best positioned to succeed Kuang Hee Pang’s position as the next chief executive officer, as the latter was suffering from ill health.\textsuperscript{534} One thing, however, remained unchanged for the executive branch: decision-making was still top-down and person-centered. Yap Sin Tian who is expected to continue dominating the chairmanship of Dongzong and Duzhong-WC will need to put in extra effort especially in hiring the right people (and not be constrained to hire only the people he knows or prefers). It is only with more healthy competition and a more transparent process in all decision-making (such as in hiring and promoting of staff members) that the institutions of Duzhong-WC would find a common ground amongst all factions.

In the meantime, the reformist faction which was forced to leave the executive branch, such as Bock Tai Hee and his supporters, have been trying to establish the Duzhong Principals’ Association (独中校长江理会) and the Duzhong Education Alliance (独中教育联盟) as alternative organizations to Dongzong.\textsuperscript{535}

5.8. \textit{Huaxiao-WC Organization}

The earlier section elaborated on Duzhong-WC as a mobilization machinery of Dongzong. In this section, the author will elaborate on the strategies and challenges faced by Huaxiao-WC as a mobilization machinery of Jiaozong. That the development of duzhong could only be successful with the continued existence and development of

\textsuperscript{533} Merdeka Review, October 12, 2009.
\textsuperscript{535} Malaysiakini, October 2, 2009.
Chinese primary schools was recognized by Perak Donglianhui as early as in 1974 during the Perak duzhong revival movement and Perak Donglianhui had already been taking the lead to visit and understand the needs of Chinese primary schools.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the lack of funding combined with government neglect led some Chinese primary schools to fall apart. By December 1976, Dongzong called for the school committees and state donglianhui to collaborate with schoolteachers, parents and alumni in developing and protecting Chinese primary schools as the foundation of Chinese education. In response, from December 1976 to February 1977, Selangor, Perak, Malacca and Penang started organizing state-level working committees for the development of Chinese primary schools.

By March 1977, the Huaxiao-WC was formally established. The working guidelines (董教总发展华文小学工作委员会简章) drafted soon thereafter. Lim Fong Seng from Dongzong was selected as the leader of the chairmen group (主席团). Chairmen from all state-level donglianhui, CSTA, and Chinese school alumni were automatically enrolled as members of the Chairmen Group. It was hoped that by consolidating power, it could attract more individuals—especially youths—beyond Dongjiaozong to defend the use of Chinese as the medium for teaching and school administration in Chinese primary schools.

Nevertheless, Huaxiao-WC was not as successful as many had expected. Unequal distribution of Chinese primary schools in each state and county made it difficult to establish uniform mobilization. The Chinese population in Kelantan and Terengganu was too small, while Malacca and Perlis housed a limited number of Chinese primary schools. Schoolteachers and school committees in Sabah and Sarawak

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536 Shen T (1975: 73).
had already been collaborating for years at the state level and therefore did not see the need to establish yet another working committee. Meanwhile, Chinese educationalists in Penang found a better working platform under the Penang Chinese Education Working Committee (槟城州华文教育工作委员会), which received financial assistance from the state government.\textsuperscript{540}

Thirty years later, in July 1993, Huaxiao-WC was reintroduced by Dongjiaozong, and administrated by Jiaozong. It was believed that this move would enable funding to be channeled from the more successful Duzhong-WC to Huaxiao-WC, and thus help to support the administrative functions of Jiaozong.\textsuperscript{541} The new Huaxiao-WC was divided into the central-level and state-level working committees (see Figure 5.8).

State-level Huaxiao-WC were administrated independently by the state-level donglianhuì, and only collaborated with the central-Huaxiao-WC in large scale fundraising campaigns. Thus far, only Johore, Perak, Selangor and Pahang have had a functional Huaxiao-WC.\textsuperscript{542} At the central level, seven representatives each from Dongzong and Jiaozong formed the General Committee that was administrated by a Jiaozong-dominated Standing Committee.

\textsuperscript{540} Interview with Lim Kee Song, July 27, 2010, Selangor.

\textsuperscript{541} Jiaozong (1994: 15); Interview with Loot Ting Yee, March 24, 2008, Kuala Lumpur.

\textsuperscript{542} Petaling-Huaxiao (2004).
5.9. The Executive Branch

At the central level, Huaxiao-WC executive branch was established in 1994 to serve more as a Jiaozong secretariat. It replaced the Education Research Center (教育研究中心) established in April 1984 by Thuang Pik King, the then chairman of Kuala Lumpur CSTA.\(^{543}\) The Center expanded Jiaozong’s secretariat from two general officers in the 1950s to 10 staff members in early 1985.

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In the 1980s, young university graduates, who later became key personnel in huatuan activities in Malaysia, such as Yow Lee Fung (姚丽芳), Tang Ah Chai (陈亚才) and Liew Kan Ba (刘崇汉), were recruited as Jiaozong executive officers to execute Jiaozong’s administrative work. More importantly, data was systematically collected to enable a better understanding of changes in vernacular education, especially at the level of Chinese primary schools.544

The Jiaozong executive branch was expanded with the formation of the Lim Lian Geok Cultural Development Center (林连玉基金) in December 1985 after the demise of the former Jiaozong Chairman Lim Lian Geok. Number of Jiaozong executive office was expanded to 15 members who shared various responsibilities from executing general affairs administration, publicity, publication, to annual commemoration of the Chinese Education Festival (华教节). The Festival, conducted every December, hosted such activities as a public memorial ceremony at Lim Lian Geok’s graveyard, seminars, Lim Lian Geok Awards (林连玉精神奖) (since 1988) and annual fundraising dinners.

By 1994, the re-estabishment of the Huaxiao-WC had seen the division of work into six departments: (1) Department of Executive organized and executed Jiaozong meeting decisions, facilitated work on propaganda, fundraising, finance and human resource, (2) Department of Resource and Research collected and compiled data, (3) Department of Teachers’ Training conducted training programs and nominated about 100 schoolteachers annually for training programs sponsored by Chinese and Taiwanese governments since 1990,545 (4) Department of Students Activities conducted annual Chinese-speaking competitions, holiday camps and

545 Interview with Yap Hon Kiat, July 22, 2010, Selangor.
seminars,\textsuperscript{546} (5) Department of Publication and Promotion was responsible for in-house publications such as Education World (教育天地) (1951–2000) and Child (孩子) (1994–current), (6) Department of Early Childhood Education conducted parenting and pre-school education programs.\textsuperscript{547}

In 2006, Yow Lee Fung, the chief administrative secretary since 1984, retired and was replaced by Yap Hon Kiat (叶翰杰).\textsuperscript{548} In the same year, the Lim Lian Geok Cultural Development Center declared ‘independence’ from Jiaozong and thus reduced the number of staff and, above all, forfeited a key source of income from the annual Chinese Education Festival fundraising dinner from Jiaozong. As a result, it has been facing an annual deficit of some RM20,000 since 2006.\textsuperscript{549} Unlike its sister organization, the Duzhong-WC, which generated income from the UEC, the expenses of Huaxiao-WC depended solely on public donations from fundraising campaigns. These included Sim Mow Yu’s eightieth birthday celebration in 1992, the reintroduction of Huaxiao-WC in 1994, and Jiaozong’s fifty-fifth anniversary celebration in 2006. Each of these occasions generated anywhere from RM60,000 to RM80,000, sums large enough to sustain the organization’s annual expenses for about three to five years.\textsuperscript{550}

Since 2006, an average of 10 seminars has been conducted annually. They have covered topics such as Teaching Methods (for fresh graduates from the Teachers Training College), Respect the Teachers, and Teachers’ Psychological Health (for general Chinese schoolteachers in Malaysia). Attended by an annual average of 1,500 schoolteachers, these activities aimed to “return to the fundamentals of education

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{546} Jiaozong (2007: 14, 177, 198).
\item \textsuperscript{547} Jiaozong (2007: 12).
\item \textsuperscript{548} Interview with Yow Lee Fung, February 17, 2009, Selangor.
\item \textsuperscript{549} Interview with Yap Hon Kiat and Er Joo Tiong, July 22, 2010, Selangor.
\item \textsuperscript{550} Interview with Er Joo Tiong, July 22, 2010, Selangor.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
and reintroduce *Jiaozong* to the schoolteachers’ community as an organization that supported the Chinese community*. Due to *Jiaozong* is a non-profit organization, a minimal registration fees is collected to cover the cost of the activities. By way of ‘sustainable activities’ and carefully planned budgets, *Jiaozong* tried to prevent running deficits when conducting these activities. *Jiaozong* is a non-profit organization, a minimal registration fees is collected to cover the cost of the activities. By way of ‘sustainable activities’ and carefully planned budgets, *Jiaozong* tried to prevent running deficits when conducting these activities.552

We cannot collect too much money if we want to attract more participants to join our activities. If we charge them (the schoolteachers and seminar participants) too high, they may question why *Jiaozong* is trying to make money. If we charge too low, we will end up with a deficit and the consequence would be insufficient money to conduct other activities in that fiscal year.553

The pressing needs to sustain the movement’s everyday expenses financially vis-à-vis that of maintaining the supporters’ confidence is, in practice, difficult to balance. Too much emphasis on soliciting financial resources from the supporters may be perceived (and may be used by movement enemies to mislead supporters) as exploitation, and raise questions about the sincerity and fairness of the movement’s ultimate goal. Yet having insufficient resources, has situated the movement—in particular, the executives officer on the ground who have to deal with the everyday struggle to sustain the movement—in a very difficult position to make the impossible possible.

The dilemma had been hidden from public knowledge, but all too often, those who wished to attack the movement, had used it to decertify the movement and the movement organizations. In the attempt to reduce financial expenses by conducting fewer and smaller-scale seminars, the movement suffered from having too little visibility when few people actually hear about or attend the seminars.

551 Interview with Yap Hon Kiat, July 22, 2010, Selangor.
552 Interview with Er Joo Tiong, July 22, 2010, Selangor.
553 Interview with Er Joo Tiong, July 22, 2010, Selangor.
The *Huaxiao-WC Sponsorship Program* (全国华文小学发展基金常年赞助人), which was established in 1984, has generate about RM10,000 from public donations annually (see Figure 5.9). However, it was perceived as “not a significant part of *Jiaozong* income” by current chief executive secretary of *Jiaozong*, Yap Hon Kiat, and therefore not much effort was invested to improve it as an alternative fundraising source.\(^{554}\) Perhaps it also had to do with the fact that the function of the executive branch had little to do with the *Huaxiao-WC*; this prevented *Jiaozong* from justifying and fully utilizing the *Huaxiao-WC* Sponsorship Program.

**Figure 5.9  *Huaxiao-WC Sponsorship Program (1989–2009)***

[Bar chart showing number of sponsors and donations received over years from 1989 to 2009.]


\(^{554}\) Interview with Yap Hon Kiat, July 22, 2010, Selangor.
Due to financial constraints, the executive branch employed only 17 full-time staff, and thus the duplication of duty across departments was common. 555 About 80% of the staff members were graduates from college or university, and were below the age of 40. At the time of writing, seven of them had served for five years, one for eight years, and two seniors had been on staff for more than 20 years. 556 Also a result of financial constraints, change of leadership and insufficient human resources, the executive branch, and Jiaozong at large, no longer sought to challenge state authorities contentiously, as “it is beyond our current ability” as Yap Hon Kiat remarked. 557

Not only does Yap’s lamentation demonstrate his frustrated ambition to do more for the office, it also shows the limitation of dreamt goal and the actual limitation imposed onto the ground officers. Very often, internal operative constraints, limited resources and conservative movement leaders have significantly narrowed down the potential of the executive office.

5.10. **Dongjiaozong Higher Learning Center and New Era College**

The third mobilization machinery of the Chinese education movement is the *Dongjiaozong* Higher Learning Center Non-Profit Private Limited (HLC) that consisted of representatives from *Dongzong*, Jiaozong and the Merdeka University Company. The formation of the HLC has to be traced back to the post-1987 economic crisis and the infamous *Operasi Lalang* (see Chapter Four). Facing increasing political pressure, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad (1981–2003) tried to appease the Chinese community by approving the establishment of Southern College—the first Chinese community-funded college—in March 1990. Efforts to set up the college had been underway since 1987, but the government balked. Hence, the approval came as a

555 Interview with Yap Hon Kiat, July 22, 2010, Selangor.
557 Interview with Yap Hon Kiat, July 22, 2010, Selangor.
‘surprise’ for everyone, and it helped to reinstall BN’s popularity, especially in Johore where the college was located. The BN preserved its two-thirds parliamentary majority in the 1990 General Election.

The Vision 2020 campaign introduced in 1991 aim for Malaysia to be a developed, industrial state by 2020. To meet the campaign’s need for increased education opportunities, the government liberalized tertiary education. For instance, it began to allow private (and foreign) universities to establish degree-conferring campuses in Malaysia. Southern College’s success, timely liberalization and the growing importance of the Chinese language with China’s rapid economic ascendance gave hope to Dongjiaozong leaders to re-try to establish a Chinese college. After a consultation on ‘strategies’ with MCA Secretary General Ting Chew Peh (陈祖排) and Deputy Minister of Education Fong Chan Onn, HLC was established in March 1994. It would serve as the maiden company for the New Era College.

Efforts to apply for a college license in August 1994 and April 1995 were rejected as MOE saw no need for another Chinese community college. Southern College was already providing training for duzhong schoolteachers. Engagement and lobbying efforts assisted by MCA central ministers, however, led to changes in New Era College’s proposal to accommodate the requirement of the newly implemented 1996 Private Higher Education Institutions Act. MOE eventually approved the New Era College establishment in May 1997.

The HLC Board of Directors consisted of five representatives each from Dongzong, Jiaozong and Merdeka University Company, and six representatives from HLC members (55 individual members and three organization members in total).

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558 Among the strategies include Dongjiaozong’s application to establish a moderate size college, laying low under the radar, and establish good relationship with Selangor State Education Department and MOE. See Dongzong (1994: 53).
All decisions were administrated by the Executive Directors (seven people) selected from the Board. Such cross-organization collaboration was the largest since the Merdeka University project. In actuality, Dongzong (through Duzhong-WC) was the main resource provider. For example, Duzhong-WC made an interest free loan of RM100,000 to HLC in 1995 and allocated four annual study loans of RM5,000 for HLC students.\textsuperscript{561} The Merdeka University Company leased Kajang land for New Era’s premises, and Jiaozong was the collaborator of the project.

5.11. Fundraising Campaigns

Dongjiaozong began conducting large-scale fundraising campaigns in 1997 to construct a seven-storey teaching building (成人成才教学楼) and a 13-storey student dormitory (饮水思源宿舍) to fulfill New Era’s need for facilities.\textsuperscript{562} The overwhelming need for financial resources saw Quek Suan Hiang spend all three terms as Dongzong chairman working on various fundraising campaigns at the central and local levels. Quek recalled,

\textit{Dongjiaozong} is an empty box; we do not have any property or source of income before the success of Duzhong-WC. To sustain new projects such as the development of New Era College, we need to unite all support, including those from the business-class, middle-class, working-class, as well as political parties.\textsuperscript{563}

Every cent for New Era’s formation was generated from the community through various campaigns.\textsuperscript{564} Among the larger campaigns included the 1995 national fundraising campaign conducted in collaboration with the United Chinese School Alumni Association. Thousand Men dinners (千人宴) were organized at the state level.

\textsuperscript{562} HLC (2008b: 33)
\textsuperscript{563} Interview with Quek Suan Hiang, March 23, 2010, Johore.
\textsuperscript{564} See Dongzong (2002c) for list of donors.
to commemorate the formation of the United Chinese School Alumni Association and as a show of support towards New Era’s establishment. Certain states, such as Negeri Sembilan, jointly organized the fundraising event with state-level donglianwhui and the CSTA. It generated some RM158,000 through the sale of dinner coupons. Among United Chinese School Alumni Association members at the state level, namely Perak, Selangor, Malacca and Johore state also donated RM20,000 each. The highlight of HLC-United Chinese School Alumni Association collaboration was the December 1996 Thousand Men Fundraising Dinner (1214 千万心宴). Nearly 1,500 individuals and companies donated approximately RM1,340,000 at the dinner.

As discussed in Chapter Three, a more popular way of fundraising was through charity sales, an approach widely used by Merdeka University for fundraising in the 1960s and duzhong in its revival movement in the 1970s. Charity sales usually invited extensive community participation, especially from the middle- and working-classes. The sales lasted from a few hours to a few days, and almost everything that could be consumed by a Chinese family were sold: drinks (soya milk, herbal tea), dried food stock (rice, noodles), cooked food (roasted pork, fried rice, bahkutteh [肉骨茶]), services (haircut, trishaw ride), arts (calligraphy, Chinese traditional paintings) and performances (circus, Chinese opera). Although these events did not generate as much money as the fundraising dinners, they nevertheless generated passion and renewed awareness of the Chinese education’s importance from the participants.

Donations have also been collected during ceremonial events such as anniversaries, weddings, or traditional celebrations (hungry ghost month and mid-autumn festival). Substantial donations have been generated from large

organizations and wealthy individuals through the efforts of the movement leaders or through influential brokers. Notable examples were RM600,000 and RM30,000 donations by the Lee Foundation (李氏基金) and by Chiew Swee Peow Chinese Education Trust Fund (周瑞标教育基金), respectively.\footnote{568}

Such funds accumulated from the public are critical for supporting the expenses needed to pay for the construction of the New Era College in the Kajang site. Thus, the success of the organization in accumulating the targeted funds is also a recognition of its leadership status. Not only does it demonstrate the external capacity of the leaders in utilizing their social networks to support the movement’s career, it also tests the operational capacity of the leaders to collaborate with the movement’s executive branch.

5.12. A Dream Come True, or the Beginning of a Nightmare?

The discussion in this chapter has thus far demonstrated the machinery of resource mobilization of the movement in terms of personal and financial resources, and the successful establishment of the movement’s first tertiary institution despite the constraints it faced with state policies. Nevertheless, the goal of having a complete Chinese education system did not end after having established the New Era College.

The more challenging task was to maintain the institution, and to develop it into a sustainable academic institution in the competitive tertiary education market in Malaysia. According to former Dongzong Chairman Quek Suan Hiang, also former head of HLC and New Era Boards who oversaw the early development of the college,\footnote{Dongzong (2002c: 75).}
The college had a difficult beginning: it suffered a deficit of about RM300,000 in its first financial year. Having only 148 students in its first intake, most lessons were conducted in temporary containers in the first quarter of 1998, as fundraising for the construction of the college building was still underway.\(^{569}\)

In order to tackle its fiscal shortage, *Dongjiaozung* launched the HLC and New Era College Development Fund (董教总教育中心基金，新纪元学院建设及发展基金) and the New Era College Sponsorship Program (新纪元学院发展基金赞助人).\(^{570}\) The latter (as shown in Figure 5.10) amassed an average donation of about RM170,000 annually. Such financial resources are important for covering part of the executive expenses required to maintain the college.

In 1999, MOE refused to renew the college’s license due to a putative technical problem: according to MOE, HLC was not a ‘company limited by share’ as required by the 1996 Private Higher Educational Institution Act. Deputy Education Minister Fong Chan Onn from MCA facilitated dialogue sessions (April, May, August and October 1999) between New Era representatives and MOE officers (Deputy Registrar Yaacob Wan Ibrahim from the Private Education and Registration Control Officer Abu Bakar Ismail). Eventually the issue was resolved.\(^{571}\)

It took HLC almost four years to accumulate about RM26,000,000 to begin construction of the teaching building and the student dormitory in 1999. The Chinese community, however, was beginning to show signs of fatigue in having to pay a ‘second income tax’—a term used to refer to donations made to Chinese education activities—due to the series of fundraising campaigns in the 1990s. The teaching building was completed in September 2001, and the student dormitory in 2002. A huge

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\(^{569}\) Interview with Quek Suan Hiang, March 23, 2010, Johore.

\(^{570}\) Those who donated more than RM1,000 were named honorary sponsors (荣誉赞助人), RM500 as permanent sponsor (永久赞助人) and RM50 as normal sponsors. *Dongzong* (1998: 145–149).

\(^{571}\) *Dongzong* internal document (January 5, 2000: 34–36).
dinner—Inspirational Heroes Dinner (壮志宴)—was held in July 2002 to celebrate the completion of the construction projects and New Era’s establishment as another milestone in the story of the Chinese education system in Malaysia since the first Chinese school was established 180 years ago.  

Figure 5.10  New Era College Sponsorship Program (1998–2009)


5.13. Students, Staff and Programs

New Era College faced fierce competition in terms of student intakes and donations from the community as a result of the boom in private universities and colleges, as well as with other Chinese community-funded colleges, such as the Southern College (located in Johore), Han Chiang College (韩江学院) (established since 1999, located in

Penang), the MCA-backed Tunku Abdul Rahman College (established since 1969, six campuses nationwide) and Tunku Abdul Rahman University (拉曼大学) (established since 2001, located in Perak).

New Era’s first college principal was Ang Tian Se (洪天赐) (1998–2000), a formal Nanyang University graduate who held a doctorate in Chemistry from Canada Columbia University. Within the first two years, Ang successfully established academic collaborations with universities in China, Taiwan, New Zealand and Australia. Among New Era’s first programs was the ‘two plus one program’ in Bachelor of Commerce and Administration in conjunction with Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. Collaboration between Duzhong-WC with Taiwan universities also allowed HLC to conduct high quality schoolteachers’ training programs in both New Era and Taiwan.

As a graduate from Peking University, Quek Suan Hiang also utilized his extensive personal networks to establish Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with universities in China. Dongjiaozong leaders led various observation tours to China. These resulted in the signing of MOUs with Beijing Normal University (北京师范大学), South China Normal University (华南师范大学), amongst others. MOUs enabled credit transfer and recognition of pre-university programs conducted at New Era College. HLC also made successful bids as the sole overseas representative for the Higher Education in China Exhibition (中国高等教育展) in Malaysia and as the official student enrollment representative for Xiamen University (厦门大学) in

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573 The program allows students to study two years of foundational curriculum at the New Era College and spend one year at a preferred overseas university.
575 These institutions included the Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission, Republic of China (Taiwan) (中华民国侨务委员会), Taiwan MOE, National Taiwan Normal University (台湾师范大学) and National Taiwan Normal University Division of Preparatory Programs for Overseas Chinese Students (国立侨生大学先修班). See Dongzong (1993: 36–46).
1996, which generated two important sources of financial income for HLC (see Table 5.4).

Kua Kia Soong succeeded Ang Tian Se after the latter resigned in 2000. Since then, the college progressed slowly but steadily, and academic departments increased from four in 1998 to 13 in 2010. The college offered lower school fees, provided many scholarship and loan opportunities, and a more spacious college environment for its students. The number of new enrollment began to climb and achieved a high of 1,000 in 2002 (see Figure 5.11). New Era was thus able to generate income for HLC.

Table 5.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>162</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>270</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>305</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>540</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1,020</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1,416</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1,420</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1,283</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1,384</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1,466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1,719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1,460</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


577 Back in 1998, the college only consisted of four departments: Department of Accounting, Department of Finance and Business, Department of Chinese Language and Literature, and Department of Information Technology. See HLC (2010: 32, 242–247).
About 50% of the students were *duzhong* graduates, a third from government schools, and the rest from converted Chinese schools. The college also provided on-the-job training for *duzhong* schoolteachers, especially those who did not have prior education-related training, under the Professional Teaching Program (教育专业系).

Since 2004, non-Chinese students began to enroll in three programs taught in English (Art and Design, Business, and Information Technology). Although their numbers were less than 1% of the overall student population, New Era offered the Multi-Cultural Scholarship (多元文化奖学金) to non-Chinese students. During the interview with New Era’s deputy head of Department of Registry, Tang Pui Kwan (邓珮君) about New Era’s strategies in attracting enrollment of non-Chinese, she informed,

> As all of the donations to New Era College were made by the Chinese community in Malaysia, the college focused its marketing strategies to attract ethnic Chinese students only. Although non-Chinese students were not the priority of the college, it did not discourage or prohibit their enrollment.

The lack of qualified academic staff and political constraints applied to New Era limited the programs it could offer. Notably, the college had only provisional accreditation status according to the National Accreditation Board (*Lembaga Akreditasi Negara*) and Malaysian Qualifications Agency (*Agensi Kelayakan Malaysia*). The college was not qualified to issue a recognized certificate, and its students were unable to obtain study loans from the National Higher Education Fund Corporation. Most of its graduates who wished to receive a full degree must continue their studies overseas universities that had signed a MOU and agreed to academic credit

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transfer with New Era. At the time of writing, this numbered more than 90 universities worldwide.

In the following figures, the author illustrated the distribution of New Era College’s collaboration with universities (in having a MOU) all over the world (Figure 5.12) and the countries in which most New Era graduate students obtained their degrees (Figure 5.13). Almost 75% of the all MOU collaborators are universities from China and Taiwan, and therefore, almost 53% of New Era graduates opted to continue their bachelor degree in these universities. Both tendencies demonstrated that the Chinese language was a significant factor in collaboration and students’ preference for undergraduate studies.

Figure 5.12 Distribution of New Era College MOU Partners by Country

Source: Compiled by the author with data provided by HLC.
Figure 5.13 Distribution of New Era College Graduates’ Preferred Universities by Country (1999–2009)

Source: Compiled by the author with data provided by HLC.

The formation of HLC in 1994 created a platform for Dongjiaozong to call for the establishment of a regional network of alliance on Chinese education. Known as the Southeast Asian Chinese Language Teaching Convention (东南亚华文教学研讨会), it was established in 1995. The convention was attended by leading Chinese education institutions from Southeast Asian countries as illustrated in Map 5.1. Renewed interest in Chinese language saw the gradual liberalization of policies on the teaching of Chinese language by the governments in the region.\(^{582}\) The Malaysian government followed suit, resulting in official collaboration with China’s MOE as embodied in the signing of a historical MOU in 1997.\(^{583}\)

\(^{582}\) Lin HD (2000); Leo (2007: 335–336).

As the leading Chinese education institution in Malaysia, HLC played a crucial role in sharing its experiences and assisting neighboring affiliations in re-establishment efforts. For example, HLC donated a set of textbooks to schools in Cambodia, and waived copyright fees to allow them to reprint them for use in the country. New Era also introduced the Teaching of Chinese Language to Non-Chinese Teachers (对外汉语教学) to train non-Chinese schoolteachers in teaching Chinese in their vernacular language.

To promote exchanges on the teaching of Chinese, a biannual regional conference hosted in rotation by members of the Southeast Asian Chinese Language

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585 Interview with Hong Woan Ying, July 26, 2010, Selangor.
Teaching Convention has been organized since 1995. In recent years, it has attracted Chinese government officials, scholars and educationalists.\textsuperscript{586} Dongzong’s executive branch acted as the convention’s secretariat and was responsible for publishing an annual newsletter, Southeast Asia Chinese Education Bulletin (东南亚华文教育通讯) and Teaching Chinese Language in Southeast Asia Seminar Papers (东南亚华文教学研讨会特辑).

5.14. New Era University

In 2000, Vintage Heights Private Limited donated 100 acres of land located in Bandar Sepang Putra to be designated as the premises for the future New Era University campus. Vintage Heights was a joint venture among GuocoLand (Malaysia) Limited, Selangor Development Corporation (Perbadanan Kemajuan Negeri Selangor)—a state development agency controlled by UMNO Selangor state government prior to 2008, Hap Seng Consolidated Limited, Crescent Capital Private Limited and Cheltenham Investments Private Limited.

In addition, Hong Leong Group (丰隆集团) pledged a donation of more than RM2 million; GuocoLand and Hume Industries donated RM1.163 million altogether.\textsuperscript{587} Vintage Heights, GuocoLand and Hume Industries were subsidiaries of politically well-connected businessman, Quek Leng Chan (郭令灿), and his extensive Hong Leong Group empire.\textsuperscript{588} This was a win-win collaboration for both Dongjiaozong and Hong Leong, as the former could now realize its ambition of developing the first Chinese university in Malaysia, while the latter earned even greater social respect as

\textsuperscript{586} The convention normally begins with reports and country overview of Chinese language teaching, and paper presentations and discussions on Chinese ontology, materials, teaching methods, teachers’ training and evaluation.

\textsuperscript{587} Malaysia\textit{akini}, February 19, 2008.

\textsuperscript{588} Gomez and Jomo (1997: 66–72).
generous contributors to vernacular education development. It also secured the potentially lucrative development of Bandar Sepang Putra.

Hong Leong Finance, which was designated as the project manager of the New Era University-Sepang Campus development, raised RM3.38 million from donation boxes set up at its branches and a high-profile fundraising concert in 2001. However, all these efforts grounded to a standstill when the BN dominated Selangor government ordered the last minute cancellation of the Sepang Project Ground Breaking Ceremony in August 2001.589 “This was perceived by many as an act of political suppression”, said Loot Ting Yee, former Jiaozong vice chairman.590

Subsequently, the project suffered another setback when Hong Leong Finance withdrew from its role as the project manager in 2002. Having lost a strong ally, Dongjiaozong faced tremendous financial pressure to sustain the cost of the developing the university, whose estimated cost of construction for the first phase of development was at least RM16 million. Dongjiaozong also was in legal deadlock with Hong Leong over the contract pertaining to the transfer of the donated land. It contained a clause stipulating that “all land not developed by August 2007 must be returned to the developers”.591

The deadlock was resolved with the signing of a new MOU between the two on February 19, two weeks prior to the 2008 General Election. The high-profile occasion took place at MCA headquarters in Kuala Lumpur and was attended by senior MCA ministers,592 Hong Leong Chairperson Quek Leng Chan, Selangor Chief Minister Mohd Khir Toyo, and representatives from Selangor Development Corporation and Vintage Heights. Albeit knowing that the occasion was politically motivated,

590 Interview with Loot Ting Yee, March 24, 2008, Kuala Lumpur.
592 MCA President Ong Ka Ting and Deputy President Chan Kong Choy.
Yap Sin Tian and the key members of *Dongjiaozong* had no choice but to concede for the sake of the long-term interest of the Sepang campus.\(^{593}\)

With the establishment of the new Ministry of Higher Education,\(^{594}\) HLC was able to collaborate closely with Ministry of Higher Education Deputy Minister Hou Kok Chung (何国忠) from MCA, who was also a former academic from the University of Malaya. However, New Era College’s application with the Ministry of Higher Education to be upgraded into the New Era University was rejected in December 2007. Under the 1996 Education Act and the 1996 Higher Education Institution Act, New Era College was assessed to fall short in the following categories: sufficient academic caliber in its staff pool (see Figure 5.14),\(^{595}\) full accreditation status, variety in its academic program,\(^{596}\) academic and research capacities and capabilities, research publication, multi-ethnic students in admission, and a complimentary upgrading plan.\(^{597}\)

Although many of these circumstances were technical, and there were other colleges in Malaysia, such as the Tunku Abdul Rahman College, that did not have difficulties being granted university status, it did seem that New Era faced more than its share of obstacles. The presence of principal Kua Kia Soong—a human rights activist, former DAP politician, and former Internal Security Act detainee who is known for his very outspoken, anti-BN views—has not been helpful in resolving the controversies surrounding the upgrading of the New Era University establishment.\(^{598}\)

\(^{593}\) *Sinchew*, February 20, 2008.

\(^{594}\) Ministry of Higher Education, separated from MOE on March 2004, is a full ministry responsible for all higher education-related matters with the aim of transforming Malaysia into a center of excellence for higher education.

\(^{595}\) Ministry of Higher Education required that a university must have at least 20% doctorate holders and 60% master degree holders as staff. See HLC (2010: 66).

\(^{596}\) By December 2009, 15 of 34 programs received the Malaysian Qualifications Agency’s approval (with ten of them under provisional accreditation), and three received full accreditation from the Ministry of Higher Education. See HLC (2010: 242–247).

\(^{597}\) Letter from Ministry of Higher Education (February 14, 2008).

\(^{598}\) HLC (2002: 15).
Most importantly, Kua took advantage of HLC’s weak organization and lack of experience in running an academic institution to wield an extraordinary amount of power in the institution, from controlling the college management and staffing to determining the college boards’ agenda.\textsuperscript{599} For example, in 2003, Kua refused to execute the Xiamen University Nanyang Research Institute Project (厦门大学南洋研

\textsuperscript{599} Interview with Chai Yah Han, January 17, 2009, Penang.
究院研究计划案), a collaborative research project initiated by the New Era Board of Governors. According to Kua, “(the project) was too expensive (RM300,000) and there was no real academic advantage for the college”. This was despite the fact that the board had accumulated the needed financial expenses. Quek Suan Hiang commented that Kua simply did not understand the sentiments and meaning for New Era to collaborate with Xiamen University, which was set up by the prominent Chinese Malayan philanthropist Tan Kah Kee (陈嘉庚).

As was mentioned earlier, after Yap Sin Tian was elected as Dongzong’s chairman in June 2005, he worked towards regaining his constituted power as committee member over the executive branch. The Bock Tai Hee controversy was replayed when Kua reached his retirement age in 2005. Although Kua’s contract with New Era had been renewed on an annual basis, by 2007, his retirement plan had already been delayed due to inability to find a ‘suitable and qualified’ successor from among senior staff. Tensions escalated in April 2008 when Yap proposed to set up a human resource hiring committee (which consisted of two directors, the principal and two representatives from the college) to review the employment of a new college principal and senior staff members.

The time bomb exploded a week after New Era’s tenth anniversary celebrations in June 2008, when 14 heads of department released a statement to the Chinese press condemning Yap as ‘authoritative’, and demanded college ‘autonomy’. Yap, who chaired the New Era College senate, had ordered them out of the meeting of the Board of Governors a few days prior. In actuality, these heads of departments had not

600 New Era College Board of Governors consisted of seven representatives from HLC, six HLC appointed representatives, two representatives each from the college academics, alumnus, students, the college principal and deputy principal. See Dongzong (1996: 287) for details regarding the project, and HLC (2001: 7) for details regarding the Board’s structure.
601 Kua KS (2009: 7–8).
602 Interview with Quek Suan Hiang, March 23, 2010, Johore.
603 Interview with Chew Saw Eng, February 17, 2009, Kuala Lumpur.
been invited to attend the meeting. A carefully-strategized plan was made to preserve the ‘status quo’ of the college under Kua Kia Soong in order to protect the interests of some of the senior academic and administrative members.604

The straw that broke the camel’s back came when Yap refused to renew Kua’s contract in July 2008. The ensuing internal fights were furious: more than 20 academics and administrative staff signed a petition in protest over Yap’s decision. Led by Zhan Yuan Rui* (詹元瑞),605 Chong Joon Kin,606 Zhang Ji Zuo* (张济作)607 and Liang Sheng Yi*,608 the staff mobilized students, together with some parents, to conduct sit-ins. Sensing an opportunity, Yap’s political enemies also struck. They included Lee Ban Chen, former Dongzong chief executive officer who was dissatisfied with Bock’s forceful resignation in 2006, and Wong Sue Kau, former Dongzong treasurer (1989) who was defeated by Yap in the 1989 Selangor Donglianhui election.609

When the attacks did not show signs of waning, movement veterans Foo Wan Thot, Quek Suan Hiang, Sim Mow Yu and Loot Ting Yee called for self-restraint. They suggested a two weeks cooling-off period, which later extended a month. They also appointed Khew Khing Ling (丘琼润), Yoong Suan (杨泉), Tan Yew Sing (陈友信) and Toh Kin Woon (杜乾焕) as mediators. Lacking impartiality, the mediators failed. Kua and his supporters broke the ‘ceasefire’ and began a second round of attacks on Yap. The mediators’ report released on September 4 could not arrive at a consensus over critical issues such as the continuity of Kua’s contract. To make matters worse,

604 Interview with Chai Yah Han, January 17, 2009, Penang; Interview with Lim Ming King, February 6, 2009, Malacca.
605 Head, Department of Academic. He served Dongzong since 1997 and New Era College since 2004.
606 Head, Department of Education. He served Dongzong since 1997 and New Era College since 2004.
607 Head, Department of Public Relation and Student Affairs. He served New Era College since 2003.
608 Head of Department of Student Enrollment. He served Dongzong since 2004 and New Era College since 2008.
609 Interview with Chew Saw Eng, February 17, 2009, Kuala Lumpur.
Tan Yew Sing and Toh Kin Woon released a pro-Kua statement that further dented their credibility.\(^6\)

To break the deadlock, Yang Yin Chong (杨应俊) and Pang Siew Fian (冯秋萍) (Malacca Donglianhui), Tew Say Kop (张志开) (Negeri Sembilan Donglianhui) and Tan Tai Kim (陈大锦) (Johore Donglianhui) called a Dongzong Extraordinary Delegates Meeting—the first in its history. These anti-Yap figures were merely seizing the opportunity to demand Yap’s resignation. Kua and his supporters also influenced movement veteran, Sim Mow Yu, to release a statement urging all to “keep the status quo until the problem has been resolved”.\(^6\)

Yap successfully persuaded most of the state-level donglianhui committees to support his plan to constrain the power of Dongzong executive branch. In the first-ever Dongzong Extraordinary Delegates Meeting in November 2008, Dongzong members voted (ten-to-three) in favor of hiring a new principal. Due to differences in opinion between the donglianhui chairman and some state delegates, the votes, which were cast in confidence by the chairman, were not necessarily representative of the donglianhui of the entire state. Rather they were more reflective of individual preferences.\(^6\)

In addition, some argued that New Era was, in reality, controlled by HLC, which constituted an alliance between Dongzong, Jiaozong and Merdeka University Company. Accordingly, the results of the Extraordinary Meeting only represented the views of Dongzong, while those of Jiaozong and Merdeka University Company had largely been marginalized.

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\(^{6}\) Interview with Chai Yah Han, January 17, 2009, Penang.

\(^{6}\) Sim Mow Yu press statement (September 16, 2008).

\(^{6}\) Interview with Lim Ming King, February 6, 2009, Malacca.
The 2009 New Era crisis not only re-energized the state- and central-level committees, it also demonstrated the internal differences between the leaders of Dongzong and Merdeka University Company, with the latter (represented by Foo Wan Thot) calling for the continued appointment of Kua. In early November 2008, five heads of departments resigned on the principle of ‘death is better than life with humiliation’ (士可杀不可辱), they included Zhan Yuan Rui, Chong Joon Kin, Zhang Ji Zuo and Liang Sheng Yi.

Failed to renew his contract, Kua left New Era in December 2008. Pua Eng Chong (潘永忠) became New Era’s third principal in January 2009. Pua worked toward acquiring the college’s necessary academic accreditation and upgrading the institution into a full-fledged university by taking advantage of post-2008 political opportunities, which included a “better relationship with Ministry of Higher Education”.

The most dramatic event of the entire controversy was when former New Era graduate, 22–year old Lim Ken Zhi (林肯智) punched and fractured Yap’s cheekbone while the latter was reading his speech in front of 500 students, parents, schoolteachers and guests at the college’s 2009 convocation. The event made national headlines. Lim was sentenced to two days’ imprisonment and fined RM6,000. In an interview, Lim defended his actions,

I am not a passionate or strong supporter of Chinese education, but I support democracy. I did that because as a leader, (Yap) refused to meet or communicate with the students and New Era population. The refusal to communicate is also a kind of violence.

The Yap-Kua controversy did not end with the punch delivered by Lim. Opposition against Yap gradually spiraled into an anti-Yap movement within the larger Chinese

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613 Interview with Pua Eng Chong, February 27, 2009, Selangor.
education movement. After successfully defeating Yap and his deputy, Chow, in the Kuala Lumpur Confucian’ school committee re-election in September 2008, Sim Teck Hwa (沈德和)—supported by the Kuala Lumpur Confucian’s principal, Goh Kean Seng (吴建成)—challenged Yap’s autonomy at the Selangor Donglianhui election in April 2009. Yap defended his position with support from the majority of the school committee members of Chinese primary schools.

The third wave came in June 2009 at the national Dongzong re-election, where the anti-Yap alliance, led by the Negeri Sembilan and Malacca Donglianhui, failed once again to challenge Yap. At the time of this writing, with the departure of Bock, Kua and most of the outspoken members of the movement, Yap began to rebuild the Chinese education movement with his trusted team members, and hopefully, to establish a more inclusive, representative and internally democratic movement.

5.15. Conclusion

The formation of Duzhong-WC in the 1970s successfully gathered experts and academics from the Chinese community to revive and reform the curriculum and educational system for duzhong. The Dongjiaozong duzhong revival movement created and transformed the duzhong system into that of a popular private secondary school, especially in the central and southern regions of West Malaysia. It also generated important sustainable financial resources for Dongzong through the sales of textbooks and collection of UEC fees. These financial resources enabled Dongzong, as the caretaker of Duzhong-WC, to expand the size and strength of the Chinese education movement.

As Duzhong-WC grew, the need for more full-time staff also increased. Under the leadership of Lim Fong Seng, a group of ambitious executive staff was trained to
become full-time movement executives, which helped to sustain the momentum of the movement in the 1990s and 2000s. The movement cultivated these full-time, salaried, and highly-educated (university degree-holders) professional social movement executive communities to sustain various mobilization activities of the movement. The discussion in this chapter has also evidently demonstrated that, without the constraints of a carefully implemented structured institution, such commitments may easily be manipulated, resulting in the power of these executive officers outgrowing that of the *Duzhong-WC* and *Dongzong* central committees during the post-Lim Fong Seng era.

Lacking in systematic division of work and rules, the leaders of *Dongjiaozong* were overburdened with multiple roles within the movement that eventually put a noticeable strain on the effectiveness and commitment in the delivery of all these responsibilities. Such reliance on individual capacity rather than on a carefully planned and executed structured system is a common phenomenon of social movements that are situated within non-liberal, democratic states. Although such relaxed and flexible system may allow social movement leaders to deal with the less predictable non-liberal, democratic states promptly and effectively, the system may allow opportunists to abuse their close relationships with the leaders to fulfill their personal agendas.

The top-down decision-making processes also may prevent useful input from the lower echelons of the organization who might construct a better and more stable internal system. Such dilemmas may explain the observation from this chapter that, despite the movement having developed the structure of a highly-hierarchical bureaucracy, most of its decision-making remain reliant upon an authoritative and top-down system.
Another point worth noting from this chapter is the failure of Huaxiao-WC despite it having adopted a similar working structure as Duzhong-WC. As discussed in Chapter Three, Jiaozong has been significantly weakened by the shrinking local-level membership and low participation rate. In an effort to revive the weakening Jiaozong, Huaxiao-WC was re-introduced in 1994 to assist with the organization’s administrative and secretariat work. Although efforts such as financial and human resources were injected into Huaxiao-WC, they did not solve Jiaozong’s fundamental problems with declining membership and lack of sustainable financial resources. After the departure of Lim Lian Geok Cultural Development Center from Jiaozong in 2004, the executive branch of Huaxiao-WC could only conduct non-contentious activities. Its performance today is far less attractive and exciting compared to the 1950s.

The system’s fragility was proven when Yap Sin Tian became Dongzong chairman in June 2005 and led a revolutionary transformation to strengthen the role of the movement central committee. Thus, the pressure to sustain and strengthen its relationship with the authorities in return for political assistance to upgrade New Era College into a full university also forced a clean up within the social movement organizations. Over-powerful and resistance-oriented executive officers such as Bock Tai Hee, Kua Kia Soong and their supporters left the movement. Many more neutral and talented staff members also left due to inability to adapt to the new leadership who saw the executive staff as ‘salaried members’ and no longer a companion of the movement. The internal changes disappointed many; however, in the opinion of the current leadership, it was the only way to secure trust from state authorities, and to obtain approval for the upgrade of New Era College.
Although the movement had now openly divided into two (or more) factions, there are many lessons to be learnt from the personal controversies of 2006 and 2008. It showed that the contemporary education movement has shifted from the simple demand for vernacular rights into a battleground between political parties and individuals who wanted to use it for personal gains.

The controversy also demonstrated the lack of skills and mechanism for conflict management within the current movement institution. The New Era crisis highlighted the need to establish a commission of enquiries, which should be empowered to pass judgment effectively in arbitrating internal disputes. The selection of a third party should be neutral and accepted by all the conflicting parties. The results of arbitration should be final, and obeyed. It should not cave in to political bargaining, thus avoiding deterioration of already troubled relationships.

Many movement veterans have expressed their disappointment and worry over the future of the movement. However, the competition for power and control over leadership of the movement will only intensify and become more aggressive within the movement’s national institutions (Dongzong, Merdeka University Company and Jiaozong), among its state networks (donglianhui), as well as at the school level. What these bickering parties failed to realize was that continued internal fighting and regrouping into factions would only the benefit their common antagonist—the state authorities—to the detriment of the movement in the long run.

Movement veteran, Lee Hing, commented, “We have donated our time, money and effort to the Chinese education movement. In so doing, we should exercise self-restraint and not engage in personal politics. However, what has happened in the past years has been disappointing. If things get too complicated, and everyone had to
choose a camp, then I might as well spend more time with my grandchildren at home than to face all this nonsense”.615

Perhaps it is time for the leaders to reflect and to review the system and strengthen checks and balances mechanisms. This chapter has also pointed out that the movement has been riding on state suppression and depending on such external suppression to foster solidarity among its supporters. Despite the movement’s successful persistence over the years, the lack of efforts in developing a better, and more structured institution to enhance its internal strength saw the movement troubled by factionalism. A successful movement should be inclusive, both internally and externally, to mobilize the necessary support to achieve its ultimate objectives. The issues of academic institutions aside, Dongjiaozong must tackle the more fundamental issues of installing Chinese language with the official status in the constitution, so as to secure its mission to protect the Chinese primary schools, support the independent secondary schools and develop the Chinese language tertiary education institution (维护华小，支持独中，发展高等教育).

615 Interview with Lee Hing, July 28, 2010, Selangor.
Chapter Six

Damansara Save Our School Movement

6.1. Introduction

Thus far, the thesis has discussed the construction of shared grievances, leadership selection through the bottom-up institution process, mobilization from the extended network and the role of human capital at the executive branches of the social movement organizations as the four key factors in the persistence of the Chinese education movement in Malaysia. Nevertheless, the movement has also been constrained by its exclusive framework, creating ethnic, social and lingual barriers that limited its capacity to mobilize large numbers of people to overcome state constraints.

In order to better observe the causal dynamics of institutions in social mobilization, this chapter illustrates Dongjiaozong’s involvement in the Damansara village community resistance against the state’s closure of its community school, Damansara Chinese Primary School (白沙罗华文小学, Baixiao). This community-initiated movement manifested itself as the Damansara Save Our School movement (SOS movement).

At its peak, the SOS movement was transformed from a struggle to defend the community right of a local school into a Chinese minority rights to receive mother tongue education in a multi-cultural, Malay majority-dominated state. Focusing on the SOS movement that lasted from 2001 to 2008 as the empirical example, this chapter illustrates the processes of movement institutionalization, and the role of Dongjiaozong in facilitating the social mobilization for the SOS movement.

616 The school was previously known as Overseas Chinese School (华侨华文小学) prior to its relocation to Damansara in 1950.
This chapter also demonstrates the potentials and constraints of the Chinese education movement’s social mobilization capacity beyond the traditional target audience, which has been limited to only ethnic Chinese thus far. At the early phase of the SOS movement, the opportunities for inter-ethnic cooperation in the achievement of the movement’s goals had seemed promising. However, toward the end of the SOS movement, any hopes of inter-ethnic cooperation in social movement became a far-fetched idea. This chapter will analyze the factors that led to the cessation of these opportunities, in the hope that it will provide a renewed perspective of the possibility of multi-ethnic collaboration of social movements in Malaysia.

The seven years struggle was also sustained by financial and moral support from a complicated nationwide collaborative social network of Chinese community organizations. Moreover, throughout the SOS movement, it also received support from even non-Chinese-speaking and non-Chinese ethnic groups. While institutionally written constitution, regulations and norms shaped the framework for this type of collaboration, individual social capital, credibility and shared grievances fueled and sustained its ability to mobilize support from various communities and organizations.

Although small in size, the SOS movement made significant claims in ballot box politics and successfully negotiated a compromise with the BN government, which eventually saw the reopening of its original premises, albeit renamed as Chung Hwa Damansara Chinese Primary School (白沙罗中华国民型学校) in 2008. For the SOS movement committees and supporters alike, the reopening of the premises proved that MOE had miscalculated its decision of closing the primary school in 2001. It also attests to the miracle of everyday resistance by underdogs against the powerful state and the triumph of a minority community over unjust policymaking imposed on Chinese schools in the country.
6.2. Dilemmas of Malaysia’s Chinese Schools

*Baixiao* is a community school that accommodated residents of the Damansara New Village, both (the school and the village) are by-products of the Emergency Doctrine in the 1950s (as discussed in Chapter Two). The village hosts 140 families in its 15-acre territory. The village and *Baixiao*—surrounded by heavily populated residential and industrial area of Petaling Jaya district—are strategically located about 10 kilometers west from the city center of Kuala Lumpur.

By the 1990s, the school was hosting more Chinese students from neighboring communities than from the village. As discussed in Chapter Three, the government’s promotion of Malay national schools has limited the development of Chinese schools in Malaysia since the 1970s, causing severe shortage of Chinese schools in Chinese-concentrated cities. As elaborated in Figure 6.1, in Petaling Jaya, eight Chinese primary schools are currently hosting more than the average of 2,000 students per school, and the numbers continue to climb yearly.

By 2000, *Baixiao* was hosting 1,463 students in its tiny 0.8 acre compound. With 50 students in one classroom, the school operated two sessions: senior levels in the morning (7 am–1 pm) and elementary levels in the afternoon (1 pm–7 pm). Four zinc-roofed wooden classrooms built in the 1950s had expanded into 16 classrooms with a well-equipped multi-purpose hall by 1999 to accommodate the increasing school population. These expansion projects were all paid for by the school committee and the Chinese community through fundraising campaigns.

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617 Interview with Hew Wah, February 25, 2009, Selangor.
618 Petaling Jaya was established since 1952 to alleviate population congestion in Kuala Lumpur. Petaling Jaya reached a population density of 432,619 people by 2000.
619 Since 1970s, Chinese communities nationwide have been submitting requests to establish new Chinese schools, many of them willing to self-fund the cost of constructions. However, these applications were not approved by the MOE.
620 Shum TK (2005).
621 In 1976, the school has only two classrooms and one office. It was replaced by a three-storey building comprising nine classrooms in 1982. In 1986, a second building with 11 classrooms was completed. A
The *Baixiao* school committee and its parents and schoolteachers’ association were staffed by ‘outsiders’ who were financially and socially better off than most of the Damansara village communities. As discussed in Chapter Three, the school committees of Chinese schools and the parents and schoolteachers’ association were entrusted to safeguard the school’s interests and guide its infrastructural development. However, when these two institutions decided to relocate the school to a larger, newer student activity center was built in 1989. In 1995, the pedestrian access walkway was constructed to ease traffic congestion at the main door.

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**Figure 6.1** Distribution of Chinese Primary School Students in Petaling Jaya (1975–2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Baixiao</th>
<th>Chen Moh</th>
<th>Han Ming</th>
<th>Kung Man</th>
<th>Subang</th>
<th>Yuk Chai</th>
<th>Yuk Chyun</th>
<th>Yak Chee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>1,590</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>2,859</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1,361</td>
<td>2,656</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>1,180</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>2,821</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>2,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1,401</td>
<td>2,597</td>
<td>1,512</td>
<td>1,709</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>3,261</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>2,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1,453</td>
<td>2,589</td>
<td>1,964</td>
<td>1,825</td>
<td>1,066</td>
<td>3,436</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>3,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1,597</td>
<td>2,591</td>
<td>2,345</td>
<td>1,913</td>
<td>1,203</td>
<td>3,450</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>3,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1,932</td>
<td>2,595</td>
<td>2,760</td>
<td>2,019</td>
<td>1,318</td>
<td>3,505</td>
<td>1,166</td>
<td>3,614</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author with data extracted from Shum TK (2005).
premises, the decision was made based on the welfare of the students. Sadly, it was made without consultation or participation from the villagers who viewed the school as part of the property of its community.

An application for a new school branch in 1995 was unsuccessful. The second attempt in 1999 to relocate the school was approved after heavy lobbying and intervention by the MCA politicians. In 2000, MOE formally announced that the school would be relocated on grounds that the Sprint Highway, where traffic, as well as air and noise pollution, were hazardous, failed to provide a conducive learning environment for Baixiao’s students.\(^{623}\)

However, MOE’s account contradicted the Report on Environmental Impact Assessment released by the Sprint Highway Company in June 1997.\(^ {624}\) It noted that the noise level along Damansara road from the Western Kuala Lumpur Traffic Dispersal Scheme was minimal and the impact of the air quality was insignificant. More importantly, Baixiao was not the only school in Malaysia that faced noise and air pollution due to the development of its neighborhood, and therefore should not be ‘sacrificed’ as the first to be closed down on such reasoning.

Lack of formal participation in the decision-making process of the school’s closure, the villagers were shocked and angered when the decision was made public in June 2000. The strong affiliation and attachment toward Baixiao led many villagers to oppose the school’s closure. Some of them were members of the Baixiao alumni and many had participated in and supported previous fundraising campaigns for the school’s expansion, which included the construction of a multi-purpose center and indoor badminton courts, which were completed in 1999.

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\(^{624}\) A copy of the Sprint Highway Company Environmental Impact Assessment Report (June 1997) is open for public reference at the Department of Environment, Malaysia.
To subdue the anger of the village community and strengthen its justification, Baixiao’s parents and schoolteachers’ association distributed 1,450 questionnaires to survey parents’ views about the relocation plan. However, the biased design of the questionnaire requested for parental signature only if the parent agreed to the location, and not vice versa. Out of the questionnaires returned, 87% of parents supported the relocation, and 3% refused; the rest had failed to respond to the questionnaire. The survey results were more a reflection of the school’s student demographics, where almost 75% of the school’s students came from outside the village.

Most ironic in this controversial relocation project was that the Baixiao students were forced to share premises with Puay Chai II Chinese Primary School (培才二校) at Bandar Utama before the completion of the new Baixiao premises located at Tropicana housing area (see Map 6.1 for the location of these schools). The rush in school closure was speculated by some as to make way for high-value development projects at the school premises and its nearby area—the ‘final piece of prime land in Damansara’. Thus, the Damansara villagers also faced uncertainty regarding the renewal of their housing permits and land ownership. Most villagers felt that Baixiao’s continued existence could prevent their homeland from being demolished to give way to urban development.

Above all, MOE had yet to release any written guarantee over the status of school ownership or any detailed planning of the construction for the new Baixiao

625 A total of 144 questionnaires were voided because they were never returned to the parents and schoolteachers’ association. Sinchew, October 13, 2000; Guang Ming, December 14, 2000.
626 About 25% of the school’s students (360) were from the nearby neighborhoods while 75% (1,062) came from further neighborhoods. See Shum TK (2005),
627 According to Chia Oai Peng (谢爱萍), a former member of the parents and schoolteachers’ association of Baixiao, the premises allocated by MOE to Baixiao was given to Puay Chai by the Deputy Education Minister Hon Choon Kim, resulting in Baixiao having no school premises after approval of relocation. Nanyang, January 15, 2001.
premises. Many harbored fears that Baixiao would eventually ‘disappear’, or end up being included as part of the controversial Vision Schools project (as discussed in Chapter Four).\(^{630}\)

Map 6.1  Location of Baixiao (Damansara), Baixiao (Tropicana), Puay Chai II and Damansara New Village

![Map showing the location of Baixiao (Damansara), Baixiao (Tropicana), Puay Chai II and Damansara New Village.]

Source: Dongzong.

6.3. Damansara Save Our School Movement Committee

Damansara villagers who opposed Baixiao’s closure, led by Lee Sang (李生), Wong Kim Foong (黄金凤) and Lai Chong Kong (赖仲光) approached the two

\(^{630}\) Nanyang, May 27 and November 7, 2000; Sinchew, December 24, 2000.
supporters of the relocation, namely *Baixiao* school committee and MCA Member of Parliament (MP) of Petaling Jaya, Chew Mei Fun (周美芬) (1999–2008) to negotiate for *Baixiao*’s reopening, but to no avail.\(^{631}\) These villagers were perceived as underdogs due to their financial and social disadvantages. Such an asymmetrical relationship limited the villagers’ ability to engage or pressure the more powerful and influential school committees or politicians to listen to their demands.

In order to overcome these disadvantages, the villagers then turned to opposition party DAP politician Ronnie Liu Tian Khiew (刘天球) who later assisted them to form the Damansara New Village School Relocation Opposition Action Committee (反对共校保留白小原校争取建分校委员会).\(^{632}\) The movement committee was renamed as the Committee for Maintaining the School’s Original Premises and Seizing the New School Branch (白小保留原校, 争取分校工作委员会), better known to the public as Damansara Save Our School Movement Committee (SOSC). The change in title marked the transformation from a passive opposition to a progressive claim that emphasizes the relocated *Baixiao* at the Tropicana site as an extension, and not a replacement.

Despite villagers’ protest, *Baixiao* was officially shut down in January 2001. The first day of school on January 3, 2001 saw about 100 students gather at the premises of Damansara to demand the reopening of their school, which was well-equipped with functioning facilities. Their parents held the protest in front of the school, demanding justification for its closure.\(^{633}\) By late January, only less than 5% of the total school student population, or 67 students (all are from the village) remained

\(^{632}\) *Nanyang*, December 11, 2000.
firm against the relocation. The exclusion of outsiders escalated the event into a struggle between the Damansara new village community against the BN regime.

Most villagers who participated in SOSC were working-class commoners and amateurs to social movement prior to the SOS movement. Many, including the authorities, had expected the movement to dissolve when the issues faded from public and media interest, and its resources run out. In fact, in 2000, the SOS movement was more of an ad-hoc group focused on day-to-day struggles.

SOSC gradually gained institutional strength in January 2001, with participation from various experienced politicians such as Ronnie Liu, and social activists such as Bock Tai Hee and Tang Ah Chai who acted as the movement’s advisors and utilized their wide networks to mobilize resources for the movement. Ronnie Liu was the chairman of Selangor DAP; Bock Tai Hee was the chief executive officer of Dongzong; and Tang Ah Chai was the chief executive officer of the SCAH.

The sense of injustice generated from the closure of Baixiao drew support from Chinese communities (both Chinese and non-Chinese-speaking alike) and non-Chinese ethnic groups. Chinese educationalists such as Dongzong Chairman Quek Suan Hiang, Jiaozong Vice Chairman Loot Ting Yee, and Chinese community leaders such as SCAH Chairman Ting Chee Seng, SCAH Secretary Chan Chin Chee (陈正志), and members from SCAH’s Language and Education Committee and Civic Rights Committee lent their strong support to the movement. Other warm-hearted and enthusiastic individuals such as Choong Pai Chee (庄白绮), Ling Chia Nien (林嘉年), Wong Cheng Yoke (黄祯玉), Ong See Yong (翁诗倜), Wong Chin Lee (黄真莉),

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635 Number of students decreased from 131 in January 5 to 71 students by end of January 2001.
637 A total of 3,068 Malay supporters signed the support Baixiao petition, see Sinchew, February 19, 2001 (b). Representatives from the University Malaya Muslim Students Association also visited Baixiao, see Sinchew, February 9, 2001 (b).
In order to accommodate students who refused the relocation to continue their studies, SOSC started a makeshift school in the Ruan Liang Temple (阮梁圣公庙) located next to the school (about 25 meters away) and held their first lessons on January 16, 2001. The first few months were chaotic. The temporary school shelter used pieces of cloth as a ‘wall’ between classrooms. Due to uncertainties they faced regarding the movement’s length and scale, both SOSC and the temple school were unable to devise any sustainable long-term plan. Financial resources were scarce, the movement’s directions were vague, and many who participated in the SOSC had hoped that the school would reopen in the short term—if not, in a few months’ time.

SOSC’s movement repertoires at this early stage were impromptu, and lacked any planned schedule or strategy. Therefore, most of them failed without any significant impact. The villagers, supporters and schoolchildren took turns to conduct sit-in strikes at government ministries (such as MOE) and especially at the headquarters of BN Chinese political parties, MCA and Gerakan. Although these approaches made the Chinese newspapers headlines, the ruling regime and its component parties saw no need to negotiate with SOSC, and simply ignored the villagers’ demands.

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638 Sivarasa Rasiah was an active PKR member and he won the Subang parliamentary seat in the 2008 General Election.
639 Sponsored by Kam Kei (金记), a food catering company, this type of temporary shelters are widely use by Malaysians as temporary extensions of the house to host parties or dinners. *Nanyang*, January 17, 2001.
640 Interview with Tang Ah Chai, February 23, 2009, Kuala Lumpur.
641 Interview with Cheng Yok Hoon, February 23, 2009, Kuala Lumpur.
642 Interview with Choong Pai Chee, February 24, 2009, Selangor.
SOSC’s petition to the National Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suruhanjaya Hak Asasi Malaysia) to demand the reopening of Baixiao under the right for community education was not followed up by SOSC due to a lack of strategic planning. Pahang DAP Women’s Wing Chairman Tuw Ah Mei (涂亚眉) who sympathized with the movement conducted a two week hunger strike at the SCAH headquarters but ended her strike due to lack of support from SOSC and deteriorating health.645 About 160,000 signatures were collected from the public (15% from non-Chinese supporters) in support of reopening the school; however, these signatures were left unused.646 All these repertoires would have had more impact if the movement had been guided by a better-planned and more established institution.

As the SOS movement progressed into its first anniversary, SOSC began to develop a more sustainable short-term strategy, and improved its organization’s operations as the movement gained pace. Organizational reforms mirroring Dongzong’s working culture of checks and balances were introduced to enhance the administrative management of the movement’s organization. In order to expand villagers’ and school parents’ participation in SOSC, almost everyone was given a position during the 2002 SOSC election, forming the largest committee number in SOSC’s history. Members of the committee were allocated into working groups with specific responsibilities, marking the first signs of professionalization and systematization.647 Beginning from May 2002, regular and systematic meetings were scheduled weekly (on Wednesdays) to evaluate the movement’s achievements and discuss strategies to achieve its desired objectives and targets.648

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645 Baixiao internal documents, source courtesy of Baixiao Executive Secretary Lim Jian An. Data was in Chinese and translated into English by the author.
647 Interview with Bock Tai Hee, February 8, 2009, Malacca.
648 Interview with Choong Pai Chee, February 24, 2009, Selangor.
Thus, Dongzong’s full intervention by 2002 not only strengthened SOSC as a social movement organization, but also played a crucial role in sustaining and continuing the struggle, both financially and organizationally. Indeed, Dongzong’s involvement cannot be taken for granted in spite of its reputation as the pioneering defender of Chinese education in Malaysia. Jiaozong’s Chairman Ong Kow Ee had strongly opposed the participation of schoolteachers or retired principals in the temple school,

They (schoolteachers) are not authorized by the MOE to teach in the temporary school. This has violated the regulations governing schoolteachers... Donglianhui should not assign people to teach at the temple school. This will only worsen the current situation.  

With Ong’s resistance, Jiaozong remained distant from the SOS movement institutionally, but allowed the participation of its executive staff in the temple school’s curriculum and administrative affairs. The SOS movement was historical as it was the first time Dongzong was directly involved in a movement at the local level. The rapid escalation of the Baixiao controversy from a community conflict into a national issue, the failure of Selangor Donglianhui (who also opposed the school’s relocation) to reconcile with the Baixiao school committee and MCA, and the fear of this as another way of diminishing Chinese schools forced Dongzong to intervene. The decision was also supported by Dongzong members—the state-level donglianhui—who issued press statements that criticized MCA’s failure to protect the rights of the Chinese community by closing down Baixiao.

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650 Nanyang, December 31, 2000; Selangor and Kuala Lumpur Donglianhui press statements (December 30, 2000, January 17 and March 2, 2001); Interview with Quek Suan Hiang, March 23, 2010, Johore.
651 See press statements issued by the following organizations: Johore Donglianhui (January 31, 2001); Penang Donglianhui (March 3, 2001); Penang Donglianhui and Other Penang Chinese Education Organizations (February 18, 2001); Pahang Donglianhui (February 15 and 17, 2001); Kedah Donglianhui (February 15 and 25, 2001).
Most importantly, as argued in this thesis, relational institutions, especially the individual commitments of influential activists such as Bock and Tang, were crucial to Dongzong’s engagement in SOSC. News about the SOS movement was disseminated through Dongzong’s website, and SOSC was invited to, and included, in most of Dongzong’s activities. One of the most significant moves in January 2002 was the formal appointment of Dongzong as the sole trustee of SOSC’s donation funds and bank account for greater accountability and transparency. With increasing public donations pouring into the SOSC foundation, this move boosted the community’s confidence that donations would be counterchecked. Moreover, Bock also utilized his power as Dongzong’s chief executive officer to place a full-time salaried administrative secretary in SOSC to facilitate between Dongzong and SOSC, administrate documentation, handle the gap management between SOSC and the temple school, and process SOSC’s requests for financial and resources from Dongzong.

However, the overwhelming influence of Dongzong also narrowed SOSC’s inclusiveness. From a frame of injustice and community rights in 2001, SOSC began to identify itself as a struggle for the survival of a Chinese primary school struggle at the beginning of 2002. The change in the way it framed its cause had the effect of distancing many non-Chinese-speaking participants from directly participating in SOSC.

In 2003, SOSC leaders faced their first major internal faction when they decided to depoliticize the movement and terminate Ronnie Liu’s position as the movement’s advisor. Although Liu and his DAP political influence were credited for the formation of SOSC, the influence of opposition parties such as DAP and Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) in SOSC were attacked by BN politicians who sought to decertify the movement. Criticisms such as “SOSC is a tool of the opposition party to attack
MCA”652 and “Baixiao events had been politicized by the DAP”653 dominated the media and distanced support from a politically neutral public.654 Liu’s supporters within SOSC, such as Chin Keh Kong (陈国光), Wong Yau King (黄耀庆) and Wong Yew Kong (王友光), were visibly upset about Liu’s termination. Although Chin and the Wongs remained in SOSC after Liu’s termination, they became antagonistic and were perceived as troublemakers within SOSC. Chin, who was also the headman for the village, utilized his position to garner support by sending damaging short messages from his mobile phone to members listed in SOSC’s contact list to express his grievances from time to time.655

The number of supporters who came forward to offer help reached its peak in 2003 and slowly declined after that. SOSC began to experience a bottleneck in 2004, especially after BN’s astounding victory, capturing almost 90% of the Parliamentary seats in the 2004 General Election. This came as a big blow to the opposition parties and their supporters. The lack of renewal of the topic for mobilization also resulted in waning support from the opposition parties and many villagers.656

From 2004 onwards, only about 50 villagers stood firmly with the movement. The deteriorating turnout prompted SOSC to adapt and develop a long-term plan to sustain the movement and the temple school. To enhance community mobilization, SOSC created a variety of activities to sustain the spirit of the people and its mobilizing capacity. This included activities aiming to enhance the social awareness of the villagers, such as training classes and movies. Outdoor activities such as hiking, running, family days and holiday group tours aimed at fostering bonds among

656 Guo PY (2005).
supporters were also organized.\textsuperscript{657} Participants in these activities paid minimal registration fees, while SOSC utilized donated funds to subsidize most of the costs.

In addition, programs such as counseling, health seminars and peer-sharing sessions targeted specific groups were conducted. For instance, small groups of \textit{Mulan} and \textit{Peter Pan} were formed; the former was a parent-child reading club that encouraged parents to share their passion for reading with their children below six years old, while the latter was a tuition class for \textit{Baixiao} students to learn computing and English. From 2007, SOSC’s monthly administrative meetings became more content- and update-focused. SOSC also conducted monthly birthday celebrations to build good relationships among the committee members, schoolteachers, students and the villagers. All these activities were conducted at the temple school, which was also a gathering point for the villagers to receive updates about the movement.\textsuperscript{658}

SOSC’s transformation throughout the life span of the movement was apparent to observers. The first transformation was that of ordinary, poorly-educated individuals mobilizing themselves and others to defend their rights. Like many ordinary citizens in Malaysia, these supporters had, for the greater part of their lives, feared the police and avoided involvement in state- or politics-related controversies. Most of them had been unaware of the existence of \textit{Dongjiaozong}, the perils of Chinese education in Malaysia, or the concept of human rights prior joining SOSC.

Many SOSC members had received only a few years of formal education. SOSC Chairman Yong Yoke Song, for example, did not even graduate from primary school. By participating in the movement, members of SOSC from the Damansara villager had learned to host weekly work meetings, plan publicity activities, conduct and chair press conferences, manage financial accounts and deliver seminar speeches,

\textsuperscript{657} Penang (December 2001), Kelantan (2003), Cameron Highland (July 2006) and Cherating Beach, Pahang (August 2007). Most of these trips lasted two days and one night.  
\textsuperscript{658} \textit{Dongzong} (2008: 44).
and above all, many of them improved their command of the Chinese language considerably in the process of being involved in the movement.

Participation in the SOS movement was on daily basis. Students’ parents such as Chow Ba Mei* (周八妹) participated through daily visits to the school, assisting in cooking meals for school students and staff at the temple school, facilitating and maintaining the cleanliness of the temple school, joining SOSC to distribute brochures during by-elections, and helping to sell donated items during fundraising campaigns. Thus, the simple desire to ensure that the Chinese education remained accessible for the next generation, has compelled these ordinary individuals to rise to the challenge of involving themselves in a movement that has indeed made a difference to the future of Chinese in Malaysia.659

Perhaps the most significant reminder of the movement was the huge billboard at the front entrance of SCAH at Maharajalela Road in Kuala Lumpur’s city center, which mirrors the billboard placed at the temple school. Installed since March 2001, it recorded the number of days of closure of the original Baixiao. Despite political pressure from various parties, SCAH Chairman Ngan Ching Wen (颜清文, 1997–2001), Ting Chee Seng (2001–2003) and Bong Hon Liong (黄汉良, 2003–2008) reiterated their firm support for Baixiao’s reopening by resisting the removal of the school signboard until the school reopened in 2009.660

6.4. Institution Design and Constraints

As shown in Figure 6.2, the SOS movement was constituted by SOSC and the temple school; it had a hybrid organizational structure of a Chinese school and huatuan. The procedural and structural designs closely followed the regulations and constitutions

659 Interview with Hew Hwa, February 25, 2009, Selangor.
660 Interview with Tang Ah Chai, February 23, 2009, Kuala Lumpur.
commonly practiced by *huatuan* in Malaysia. However, the basis of membership was a sponsorship system typical of a Chinese school in Malaysia. The temple school hosted the Annual Sponsors Meeting every year.

**Figure 6.2 SOSC and *Baixiao* Temple School Organizations**

Source: The author.

Sponsors were the primary members of the school and had the right to nominate, second a motion, to vote and to be voted. Sponsorship was open to the public in 2001 but thereafter, SOSC began to implement stricter rules in order to prevent phantom sponsors or political sponsors from interfering with the school’s development or sabotage the movement. From 2002 onwards, a sponsor had to fulfill at least one of the following requirements to qualify and register as a sponsor of the school:661

1. Already a sponsor after *Baixiao*’s Damansara premises was closed.
2. Resident of Damansara New Village.
3. Parent of students enrolled in the temple school.
4. Alumni of *Baixiao* (Damansara).
5. Teacher or principal of the temple school.

The selection of SOSC followed the set of rules and process of institution design—and incorporated elements—widely used by Chinese education movement and huatuan in Malaysia alike. This process not only provided legitimacy to SOSC’s tenure of power, it also affirmed the democratic elements of the movement through the carefully conducted electoral process to ensure fair and free competition among members. Although the number of candidates may be small, and many of them were not equipped with high academic qualifications, this system induced credibility and ensured the reliability of the internal structure by making sure that SOSC was led by the most appropriate person. The oath of office ceremony was, in a traditional and symbolic way, the platform through which the community gave its recognition, blessings, and support to new committees. For example, the dates and procedures of the SOSC election held at the temple school are described below.662

1. Nomination period: June 25 to July 7, 2003. Sponsors could nominate potential nominees. For example, in 2003, a total of 32 nominees were named, but only 21 of them were eventually selected into the committee. In 2006, 15 committee members were selected from 17 nominees.

2. Vote counting: July 9, 2003. Votes were counted publicly before being sealed. The vote sealing process was monitored by representatives of Dongjiaozong and SCAH.

3. Vote casting day: July 16, 2003. Sponsors casted their votes. The result was announced on the same night. The top 21 nominees who received the highest votes were elected into the committee. This was also the day when all sponsors gathered and passed the Baixiao progress reports and financial reports of 2005 and 2006, and the Baixiao Committee Sponsors General Regulations.

4. Committee members were elected by sponsors’ votes during the Annual Sponsors Meeting.


6. An Oath of Office Ceremony by the new committee concluded the formality. The ceremony was witnessed by representatives from Dongzong and major Chinese organizations that had taken care of Baixiao events. This annual event was among the few that continued to receive attention from the Chinese media. Despite this, not all important figures invited were willing to grace this ceremony. The event on December 1, 2004 to inaugurate the 2004–2006 SOSC committee members was inspected by Dongzong Chairman Quek Suan Hiang, Jiaozong Vice Chairman Loot Ting Yee and SCAH Chairman Bong Hon Liong.

6.5. The Temple School

Beyond SOSC, the other main component of the SOS movement was the temple school. The temple school began to operate from January 16 after the police forcefully sealed the Baixiao (Damansara) premises by cutting off water and electricity supplies—officially ceasing its operation—and warned of detaining all trespassers. All the students stranded at the Damansara premises were moved to the makeshift school in the Ruan Liang Temple located about 10 meters away from the Damansara premises. A unique feature of the temple school was its mix of schoolteachers from various backgrounds and holding different qualifications.

The temple school was led by a retired Chinese primary school principal and long-term Jiaozong activist, Ong See Yong (翁诗佣), who bravely took up the

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responsibility of running the controversial school as a Baixiao principal (2001–2005). Others who offered their help in establishing the temple school were mostly untrained volunteers from Dongjiaozong’s executive branch and fresh graduates from local universities. The former were the key persons in the educational administrative affairs team, comprising PKR politician Lee Kim Sim (李成金), Jiaozong Chief Administrative Secretary Yow Lee Fung, head of Dongzong Department of Teachers’ Training Wong Cheng Yoke, head of Dongzong Department of Publication Zeng Qing Fang* (曾庆方) and head of Dongzong Department of Meeting and Organization Zhang Xu Zhuang* (张绪庄). Their prior experiences in the Chinese education movement and in the duzhong management were crucial in ensuring the sustainability of the temple school’s administrative and academic curriculum.

The latter, consisted of university and college graduates who filled in as short-term schoolteachers for the temple school especially in 2001. 664 As many schoolteachers were helping on a voluntarily basis, there was high turnover, which in turn affected the students’ academic development and progress. The part-time basis and high turnover of these volunteers were criticized by MCA as “detrimental to the future of the schoolchildren”. 665 At the end of February 2001, MOE threatened to expel students who refused to move into the new premises. 666 Nevertheless, this failed to shake the parents’ determination, but highlighted instead the need to establish a more sustainable temple school as their resistance against the state.

In order to provide a more comfortable and conducive environment for the students, five air-conditioned containers-turned-classrooms and a makeshift stage for

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the school’s daily assembly were installed in March 2001.\textsuperscript{667} Two months later, MOE issued warning letters to Principal Ong and the chairman of \textit{Ruan Liang} Temple and demanded them to terminate the illegal school operation. However, there was no follow-up action from the state after the warning, and thus the temple school survived its first difficult year successfully.\textsuperscript{668}

In order to enhance students’ academic performance, the school implemented a full-day curriculum in 2002, with formal curriculum in the morning, and supplementary activities such as tuition and extra curriculum activities (chess, calligraphy and so on) in the afternoon.\textsuperscript{669} Albeit having limited financial resources, permanent schoolteachers were hired in early 2002 and sent to \textit{Dongzong}’s schoolteachers’ training program to be trained in classroom management, teaching administration, curriculum preparation and academic reporting.\textsuperscript{670}

The schoolteachers of the temple school received modest subsidies, some as low as RM20 per day. This paled in comparison to the rate offered to schoolteachers in government-subsidized schools, which was between RM300 to slightly more than RM400. Moreover, \textit{Baixiao} schoolteachers did not enjoy benefits of the Employees Provident Fund, among other benefits, like their counterparts in government-subsidized schools. Nevertheless, as most of these volunteer schoolteachers who stayed on were movement sympathizers, many understood the school’s financial difficulties and did not mind these disadvantages.

However, many schoolteachers that joined the temple school after 2003 were less enthusiastic about the movement and saw \textit{Baixiao} merely as an alternative teaching experience in a non-mainstream school, and refused to participate in movement-related

\textsuperscript{668} \textit{Sinchew}, May 6, 2001.
\textsuperscript{669} \textit{Baixiao} Annual Report (2002).
\textsuperscript{670} Interview with Wong Chin Lee, February 25, 2009, Selangor.
activities. Although the teachers’ allowance was increased to about RM1,300 per month, with medical benefits provided by Dongzong, most schoolteachers of the temple school left in less than two years often due to better job offers elsewhere.671

The school thus imposed new rules, starting from 2004, requiring all schoolteachers to commit their service to the school for a minimum of one year in order to sustain the academic development and performance of their students. Despite the above mentioned challenges, Baixiao temple school managed to attain a sustainable average of 12 full-time teaching staff and was the only school in Malaysia that was fully staffed by university-qualified schoolteachers, as detailed in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3 Qualifications of Baixiao Temple Teaching Staff (2005–2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Principal: Ong See Yong (翁诗佣)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head of School Administrative: Wong Chin Lee (黄真莉), Rahman College, Bachelor of Communication (2001).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Student Disciplinary Affairs: Tan Siang Chen (陈香琴), Universiti Sains Malaysia, Bachelor of Communication (2004).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Students Affairs: Ling Chia Nien (林嘉年), Taiwan Tamkang University, Bachelor of Chinese Literature (1997).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoolteachers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Zeng Qing Cai* (曾庆财), Taiwan National Chengkung University, Bachelor of Science in Chemistry Engineering (1987).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Du Chun Mao* (杜春茂), National Taiwan Normal University, Bachelor of Fine Arts (1995).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Li Jia Zhi* (李嘉芝), University of Malaya, Bachelor of Education (2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ting Shu Yun* (丁淑韵), New Era College, Bachelor of Communication (2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. He Yong Liang* (何永良), New Era College, Bachelor of Communication (2005).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author with data extracted from SOSC (2005: 13).

Throughout the movement’s seven years of endurance, the temple school also faced a student enrolment problem and a difficulty in enrolling students for the national examination. Although all student intakes of the Baixiao temple school from 2001 to 2004 were mostly from Damansara village, Baixiao suffered a plunge in its student enrolment in 2003 (Figure 6.4).

**Figure 6.4  Distribution of Baixiao Student Enrollment (2001–2008)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>New Students</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author with data extracted from Baixiao Annual Reports (2001–2008).

All student intakes of the Baixiao temple school in the first phase (2001–2004) were from Damansara village. The small size of the temple school population made it possible for schoolteachers to pay greater attention to their pupils in class and outside.
school. Students were given equal opportunities to be the class monitor, and to take turns to be the ‘tour guide’ to introduce the ‘school’ to visitors.  

Schoolteachers made home visits outside school hours to help parents better understand the needs of their child and provide advice on dealing with their child’s learning and behavioral difficulties, especially disciplinary problems such as low attendance rates and poor academic performance. In return, parents, especially from the Damansara village, began to participate in various SOSC or school-related activities; for example, some parents were responsible for preparing meals for students and schoolteachers, while others provided free transportation for SOSC during activities.

**Figure 6.5 Distribution of Baixiao Graduates in Different Types of Secondary Schools (2001–2008)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Duzhong</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author with data extracted from *Baixiao* Annual Reports (2001–2008).

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Defending the School Premises

As a reminder of the ultimate aim for the SOS movement, each year, the school insisted on hosting a School Term Opening Ceremony at the Damansara premises. The ceremony took less than an hour and the repertoire was brief. The school students were assembled to sing the national anthem and school anthem, together with the raising of the national, state and school flags; the event was usually concluded by a speech by the principal. Attempts to host the ceremony at the ‘sealed’ school premises had been eventful.

In 2002, police prevented SOSC from entering the premises and threatened to arrest anyone who tried to do so. As a result, the ceremony was conducted at the school gate instead.\(^{673}\) Subsequently in 2003, MOE continued to reject SOSC’s request to open the school premises although the police force was not activated. SOSC forced its entry into the school.\(^{674}\) Although MOE continued to prohibit the SOSC from entering the school, there was hardly any follow-up action, so SOSC went ahead to enter the school premises by force to host the ceremony every year from 2003 onwards. SOSC’s persistence was rewarded when, as late as in January 2008, MOE, for the first time, voluntarily opened the school door and allowed the ceremony to take place in the school premises officially.\(^{675}\) A year after that, Baixiao premises was reopened in January 2009.

Prior to the school reopening in 2009, the process to defend Baixiao premises was fraught with challenges. In December 2003, Selangor Education Department attempted to transform the abandoned Damansara Baixiao premises into a state storage warehouse. Five trucks tried to unload 250 boxes of old official documents into the

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\(^{673}\) *China Press*, January 8, 2002.


\(^{675}\) *Guang Ming*, January 3, 2008.
abandoned classroom.\textsuperscript{676} The villagers managed to prevent the unloading process by summoning the Chinese press and scaring away the workers. MOE merely paid lip service when SOSC sought an explanation over the ploy.

Even Mother Nature tested the Baixiao movement: a rainstorm devastated the temple school in May 2006. Remembered as the worst natural disaster during the movement, punishing winds uprooted a 70-year old giant banyan tree in the temple compound and flipped 60\% of the school’s zinc roof, drenching most of the temple school facilities.\textsuperscript{677} SOSC placed students temporarily at the abandoned school premises while repairing the temple school’s facilities. With help from the Damansara village community and public donations totaling RM22,700, SOSC successfully repaired the facilities and resumed normal school activities for all students in the temple school a few days later.\textsuperscript{678}

Perhaps the more worrying threat was that coming from the Petaling Jaya Development Plan 1 (\textit{Draf Cadangan Pengubahan dan Rancangan Tempatan Petaling Jaya I}) released in April 2002. Damansara New Village was included as the potential redevelopment area and it worried the SOSC and the villagers that the school and the villagers’ homes would be swallowed by the wave of urban development. In reaction, SOSC mobilized about 100 villagers to sign a memorandum of objection in May 2002.

SOSC also expanded its sphere of influence by participating actively in the Petaling Jaya resident associations and built networks with other residents, especially those from higher socio-economic backgrounds.\textsuperscript{679} SOSC’s strong protest against the revised draft of the Petaling Jaya Development Plan (released in May 2005), which changed the status of Baixiao premises from a reserved site for educational

\textsuperscript{677} \textit{Nanyang} and \textit{Sinchew} May 5, 2006; \textit{China Press}, May 6, 2006.
\textsuperscript{678} \textit{Sinchew}, May 10, 2006; \textit{Baixiao} Annual Report (2006).
development into an urban redevelopment site, led to Petaling Jaya Town Council reverting the change of land status in March 2006.  

6.7. **Encountering the Police Force**

The SOS movement remained non-violent throughout its struggle. Although the Federal Reserve Unit and police force were placed on standby outside the temple in January and February 2001, physical clashes did not materialize. The villagers use various ‘weapons of the weak’\(^{681}\) to demonstrate their determination in defending the school, such as shaving their hair, staging sit-ins at government offices, and taking turns to guard the school premises.

Reactions from the authorities were more off to warn away these protestors. The police began arresting SOS movement supporters in February 2001: four parents who staged a sit-in at the MOE were arrested for illegal assembly; two parents staged a hunger strike outside the Transport Ministry were chased away by security guards; forty-seven ‘jog and support Baixiao’ participants were arrested;\(^{682}\) six Tunku Abdul Rahman College students who collected signatures in support of *Baixiao* were warned against ‘illegal assembly’.\(^{683}\) However, all of them were released after a brief warning.

Arrests reduced in the following year. After 2002, the police sent only a minimal number of officers to observe major events that took place at the temple school, such as the annual School Opening Ceremony, 500\(^{th}\) day anniversary celebration and 2002 annual dinner.\(^{684}\)

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\(^{681}\) Scott (1985).


\(^{684}\) *Sinchew*, May 15, 2002.
6.8. Media Coverage

Media, especially Chinese newspapers and television news programs, covered the *Baixiao* controversy extensively in the first quarter of 2001. Chinese language newspapers, in particular, have been relying on the Chinese-speaking communities as their target group of consumer. The impact of such coverage on the *Baixiao* events was overwhelming especially in the early phase (December 2000–April 2001) of the movement. Closely studied by the author, most of the coverage framed the issues as injustice, anger, chaos, and helplessness, splashing the pages with images of the Damansara villagers and *Baixiao* students portrayed as the victims of the school closure. The effectiveness of the framing strategy was seen in the spike in donations flowing from various Chinese communities and the number of readers that wrote to the press to condemn the BN regime.

As demonstrated in figures 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8, the *Baixiao*-related news coverage from 2000 until 2009 by three major Chinese newspapers in Malaysia (*Sinchew Daily*, *Nanyang Shangpao* and *China Press*) showed a shared pattern. There was outstanding news coverage on *Baixiao* events in the headlines, national news, regional news and columns sections of these newspapers in January 2001, and strong follow-up coverage until March 2001. Beginning from April 2001, reduced coverage on *Baixiao* issues suggests that there may be state suppression of the media.685

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Figure 6.6  Newspaper Coverage on *Baixiao* in the Headlines Section (2000–2009)

Source: The author.
Figure 6.7  Newspaper Coverage on *Baixiao* in the National News Section (2000–2009)

![Graph showing the number of national news articles mentioning Baixiao by year and month from 2000 to 2009. The graph includes data from *Sinchew*, *Nanyang*, and *China Press* newspapers.]

Source: The author.
Figure 6.8  Newspaper Coverage on *Baixiao* in the Regional News and Columns Sections (2000–2009)

Source: The author.
State interference were confirmed when an informant, who was also a senior media worker who wished to remain anonymous, informed the author that the state, through MCA, did exert political pressure on the chief editors of the various news agencies to reduce and minimize their coverage on Baixiao news.\textsuperscript{686} Since then, only news benefiting the BN regime were reported. For instance, the completion of the Baixiao (Tropicana) construction in September 2001 was widely covered by the press in the headlines sections of the local newspapers. Concurrently, news on the original campus at Damansara was downgraded from the national sections to the regional sections of the newspapers, and occupied much smaller columns than previously.\textsuperscript{687}

As coverage faded out, the public assumed the issue had been resolved.\textsuperscript{688} In a bid to keep public support alive, SOSC organized more press conferences (20 conferences in 2002) and released more press statements (10 statements in 2002). Nevertheless, these efforts did not bear fruit. By 2006, there was a total blackout on Baixiao news in all Chinese newspapers. Thereafter, Baixiao relied on internet-based media, such as Malaysiakini and Merdeka Review to reach out to the public. In particular, Malaysiakini’s Chinese Editor, Yong Kai Ping, a former SOSC committee member, and Merdeka Review’s Huang Wen Da* (黄文达), a former SOSC head of student affairs, provided much needed space for Baixiao in the political news website.

In mid-2001, SOSC began to publish its own newspaper, the Baixiao Newspaper (白小报报), as an alternative to disseminate information about the movement to the public. Ten volumes were published in the first two years, but the number was gradually reduced to six volumes in 2003 and three volumes each in 2004 and 2005 due to the lack of manpower and resources to sustain the publication.

\textsuperscript{686} Interview with Chen MM, March 16, 2008, Selangor.
\textsuperscript{687} China Press, Kwongwah, Nanyang and Sinchew, September 20, 2001.
\textsuperscript{688} Interview with Choong Pai Chee, February 24, 2009, Selangor.
The printed media only resumed publication of news on Baixiao in January 2007 as the general election approached. After the 2008 General Election, non-Chinese media, such as The Star (a newspaper controlled by MCA), New Straits Times, and Utusan Malaysia (controlled by UMNO affiliated Malaysian Resources Corporation) began to report about the progress of the school’s reopening in the national news sections of their respective newspapers.

Table 6.1 shows the few, but nevertheless significant, coverage of Baixiao news on these non-Chinese printed media. These news mainly targeted non-Chinese-speaking Chinese communities. Their coverage confirmed that the non-Chinese-speaking communities in Malaysia might have been one of the key clusters that supported the SOS movement, and also demonstrated the state’s desperation to win back the support of the non-Chinese-speaking communities, which had been traditionally ‘ignored’ and ‘forgotten’ in most part of the Chinese education movement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>New Straits Times</th>
<th>The Star</th>
<th>Utusan Malaysia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>June 26, 2008</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 7, 2008</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 19, 2008</td>
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<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 28, 2008</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 6, 2008</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 8, 2008</td>
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<td>January 8, 2009</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The author.
6.9. Networks and Alliances

Facing the denial of access to the media, from 2002 onwards, SOSC began to distribute the *Baixiao* Newspaper (by post) to more than 2,000 *huatuans* nationwide. Through this, SOSC provided first-hand, accurate information to the wider community, and built closer bonds between SOSC and other communities involved in their own movements. In response, many *huatuans*—especially the custodian-based *huatuans*—and Chinese school alumnus were particularly supportive of the SOS movement. *Huatuans* and Chinese schools nationwide organized trips to visit *Baixiao*, provided moral support and donated much needed financial resources to the SOS movement, attesting to the strength of the Chinese community in Malaysia.689

SOSC records showed that there were 40 groups of visitors to the temple school in 2002; 50 groups (2,173 visitors) in 2006; and 60 groups (1,280 visitors) in 2007.690 Efforts of the BN regime to pressure *huatuan* leaders to end the movement had little impact.691 MCA in particular has fallen behind significantly in the race against *Baixiao* to expand their influence. *Baixiao* sympathizers showed their support through site-visits and donation to the temple school. More than 200 traditional banners with Chinese slogans given by *huatuans* were hung all over the temple school, and numerous wishes signed at the school’s guest books were the best proof of the extensive support that the movement received from the grassroots.

SOSC also forged alliances with other communities involved in movements of their own, such as the Rawang Anti-High Tension Cable movement (万挠新村反建高压电缆运动) and the Semenyih Community Against the Construction of Telecommunication Towers movement (士毛月居民反对电讯公司电讯塔运动).

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689 They included Chinese schools, alumni associations, *huatuans* and others.
SOSC members also participated in the Coalition for Clean and Fair Election movement for a corruption-free and fair electoral system; and supported the Hindu Rights Action Force’s call for equality for the Indian community in Malaysia.

In addition to these alliances, Baixiao’s strategic location in the heart of Petaling Jaya and the center of 23 colleges and universities made it easy for students of the tertiary institutions (especially those from the University of Malaya, University Tunku Abdul Rahman-Petaling Jaya campus) to visit and support the movement. Through the network among Democratic Movement of Malaysian Youth and Students (马来西亚学生与青年民主运动), Chinese associations and the Student Progressive Front (前进阵线), Chinese university students nationwide organized regular visits and voluntary activities with Baixiao. There were also Malay students from International Islamic University (especially those from the Matriculation Campus located in Section 17 of Petaling Jaya) who visited the Baixiao temple school.

These university and college students had been a great help as volunteers in facilitating and organizing various activities for the temple school. These included the annual Chinese New Year reunion dinners, which hosted about 300 participants at the temple school to enhance solidarity among the villagers, committee members and parents. The dragon boat festival, mid-autumn festival, Christmas celebration, family day and teachers’ day were also conducted as part of the school’s events.

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692 Founded since 1998, this is a national student movement organization fighting to uphold human rights, democracy and equality.
693 They include the Chinese Language Society of Universiti Utara Malaysia (北大华文学会), Malaysia Chinese Student Council of the Universiti Teknologi (工大华裔学生理事会), Pesatuan Bahasa Tionghua, Universiti Putra Malaysia (博特拉大学华文学会), among others.
694 This is an underground student organization established since 2001 to promote campus democratization and improve inter-ethnic interaction. These include the Student Progressive Front branches in the New Era College, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia and many more.
695 This includes University Malaya, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Han Chiang College, Southern College and more.
696 Interview with Tang Ah Chai, February 23, 2009, Kuala Lumpur.
In 2007, ahead of the upcoming general election, SOSC organized seminars (assisted by SCAH) to raise awareness and generate support from the wider community. These seminars discussed topics such as ‘Is Community Education a Dream or a Basic Human Right’ (社区教育是梦，还是基本人权，June 14, 2007) and ‘Where do We Go Next? Future Directions of SOS Movement’ (谈路在何方？白小保校运动之方向，August 10, 2007) were conducted at SCAH and attended by about 50 to 80 persons. Such activities, albeit having a small audience, were significant because they delivered updated news to core supporters (who were not members of Damansara village or SOSC). Through such opportunities, SOSC was able to engage in dialogues directly with their core supporters—many of them who are key players of Chinese civic movement organization in the capital city—to devise better strategies and generate new ideas to strengthen the SOS movement.

Beyond Malaysia, the SOSC movement received considerable attention from Chinese communities overseas, especially from Taiwan, Hong Kong and China. Hong Kong Phoenix Television (April 24, 2007) and China First Financial Daily conducted exclusive reports on the struggle. In February 2007, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Education, Vernor Muñoz Villalobos, became the highest-ranking official from overseas to visit Baixiao.

6.10. Tug of War between Political Parties

Since the formation of the first anti-relocation committee with DAP’s assistance, the Baixiao issue has been perceived by many as a political issue. While MPs from the opposition parties were keen to show their support and made numerous visits to the

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697 For instance, National Taiwan University, Beijing Chinese Language and Culture College, Hainan University (中国海南大学) and Philippines Chiang Kai Shek College.
temple school since March 2001, reactions from the BN ruling regime’s Chinese component parties, especially MCA, lag behind.\textsuperscript{699}

For MCA central leaders, the relocation was a just deal between MCA and MOE, and they did not want to waste political capital on what they considered was a small issue in late 2000 and early January 2001.\textsuperscript{700} MCA President Ling Liong Sik affirmed MCA’s support of MOE’s decision by acknowledged that “Baixiao’s closure is a right decision”,\textsuperscript{701} and therefore refused to intervene or meet any parties of the other camp.

However, within weeks after Baixiao’s closure, demands had begun to pile up and pressure was coming from Dongjiaozong and the Chinese community alike, who condemned the government’s policy of not building new Chinese primary schools, which was the fundamental cause of the Baixiao dilemma.\textsuperscript{702} After the school relocation disputes escalated into a national concern and a more serious problem of unjust treatment of Chinese primary schools by the state, MCA leaders simply avoided discussing the SOSC issue, and the buck was passed from one to another among MCA’s leaders.\textsuperscript{703}

MCA cabinet member, also the Deputy Education Minister Hon Choon Kim, was echoing Education Minister Musa Mohamad’s statement that “MOE did not force the relocation; quite the opposite, MOE had approved the relocation in response to Baixiao’s parents and schoolteachers’ association’s request”.\textsuperscript{704} Ling’s successor, Ong Ka Ting (2003–2008), likewise refused to interfere. Chew Mei Fun refused any discussion on the Baixiao issue when she met the Damansara villagers during her visit

\textsuperscript{699} \textit{Sinchew}, March 30 and November 8, 2001.
\textsuperscript{700} \textit{Sinchew}, January 11, 2001.
\textsuperscript{702} \textit{Kwongwah}, February 17, 2001.
\textsuperscript{703} Interview with Bock Tai Hee, February 8, 2009, Malacca.
to her constituency. She went as far as commenting that “if the Baixiao incident is politicized, there will be no room for negotiation at all, and the problems will never be solved”.705

When Musa Mohamad pressured the Baixiao school committee to persuade the remaining students to rejoin the relocated school at Puay Chai within seven days or face the withdrawal of approval for the relocation,706 MCA’s top leaders released pro-government statements advising students to leave the temple school. These MCA leaders knew well that they needed to uphold the principle of ‘not having a branch of the original school’, to ensure that future relocation deals with MOE would still be possible, even at the expense of going against the wishes and aspirations of the overwhelming majority of MCA members. As such, MCA President Ling Liong Sik and Deputy Education Minister Hon Choon Kim repeatedly urged the Chinese community to “keep their promise and not demand for a new school branch”.707

However, not all MCA leaders were alike. At a lower house parliamentary debate on the 2007 education budget allocation in November 2006, a Serdang MP, also the MCA Vice President Yap Pian Hon (叶炳汉), pursued the reopening of Baixiao’s original premises. Deputy Education Minister Hon Choon Kim defended MOE’s position, stating that the “Baixiao issue should not be mentioned anymore as it has been relocated to the newer and bigger (5.6 acre) Tropicana premises with the help of MOE. MOE has tried to encourage students at the temple school to rejoin the Tropicana branch, and is trying its best to find the best solution”.708 He insisted that Baixiao must understand that “once a school is relocated, the old premises must be closed down”.709

Many MCA local leaders and rank-and-file did not share or agree with the central leadership’s position. They were dissatisfied by their leaders’ lack of political bargaining power and them bowing down to UMNO’s political domination despite being the largest Chinese political party in Malaysia.\textsuperscript{710} These state- and local-level MCA rank-and-file showed their displeasure with MCA leadership by providing tremendous support and funds for \textit{Baixiao}’s reopening.\textsuperscript{711}

SOSC also targeted the political opportunities during the by-elections to mobilize voters’ support and used them to pressure BN, especially MCA. For example, during the April 2007 by-election at MCA-stronghold, Machap state constituency in Malacca, SOSC and its supporters flooded the election campaign in the Chinese-majority constituency by circulating \textit{Baixiao} leaflets, such as the ‘Truth about \textit{Baixiao}’ (白小真相报) and ‘Reopening \textit{Baixiao}’ (重开白小). Although MCA’s candidate successfully defeated DAP’s candidate in this by-election, the slight reduction of 481 majority votes boosted SOSC efforts to continue to ‘advertise’ their issues during the other by-elections. More importantly, SOSC by-election campaigns were generally well-received by the local Chinese communities, and were the rare and most direct opportunities for SOSC to meet the BN leaders in person.\textsuperscript{712}

Gerakan, the second largest Chinese dominated political party in BN coalition, had demonstrated a supportive role on the SOS movement when compared to MCA. Gerakan President Koh Tsu Koon, Deputy President Kerk Choo Ting, central leader Toh Kin Woon and Bukit Gasing MP Lim Thuang Seng (林传盛) had been fervent supporters and sympathizers of the SOS movement since the very beginning.\textsuperscript{713} Lim Thuang Seng in particular, has been the most supportive BN politician on the SOS

\textsuperscript{711} \textit{Sin Chew}, March 13, 2001; \textit{Guang Ming}, April 16 and July 16, 2001.
\textsuperscript{712} \textit{Malaysiakini}, April 3 and 8, 2007.
movement; he provided both political assistance and personal support to the SOSC. He was the only politician who visited Baixiao temple school annually during Chinese New Year, and distributed Angpow\textsuperscript{714} to all the students and staff members from his personal coffer.\textsuperscript{715}

*Baixiao* found itself in a dilemma when Lim Thuang Seng requested SOSC members not to support the PKR candidate during Selangor’s Ijok constituency by-election campaign in April 2007.\textsuperscript{716} Although *Baixiao* eventually assisted the opposition PKR in this by-election, it did not prevent the BN component party, Malaysian Indian Congress, from winning the elections with a majority vote. Knowing that SOSC needed support from both the ruling regime and the opposition party, SOSC learnt to be more careful and skeptical when participating in future election campaigns. From April 2007 on, only individuals from SOSC went ahead to distribute *Baixiao*-related brochures, and there was no longer mass participation from SOSC.

### 6.11. The Impact of General Elections

The SOSC was optimistic about demanding for *Baixiao*’s reopening in the 2004 General Election. It established the *Baixiao*’s General Election Operation Unit and proposed the *Baixiao* General Election Petition, stating three appeals: (1) reopen the *Baixiao* Damansara premises immediately, (2) establish one Chinese primary school for each community, and (3) return the minority’s right for vernacular education. SOSC was mobilized in full force during the election campaign period. They participated in the opposition party’s election campaign at 38 strategic locations in Selangor, promoted *Baixiao* election slogan to “protect the Chinese community’s mother tongue

\textsuperscript{714} Angpows are red packets with cash in them, given as a token of luck.

\textsuperscript{715} Interview with Wong Chin Lee, February 25, 2009, Selangor.

and to support Baixiao’s reopening before canvassing for votes” (先出来捍卫母语教育, 先支持重开白小原校, 才来拉票).

As discussed in Chapter Four, the ‘Abdullah Badawi factor’ saw BN’s overwhelming victory in the 2004 General Election and brought the SOS movement into a new low, with opposition parties temporarily withdrawing their interest on Baixiao issues after the election defeat. However, SOSC was surprised to receive a letter from MOE on September 27, 2005, marking the first official acknowledgement of the SOSC as the movement and chartering opportunities for bilateral negotiation between the two parties. 717 SOSC tried to lobby support from the new Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi by submitting more than 10,000 pieces of ‘Please Listen to Us’ 718 postcards, each signed by a SOS movement supporter, to the Prime Minister’s Office in March 2006. 719 In May 2007, SOSC Chairman Yong Yoke Song offered an olive branch by renaming the new school on condition that the MOE reopen Baixiao’s original premises. 720

As the 2008 General Election drew near, rumors regarding the school’s reopening began to spread especially after the first-time visit (since 2001) to the temple school by MCA President Ong Ka Ting, Vice President Chan Kong Choy and Chew Mei Fun in January 2008. 721 The Education Minister Hishamuddin Hussein, well-remembered for waving the keris (traditional Malay dagger) to defend the Malays’ Special Rights at the UMNO Annual General Meeting in 2005 and 2006, held a high profile meeting with SOSC Chairman Yong Yoke Song on February 19, 2008, four

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718 In the postcard, it wrote, “The original school of SJKC Damansara has been abandoned for nearly four years. Dear Pak Lah, please let our children return to their beloved school in 2005; Dengarlah Hasrat Kami (in Malay); 请听我们的真心话 (in Chinese)”.
719 Nanyang, March 9, 2005.
721 Malaysiakini, January 24, 2008.
days before the nomination day for the twelve General Election. Hishamuddin promised, in this closely watched meeting that “the Baixiao issue would be resolved soon”. His timely announcement was perceived by many as politically driven—an attempt to gain support from Chinese voters. Whatever his real intention was, his announcement failed to help BN repeat its victory in 2004.

The BN coalition suffered a massive setback in the 2008 General Election where it lost control of five states and failed to win the crucial two-thirds majority in parliament for the second time since independence. The shocking news of the death of SOSC Chairman Yong Yoke Song due to heart attack on March 10 further fueled the frustration of Baixiao supporters. Both political defeat and community tensions finally propelled the BN regime to resolve the Baixiao issue.

On May 2, 2008, the newly appointed Deputy Education Minister Wee Ka Siong (魏家祥) made an unprecedented visit to the temple school on the orders of the education minister. On October 28, 2008, MOE finally announced that Baixiao premises would reopen in the new school year in January 2009. Baixiao was reopened on January 5, 2009, and renamed as Chung Hwa Damansara Chinese Primary School after Chung Hua Ladang Serapoh Chinese Primary School (巴力士拉坡中华国民型小学) was relocated from Parit, Perak, and installed into the

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723 The Sun, March 11, 2008; Sinchew, January 4, 2008.
724 PR coalition is now in control of Kedah, Penang, Perak, Selangor and Kelantan. Two-thirds majority in the parliament is critical for the ruling regime, especially in deciding the new constituency boundaries scheduled every 10 years.
725 More ironic is that MOE opened the school door to make way for Yong Yoke Song’s funeral procession, as if allowing him to say a final ‘goodbye’ to the school he had been defending to his last breath.
As the latter had been facing problems of under-enrollment, it was a compromise for both SOSC and MOE.

6.12. Resource Accumulation

Resource accumulation is important for a community-based movement. *Baixiao* had to raise funds to support its operations for eight years. This thesis studies three resources accumulation approaches, namely, the ‘One-person, One-dollar’ campaign, sales of merchandise, and the annual solidarity fundraising dinner.

(1) ‘One-Person, One-Dollar’ Campaign

Inspired by the overwhelming success of 1960 Merdeka University’s ‘One-person, One-dollar’ campaign, SOSC launched the ‘One-person, One-dollar’ fundraising campaign in 2003, aiming to mobilize and to expand support from a wider public. By asking for a mere dollar donation, the organization had tapped into a large pool of new donors who had not thought they would want, or could have afforded, to be involved in the campaign. Through collecting funds at the local market and major Chinese social events, SOSC was able to engage individuals at a personal level. SOSC collected a substantial sum of RM210,000 in 2003 through this campaign and mobilized at least 200,000 people in support of the SOS movement.\(^\text{729}\)

(2) *Baixiao* Merchandise

Beginning in 2002, *Baixiao* began to produce a series of merchandise as its publicity tools, as well as to be sold to generate income for the movement. These included the Pictorial Collection of 500 Days of the SOS Movement (2002) and merchandise such as

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\(^{728}\) *Guang Ming*, January 2, 2009; *Sinchew*, January 5, 2009.

postcards, documentary VCDs,\textsuperscript{730} song collection in a music TV (2002), a five-year anniversary magazine (2006), SOS T-shirts (2001), caps (2001) and key chains. Although income from the sales was not the major source of financial income for the movement, the souvenirs were popular and memorable, especially to visitors of the temple school.

(3) \textit{Baixiao Annual Solidarity and Fundraising Dinner}

The \textit{Baixiao} annual solidarity and fundraising dinner was perceived by some as a yardstick of the movement’s popularity. Held in June annually, donations collected during this event were the movement’s main source of funding. Expenses at the temple school was about RM20,000 monthly, covering food supplies for students and staff, electricity and water consumption, schoolteachers’ subsidies and maintenance. Other expenses included SOSC publication fees and campaigns. Monies raised from the dinner contributed towards Damansara SOS Movement Foundation and were redistributed to the temple school and SOSC with detailed accounting procedures. Each year, companies donated items such as ginseng extract, books and cassettes to be sold to raise funds.

The dinner typically ran from 6.30 pm to midnight. An average of about 100 to 120 Chinese banquet tables (10 people per table) were hosted each year, gathering an average of about 1,200 supporters. Money was collected through the dinner sponsors. For example, those who donated RM5,000 would be named as honorary sponsors of the event, be invited for a ribbon-cutting ceremony and receive dinner vouchers as distinguished guests. Donors who donated RM1,000, RM500 or RM300, would be invited to a ribbon-cutting ceremony and receive dinner vouchers. Supporters could

\textsuperscript{730} ‘Keep Our Roots’ (2001) and ‘Let’s Join the Movement’ (2004).
also opt to sponsor a banquet table (RM500) or purchase individual dinner vouchers at
the price of RM50 per voucher. Resources mobilized by SOSC increased steadily as
illustrated in Figure 6.9.

**Figure 6.9 Donations Collected from Baixiao Annual Solidarity and Fundraising Dinners (2001–2008)**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Donations Collected (RM)</th>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>80,000</td>
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<td>2003</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>91,240</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>70,000</td>
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Source: The author.

As a result of increasing support, the dinner venue had to be changed from SCAH to a
more spacious venue at Petaling Jaya Section 17/29 car park from year 2003 onwards.
The permit to use the car park facility was granted by the police and Petaling Jaya Town
Council with facilitation by Gerakan MP Lim Thuang Seng. The dinner’s repertoire
was akin to a cultural night in an average Chinese school. Programs included songs,
dance and drama performed by Baixiao students, schoolteachers, parents and SOSC
members.
The dinner themes often mirrored closely the development of the SOS movement and resonated the injustice that these people felt regarding 
Baixiao. Some examples of the dinner themes included ‘Save Baixiao’ (救救白小团结宴) (2001), and ‘Save Baixiao with Courage and Passion’ (万丈豪情救白小) (2002). Approaching the first 1000th day anniversary of Baixiao’s closure, the theme at the 2003 dinner called out to its supporters to pledge their undying support for Baixiao (爱我白小，久久不息).


The dinner in 2008 became the final episode of the movement after a promising meeting with Education Minister Hishammuddin Hussein with SOSC in February 2008.\textsuperscript{731}

The dinner was a closely-watched event by Chinese educationalists and social activists in Malaysia, for it was graced annually by old and new faces from the rank-and-file of the movement, and heavyweight figures from Dongjiaozong,\textsuperscript{732} huatuan,\textsuperscript{733} non-ethnic Chinese activist,\textsuperscript{734} Gerakan,\textsuperscript{735} and opposition parties.\textsuperscript{736}

Heads and representatives of various associations of the cultural and educational

\textsuperscript{731} Malaysiakini, April 24, 2008.
\textsuperscript{732} Quek Suan Hiang, Yap Sin Tian, Loot Ting Yee, and more. Jiaozong Chairman Ong Kow Ee was absent from Baixiao activities until as late as 2007.
\textsuperscript{733} Such as Ting Chee Seng, Lee Sok Jing (李书祯), Liau Kok Fah (廖国华) from SCAH, Liu Tian Ji (刘天吉) from Malaysia Federation of Alumni Association of Taiwan Universities, Yap Swee Seng (叶瑞生) from Suara Rakyat Malaysia and many more.
\textsuperscript{734} For example, Chairman of International Centre for Educational Excellence Megat Mohamed Amin attended the 2008 dinner. See Malaysiakini, June 29, 2008.
\textsuperscript{735} Toh Kin Woon and Lim Thuang Seng.
\textsuperscript{736} PKR: Lee Boon Chye (李文材), Sivarasa Rasiah and William Leong (梁自坚); DAP: Ronnie Liu, Liew Chin Tong (刘镇东) and Pua Kiam Wee (潘俭伟); Parti Rakyat Malaysia: Koh Swe Yong (辜瑞荣).
fraternities in the Klang Valley (and elsewhere) also came from across the country to reiterate their support for *Baixiao*.

It was in these nights that speakers from the movement would insistently urge BN leaders to respect the aspirations of the Chinese community and allow *Baixiao* in Damansara to be reopened.\(^{737}\) The opposition parties had often taken the dinner as an opportunity to condemn MCA and UMNO for neglecting the rights of minority groups. Only MCA central-level leaders such as Ling Liong Sik, Hon Choon Kim, Ong Ka Ting and Chew Mei Fun declined repeated invitations by SOSC to grace the event.\(^{738}\) It was as late as in 2009 when the first MCA senior leader, Deputy Education Minister Wee Ka Siong, attended the annual dinner.\(^{739}\)

**6.13. Conclusion**

After the school premise was reopened in January 2009, a SOSC emergency meeting was held on January 3, where 10 out of 12 committee members casted their votes to support the dissolution of SOSC\(^ {740}\) and select SOSC representatives into the new school committee. A faction led by Tommy Chin, Wong Yau King and Wong Yew Kong strongly opposed its dissolution and insisted upon continuing the movement, remarking that the SOS movement, which was spawned by the lack of effective representation of a minority cluster, was concluded by the same problem. Despite such controversies, the SOSC was dissolved in April 2010. The remaining

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\(^{737}\) *Sinchew*, June 26, 2006.


\(^{739}\) *Malaysiakini*, June 29, 2008.

\(^{740}\) The decision to dissolve SOSC was passed in the twenty-sixth administrative meeting on March 31, 2009. The *Baixiao Sponsors Special Meeting (白小保校委会赞助人特别大会)* on May 23, 2009, made the following decisions: dissolve the committee (48 votes); declined (10 votes); disqualified votes (two); abstained (one). See *Guang Ming*, April 4, 2010.
SOSC funds of RM392,533.23 was used to form the Baixiao-SOSC University Loan Fund, which was administrated by Dongzong.741

The SOS movement attested to the power of the weak and demonstrated the struggle of underdogs versus the state. The significance of the SOS movement was publicly recognized. It won the Suara Rakyat Malaysia Human Rights Award and Lim Lian Geok Award in 2001. In addition, Baixiao principal, Wong Chin Lee, received the 2007 Guang Ming Warrior Award from Guang Ming Daily for her extraordinary perseverance. Although the SOS movement failed to achieve its ultimate goal of reopening Baixiao, but it successfully mobilized support from the public and exact compromises from the ruling regime to reopen the Damansara school premises.742

This chapter also demonstrated the importance of having support from experienced social movement activists to strengthen the SOSC institution from within. Civic bonding with community organizations, especially through the existing Chinese education movement networks, provided important resources for the SOS movement in terms of mental and financial support. The role of Ruan Liang Temple as a shelter for Baixiao temple school and the support of the Damansara villagers became the crucial factor for the SOS movement’s successful persistence.

Although participation of non-ethnic Chinese supporters in the SOS movement remained limited, shared concerns over Baixiao issues and the collaboration experience with these non-traditional supporters of Chinese education movement during the SOS movement had opened the window of opportunity to form inter-ethnic associational alliance for Dongjiaozong. Nevertheless, with the end of the SOS movement in 2010, the momentum to establish a more inclusive and stronger inter-ethnic alliance once

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741 Sinchew, April 14, 2010.
742 The Star, January 8, 2009.
again faded. If such inter-ethnic collaboration can be successfully established in the future, it may offer the necessary capacity for the Chinese education movement to seize the political opportunities available in Malaysia after 2008.

After 2,926 days of an uphill battle, the reopening of the school premises might have marked the end of SOSC’s struggle, but it did not lead to a roadmap for solving continuing discrimination faced by the Chinese and other minority groups in vernacular education. The allocation of RM1,200,000 under the cabinet’s special budget in 2001 saw speedy completion of *Baixiao* Tropicana—the first fully government-funded Chinese primary school in Malaysia—demonstrated that many controversies can be resolved when political will sets in.\(^{743}\) At the end of the day, it was the willingness of the Malaysian authorities to act pragmatically to accommodate the needs and voices of a multi-cultural society in national policymaking that paves the road for Malaysia to become a more just society for all.

\(^{743}\) *Sinchew*, February 1, 2001.
Chapter Seven

Discussion and Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

This thesis has identified two fundamental institutions—structural and relational—to measure the mobilization capacity and persistency of the Chinese education movement. As democratic institutions within non-liberal states are constrained and easily manipulated by the ruling regime, social movements in these states rely on relational institutions to channel their needs and demands for change. The flexibility of relational institutions that are based on informal interpersonal networks compliment the rigidity of their structured counterparts, thus enabling the movement to persist in pushing its agenda despite facing ongoing constraints imposed by the majority-dominated state.

Dynamic state-movement interactions have resulted in movement mobilization mechanisms and repertoires that are adapted to the local political environment, indigenous norms and cultural influences. Although these mechanisms and repertoires may differ from those practiced in liberal democratic societies, they have proven to be enduring in sustaining movements in suppressive states. Above all, the thesis has demonstrated that despite rapid industrialization and urbanization, primordial-based social movements, of which the Chinese education movement is a type, remain a significant social force in Malaysia.

This concluding chapter is divided into four sections. This first summarizes the chapters and details their significance and relevance to the main argument of the thesis. The second section explores three significant trends on social mobilization identified from studying the Chinese education movement. First are the strategies and sustainence of endless resource mobilization efforts conducted by the Chinese education
movement’s activists. Second is the role of brokers and interpersonal networks in sustaining movement-regime interactions within a non-liberal, democratic setting. Third are the challenges faced by the movement in sustaining unification.

Third section of this conclusion sketches potential future research in three levels of comparison. Firstly, a national comparison of social movements in Malaysia will explore state-movements relationships and patterns of movement repertoires in the country. Second, an exploration of Chinese education in other Southeast Asian countries will help to examine the factors that lead to movement formation, persistency or termination. Third, an interregional comparison will provide an understanding of the repertoires of social movements in non-liberal, democratic states in the Global South.

In the final section, the role of institutions, and in particular the non-formal, relational institutions, are evaluated in terms of their impact on the endurance of social mobilization within a suppressive and majority-controlled regime. This section emphasizes the importance of adapting movement repertoires and mobilization mechanisms, especially those that have evolved through interactions with the regime over the years, as the key drivers to sustaining the movement. As one of the oldest nationwide social movements in Asia, the Chinese education movement is an instructive example from which important lessons may be drawn and shared with activists of other similar movements within non-liberal, democratic settings.

7.2. Chapter Summaries and Their Significance

Chapter One laid the foundation of the thesis and traced the rise of social movements studies in non-liberal, democratic contexts. The roles of extra-institutional variables in the execution of structural institutions were delivered in three perspectives: the intra-movement relationship explored the roles of SMOs and movement leaders in
mobilizing movement activities; the movement-state relationship was characterized by
dynamic interactions of these conflicting parties through constant adaptation of
movement and suppression repertoires; the inter-movement perspective asserted the
importance of interpersonal bonds in engaging networks and building alliances with
other social movements in the country.

Chapter Two demonstrated the path-dependent qualities of the Chinese
education movement during Malaya’s transition from a British colony to independence.
Intimate collaboration between the movement and the MCA under the framework of
the Sandajigou successfully procured political compromises from the Malay political
elites to incorporate Chinese schools into the national education system (rather than
terminate the vernacular schools), and accommodate more political rights for Chinese
immigrants as citizens in the 1950s. In return, the Alliance received support from
Chinese voters (and other vernacular communities) and succeeded in gaining
independence from the British in 1957.

Nevertheless, constitutional deadlocks over the status of the Chinese’
vernacular language as an official language resulted in the most severe setback for
Sandajigou. Pro-vernacular MCA leaders were forced to leave the party; movement
leaders were punished; movement capacity was significantly weakened by a series of
discriminative regulations imposed by the gradually oppressive UMNO-dominated
regime. All these forced the Chinese education movement to form extra-MCA alliance
with huatuans to continue its self-help mission to defend the distinctiveness of Chinese
culture in Malaysia.

Chapter Three analyzed the dynamic interactions between the ruling regime and
the Chinese education movement following the 1969 ethnic riots. Although an elected
government was restored after two years of emergency rule under the National
Operation Council, pro-Malay policies, such as the New Economic Policy in 1970, were also imposed. Chinese schools were marginalized by the national education system, and received little financial support to sustain their development or to maintain their facilities. Movement leaders from *Jiaozong* were punished by the authorities, instilling fear among the movement communities and supporters. Meanwhile, Chinese schoolteachers were incorporated as civil servants, resulting in massive drain in both human and financial resources for *Jiaozong*.

The Chinese education movement was revived when leaders from *Dongzong*—the sister organization of *Jiaozong*—took over leadership. *Dongzong* launched the *duzhong* revival movement to mobilize the Chinese community to support the movement. More importantly, the timely forced closure of all English primary schools by the state in the late 1970s turned the wheels of fortune in favor of the movement—not only did it increase the popularity of Chinese primary schools as the preferred primary education institutions, it also reinstated the role and importance of the Chinese school committees that had, traditionally, been acting as the management arm of Chinese primary schools.

Chapter Four revealed the role of leaders, brokers and alliances in mobilizing the movement within Malaysia’s testy political landscape. This chapter in particular traced the movement repertoires adopted by four leaders, namely, Lim Fong Seng, Foo Wan Thot, Quek Suan Hiang and Yap Sin Tian, which varied from competitive resistance to cooperative collaboration. The variation in strategies often relied on each leader’s capacity to engage support from Chinese politicians in the ruling regime and the opposition parties, the capability of the movement to mobilize participational and financial resources from supporters, and the strength of the leader’s alliance with *huatuans*. 
Chapter Five was dedicated to evaluating and affirming the movement’s capability for learning and adaptation, which resulted in the creation of Duzhong-WC, Huaxiao-WC and HLC as the movement’s mobilization machinery. The machinery was organized in terms of national, state and thematic working committees, with extensive support from full-time executive branches to maintain the everyday needs of the movement. Through systemic intra-movement networks as well as alliances with huatuans, the machinery has been critical to the mobilization of participants for the Chinese education movement.

This chapter also detailed the success of Duzhong-WC in generating financial resources for the movement. However, this also resulted in the domination of Dongzong leaders in the movement. Overburdened with multiple roles within the movement, the leaders manifested noticeable strain in their effectiveness and commitment in delivering their responsibilities, which, in turn, resulted in the increasing domination of the executive staff in maintaining the movement’s daily activities. Delayed efforts to restore the balance of power resulted in open conflict between the factions and consequent division of the movement community.

Chapter Six focused on the correlations among institutions, alliance and social mobilization through the case study of the Damansara SOS movement. Experienced Chinese education movement activists strengthened the SOS movement committee, which comprised Damansara villagers, who were novices in social movements. Resources and support from the Chinese education movement and its’ wider huatuan networks provided sustainable resources for the survival of the SOS movement.

More importantly, grievances that culminated in the SOS movement attest to the suffering of the urban poor who received support even from non-ethnic Chinese communities that shared similar grievances. This became a window of opportunity for
the Chinese education movement to expand its influences beyond the Chinese-speaking community. Unfortunately, the momentum for expanding its support base faded when the BN ruling regime gave in and reopened the school premises after a series of political setbacks in the 2008 General Election. The end of the SOS movement saw the Chinese education movement return to an ebb as it languished in its comfort zone, (mis)placing its priorities on maintenance and persistence, rather than re-strategizing how to achieve its aims through a more progressive form of resistance.

7.3. Social Mobilization in Non-Liberal Democracies

Thus far, the thesis has pondered over the survival of anti-regime social movements in repressive states and questioned the role of institutions in sustaining social movement activities, in prolonging their existence, and in increasing their opportunities for success. This section identifies three criteria, namely, constant resource mobilization, relationship with the non-liberal democratic regime, and unification of diversity, as key variables to the persistency of a minority social movement despite facing ongoing constraints imposed by a majority-dominated and non-liberal, democratic state.

7.4. Constant Resource Mobilization

Resource mobilization has been one of the most visible yardsticks for measuring the popularity of a movement and the influence of its leaders. Constant needs for financial resources to sustain the development of Chinese schools at the local level and maintain movement activities at the national level resulted in the evolution of various mobilization mechanisms that have been adapted to the political norms of Chinese culture in twentieth century Malaysia.
Although all Chinese primary schools and converted Chinese secondary schools have been incorporated into the national system and have thus been entitled to state’s education budget, the promotion of the Malay-medium national schools by the BN ruling regime as the school for all Malaysians has resulted in unequal distribution of state resources. As discussed in Chapter Three, the Malay-medium schools have become the sole beneficiary of the national budget since independence, while other vernacular schools have faced severe financial scarcity in sustaining, let alone developing, themselves.

Such structural constraints have forced Chinese schools to depend on public donations to survive. Education is an expensive enterprise. Although teachers’ salaries are government-supported, other expenses are not. These expenses require substantial sums of money annually and therefore involve constant, wearying fundraising. The contribution from the Chinese communities varied according to their economic capacity: the wealthy business entrepreneurs, the urban-middle-class and the working-class.

Chinese schools—as the most autonomous yet fundamental units of the Chinese education movement—depend on two primary mechanisms to mobilize the local Chinese community to contribute financially: the school committees and fundraising campaigns.

Members of the school committees contribute a ‘second income tax’—on which the Chinese schools rely upon as their core financial income—to the schools they run. The willingness of school committee members to donate stem from culturally-, socially-, economically- and politically-driven motivations.

Culturally, individuals with financial resources or political connection are expected to take the lead in safeguarding the community’s common goods. Communal
pressure, which could be self- or other-imposed, have ensured continuous commitment of community elites to commit to supporting the needs of Chinese schools. Such phenomenon is strongly held, especially within dense Chinese community settings, where the community’s ties remain strong and are based predominantly on interpersonal interactions.

The benefits of paying a ‘second income tax’ are multiple. School committee members generally received respect and praise from the community for their altruism. Social recognition strengthens personal and social capital and expands business opportunities. As many Chinese entrepreneurs are constrained by bumiputera economic policies in Malaysia, they have to rely on interpersonal relationships and day-to-day social connections to sustain and expand their small-to-medium-sized enterprises.

While the financially-advantaged businessmen dominated the Chinese school committees, interaction between the business and middle classes has increased since the 1980s. As a result of Malaysia’s rapid industrialization and urbanization, increasingly more Chinese moved from rural areas to cities for work and business opportunities. As elaborated in Chapter Three, the state’s promotion of national schools stalled the development of vernacular schools. Therefore, the Chinese community faced fierce competition to enroll their children into over-crowded Chinese schools in urban neighborhoods that are already heavily populated with Chinese. To ensure successful enrollment into their preferred schools, many urban middle-class parents seek to establish patronage relationships with school committees so as to have the upper hand over the school committees’ quota on recommending new enrollments.

The other mechanism most Chinese schools have been depending upon for income is the fundraising campaign. The income resulting from these activities goes
towards maintaining school facilities (tables and chairs, library facilities), developing school facilities (computer rooms, sports complex), expanding school premises and so on. Middle-class parents have been willing to support these donation campaigns primarily to ensure their children have access to better facilities and thus a head start in a competitive and result-oriented education system.

However, the participation of these parents in the donation campaigns is passive and limited. Most donate to the school that hosts their children, and are reluctant to support other Chinese schools; they are willing to donate financially but rarely organize or participate as members of fundraising committees; and many of them tend to stop donating upon their child’s graduation from the school.

Although the financially- and socially-inferior working-class community remain on the periphery of the Chinese schools structure, they have been the most loyal and extensive supporters of local mobilization campaigns. Albeit contributing a much less significant amount compared to their business-class and middle-class counterparts, their participation rate has been disproportionately higher than the latter, as was demonstrated in the success of the ‘One-person, One-dollar’ donation campaign that has been popularized since the 1950s; it continues today to be the most popular fundraising repertoire. Although novices in social movements, they are passionate volunteers at fundraising events and charity sales because of a simple belief—to ensure access to Chinese schools for their children, and for future generations. Acting on their beliefs on the importance of Chinese schools has proven to be impactful, as shown in Chapter Six. Despite having no financial or political privileges, the Damansara villagers successfully resisted the state and were able to reopen the community’s school after seven long years of constant struggle.
While the financial needs of Chinese schools at the local level have been sustained through periodic fundraising campaigns and donations from the school committees, the needs of movement headquarters at the national level is attained through the national mechanisms administrated by Dongjiaozong. Over the course of 60 years, Dongzong and Jiaozong have grown from a conceptual national collaboration between Chinese school committees and schoolteachers into one of the largest, most well-established and most resourceful SMOs in Malaysia.

The success of the duzhong revival movement in the 1970s, as Chapter Five elaborated, has been able to generate a sustainable source of income to support the executive expenses of Dongzong. In contrast, the weaker partner of the Chinese education movement—Jiaozong—continues to face annual financial deficits in sustaining their operational costs. The reintroduction of Huaxiao-WC in 1994 failed to generate a sustainable source of income for Jiaozong. Plagued by conservative leaders and passive members who constrained its ability to expand, the fading Chinese schoolteachers’ organization failed to produce new appealing issues to compete with other Chinese organizations for resources and support. In 2001, Jiaozong also lost its key annual income from the Lim Lian Geok Cultural Development Center’ Chinese Education Festival fundraising dinner after the foundation declared its ‘independence’ from Jiaozong.

Facing growing deficits year after year, executive officers at Jiaozong began to depend on unsustainable channels for public donations. It survived by conducting small-scale seminars, which have been the only visible activities that kept Jiaozong connected to its remaining audience, namely, Chinese schoolteachers. The seminars include motivational talks, training workshops and seminars on topics closely related to the contemporary needs of Chinese schoolteachers. A minimal registration fee is
usually collected to cover the cost of the activities. Although the seminars harness great potential as a means to generate income to replenish Jiaozong’s bleeding coffers, the non-profit nature of Jiaozong has prevented it from exploiting these activities as a source of income. As for the movement’s executives, they would rather remain in the red than risk being perceived by the few remaining supporters to be profit-driven.

In the history of the Chinese education movement, various national level fundraising campaigns have been conducted when significant sums of money were needed. As seen in Chapter Four, a series of campaigns were conducted in the early 1990s to support the construction of the movement organization’s new headquarters in Kajang. Movement leaders were responsible for planning the campaigns and mobilizing their social capital to gather support from the larger community. The execution and administration of these fundraising campaigns fall on the full-time executive officers at Dongzong and Jiaozong, which totaled about 120 staff members. The organized networks and processes enabled the central branches of both organizations to mobilize extensive support from grassroots members in fundraising campaigns.

The collective cultural identity represented by the Chinese education movement has been a key factor to the successful mobilization of resources nationwide over the years. Dongjiaozong has always framed itself as a defender of Chinese culture to attract ardent support from the Chinese-speaking community, and has adopted repertoires that are closely identified with the elements and trappings of Chinese culture in all of its campaigns. As this thesis has demonstrated, fundraising dinners, bazaars, traditional plays, and likewise events that highlight the concept of charitable, voluntary and righteous actions to protect the weak have attracted extensive community participation. Large amounts of donations have also been collected through the ‘One-person,
One-dollar’ campaign, or during ceremonial events such as anniversaries, weddings and religious celebrations. These campaigns generate much passion and renewed awareness of the importance of preserving Chinese education from the participants.

Nevertheless, that fundraising campaigns had taken a toll on the two organizations began to surface by the mid-1990s, as some campaigns fell short of their targeted goals. As time wore on and the movement aged, ossification set in as repertoires became less impulsive and more rigid. Movement leaders—in particular those who had come into power in the 1990s—preferred to work within moderate and predictable settings, rather than in settings that are spontaneous, creative and unplanned. These ‘predictable’ settings survived the narrow and liquid liberal space in Malaysia; more importantly, working in these settings does not ‘irritate’ the Malay-dominated regime. Lacking a stable collective bargaining channel through democratic institutions in the state, it is therefore in the best interest of the movement leaders to adopt these low-risk and ‘effective’ approaches in delivering their demands.

The movement also has tried to publicize the positive results of its campaigns in the Chinese vernacular press from time to time—visual, physical or symbolic—to boost the morale and confidence of its supporters. It has also been highlighting transparent check-and-balance mechanisms to instill confidence in the proper use of public donations. In spite of these efforts, the aging movement, overwhelmed by the impact of ossification, bureaucratization and centralization, has been slowly losing its dynamism and momentum.

The 2001 eruption of the Damansara SOS movement provided a dynamic opportunity for Chinese educationalists to reenergize the education movement. The Damansara community, which was perceived as underdogs due to its low economic and social status, had, in spite of its limited resources, inspirationally resisted state
suppression. Through the everyday forms of resistance and non-confrontational repertoires, it achieved its goal of reopening the school premises (albeit having conceded to the state’s condition of installing a relocated school from Perak).

The Chinese education movement and the Damansara SOS movement subsequently developed into a symbiosis. The latter utilized the existing networks and support system from the former to mobilize resource campaigns and receive extensive contributions (in terms of moral support and financial contributions) throughout the seven years of the struggle. The Chinese education movement, in return, benefited from opportunities to engage with the younger generation of movement activists (many of whom are university graduates), the working-class and non-ethnic Chinese Malaysians—three clusters that had yet to be actively involved in the Chinese education movement—to expand its support base.

Since the 2008 General Election, the movement has been presented with increasing political opportunities as the BN ruling regime began to relent in approving the establishment of the first Chinese university in Malaysia. At the time of this writing, MCA senior politicians continue to broker between the BN regime with movement leaders led by Yap Sin Tian. However, the vast amount of resources needed to support this massive project divided movement leaders, as some questioned the ability and capacity for the movement to run a university.

In addition, there are calls from movement supporters, especially the reformist cluster, for re-examination of the movement’s goals, directions and strategies in the face of globalization and changing needs of the Chinese community. If the New Era University project were to go ahead, the movement must confront the pressing need to change its approach to be more inclusive, and to engage support from non-ethnic
Chinese populations in Malaysia, as well as ethnic Chinese throughout Southeast Asia in particular, and from the rest of the world in general.

7.5. **Relationship with the Non-Liberal Democratic Regime**

Opportunities for movement mobilization vary with the changing realities of political circumstances. Social movements constrained under a non-liberal, democratic political context and oppressive state face more difficulties in encapsulating their demands. The Chinese education movement has been able to co-exist with the heavy-handed state by exploiting the limited space in the non-liberal, democracy system, maneuvering its interests through brokerage by MCA politicians, and drawing opportunities through constantly adapting its movement strategies.

The movement has been condemned by the BN ruling regime—in particular, the Malay-ethnic political party, UMNO, the dominant partner in the ruling coalition—as a threat to national unity. Demands from the movement have threatened the interests of the ethnic Malays, forcing the UMNO-led regime to face considerable political pressure to maintain its image as the protector of the Malays. Over the years, the regime has imposed constraints on the movement through threats, manipulating by way of resource distribution, retraction of schoolteachers’ teaching permits and citizenship, co-optation of movement leaders, and so on.

Although the regime can, and has been, manipulating the electoral procedures to its own advantage to narrow the room for contenders to curb politicking, it cannot limit civil liberties outright by arresting and incarcerating opponents and civilians. In fact, the electoral system remains a significant mechanism in legitimatizing the regime’s domestic power, despite distorted democratic institutions. As majority of the constituencies in Malaysia are mixed, contesting parties need the support of voters from
all ethnic groups to secure victory in elections. Therefore, although tensions have waxed and waned over time between the movement and the state, the BN ruling regime risks offending the larger Chinese community in Malaysia—thus losing their electoral support—if it chooses overly coercive measures to suppress or terminate the movement.

Moreover, long-term confrontation between the regime and the Chinese-dominated Malaya Communist Party (from 1949 until the Peace Accord in 1989 that led to the cessation of militant activities) has been a costly battle for the regime, economic and politically, as discussed in Chapter Two. To discourage the Chinese community from supporting the communists, the regime allowed it to express its grievances through non-violence means, such as by participating in its education movement. The movement has thus been tolerated by the state during the years of battling the communists, and helps to explain the movement’s continued existence.

While social movements in matured democratic states could deploy demonstrations and adopt explicit anti-state stances to express grievances in achieving demands, these forms of resistance tend to receive strong reactions from BN. Instead, it has been containing, co-opting and suppressing movements by proactive, albeit often covert, repressive measures or through counter-movement strategies, as elaborated in Chapter Four. In turn, movement activists have learned to adapt their repertoires to lower risks. This is a second factor that has led to the movement’s prolonged endurance.

Chapter Four also showed how the movement developed parallel institutions in reaction to opportunities available in the tightly contended political environment. The onslaught of discriminative and assimilative state-imposed policies gave the movement leaders little choice but to move out of their comfort zone to form strategic alliances in
the 1980s. *Dongjiaozong* collaborated with the Gerakan in the alliance of three campaign (1982) and established the 15-*Huatuan* alliance (1983) that allowed the Malaysian Chinese civic movement to reach its height at the mass assembly at *Tianhou* Temple in 1987.

In the face of such a powerful social force from the Chinese civic community and mounting challenges from the severe internal faction within UMNO, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad decreed the infamous *Operasi Lalang* in 1987 to contain escalating political tension. Four activists from the education movement were among the 107 detained for purportedly fanning anti-government sentiments and threatening national security. *Operasi Lalang* not only enabled Mahathir to freeze political challenges and divert focus away from internal party faction to interethnic relations; it was also an important wake-up call for the movement.

After 1987, the Chinese education movement strengthened its structural institution by expanding the number of senior committee members. Overwhelming pressure from the regime also prompted the movement’s chairman, Lim Fong Seng, to seek political collaboration with the DAP—the leading opposition party—in the 1990 dual coalition system campaign. It challenged the BN in the general election, as was discussed in Chapter Four.

Nevertheless, not everyone within the movement agreed with the collaboration. As one of the largest social movements in the country, the political partnership (with ruling regime or opposition parties) failed to garner sufficient support from the movement community, which was divided internally by its own political affiliations. Most supporters preferred to take a politically neutral and non-aggressive approach to attain their demands, such as refusing to send their children to the national school, providing financial support to Chinese schools and the movement.
There were times when Dongjiaozong successfully pressured the state into compromising on these demands. Chapter Five provided examples: the tender rights of school canteens and cooperative shops in late 1990s, and the Vision Schools project in early 2000s. More often than not, the movement has only been able to obtain limited concessions from the state, as was the case with the controversy regarding the teaching of mathematics and science English in early 2000s.

The successful coexistence of the Chinese education movement also has been due to the result of MCA’s (and to some extend, Gerakan’s) brokerage efforts. Because conflicting interests had limited the degree of trust between the UMNO and the Chinese education movement, therefore, the role of broker, especially those delivered by a BN entity has been important. MCA politicians have shuttle between UMNO leaders and movement leaders to mediate interactions, bridge the needs of both sides, and enable compromises through negotiations. In doing so, MCA has established a working relationship with the Chinese education movement and has exploited this as a political model for it in gaining increased support from the Chinese community. Through this approach, the movement has found the most efficient channel in maneuvering its interests and in influencing and pressuring for change in the state’s process of agenda-setting. The UMNO-led BN regime also has contained the movement and its leaders by occasionally responding to movement demands.

The impact of brokerage was exemplified by MCA’s first president Tan Cheng Lock, as was seen in Chapter Two, was able to persuade UMNO’s president, Abdul Rahman, to attend a secret negotiation with the movement’s leaders at Tan’s residence in Malacca in 1955. This led to a social contract between the movement and the Alliance government. As head of the Sandajigou, Tan also strengthened his status among the Chinese education movement community.
MCA’s second president, Lim Chong Eu, was an equally progressive broker for the movement. The pressure to gather support from Chinese voters in competition with the growing socialist front forced Lim and his team to be more committed to accommodating the needs of the Chinese education movement, such as advocating for a more open and inclusive education policy and according official status to the Chinese language in the nation’s constitution, also seen in Chapter Two. Although Lim achieved substantial success in excluding the regime’s controversial ‘ultimate objective’ of making Malay as the main medium of instruction in all schools as stated in Article 12 of the 1957 Education Ordinance—a key factor that has, ironically, ensured the continued existence of Chinese schools in post-independence Malaya. Nevertheless, such a pro-movement and pro-Chinese community stand became a great threat for UMNO and non-Chinese-speaking MCA elites. The reality that Malaysian politics is elite-based forced Lim to resign and to be replaced by a more submissive, pro-UMNO leader, Tan Siew Sin, in 1962.

Since then, although there was no lack of passionate sympathizers of the movement who came into power with MCA, the weakening of MCA within the BN coalition has limited the usefulness of brokerage significantly. These intermediate agencies could only act as buffers to provide important and timely tip-offs, and strategic suggestions that had benefited the movement in strategizing its response ahead of state suppression.

For example, as was discussed in Chapter Four, MCA politicians (in particular the deputy education minister) would ‘process’ memorandums based on the demands laid out in the proposals drafted by Chinese education movement activists. These documents would then be brought to the BN cabinet’s attention for negotiation with the other component parties through MCA National Education Bureau. Although the
contents of these memorandums remain the same, the BN regime, however, has been more willing to accede to the demands of its component parties than those made directly by the social movement.

Beginning in the 1990s, MCA has grown increasingly reliant on Chinese education-related issues to gain political support from Chinese voters. The number of rural Chinese schools successfully relocated to urban areas and the special funds received by the Chinese schools from the state were widely reported by MCA to gain support from these voters in the general elections. Although such ‘self-advertisement’ was successful in the 1990s, its effects gradually faded.

The interactions between the state and the movement are neither rigid nor linear; they evolve through continual interactions. MCA’s repetitive and over-reliance on its intermediate political strategies was widely criticized by the Chinese community in the 2008 General Election as insufficient to secure the minority’s rights. Led by the gradually strong opposition alliance—the *Pakatan Rakyat*—which demanded fundamental political reforms to ensure a free, fair and just political system for all. As was discussed in Chapter Four, BN lost its traditional two-third dominance of the parliament in 2008, and MCA suffered one of its worst and most humiliating battles since independence, or at least since 1969.

Although the BN regime has never been supportive of the Chinese education movement, it has yet to terminate the movement by force. The movement’s prolonged existence is the result of a successful co-existence with the suppressive regime. Facing a non-liberal, democratic state, which has had the power and tendencies to manipulate its law enforcement system to crack down on movement supporters, the movement has learnt to adapt its movement activities and switched from a resistance-oriented to a negotiation-oriented approach. Although such adaptation has effectively reduced the
risks and costs of sustaining the movement and prolonged its existence, it has also decreased the movement’s capacity to reach its ultimate aims.

7.6. Unification of Diversity

As one of the largest social movements in Malaysia, the Chinese education movement is supported by an extensive number of heterogeneous agencies. The vast numbers of supporters, each playing different roles, have varied levels of commitments to and expectations from the movement. Such internal division—categorized into three factions, namely, (1) the division between Dongzong and Jiaozong, (2) problems of movement exclusiveness, and (3) tensions between the conservatives and the reformists—have impeded the movement’s efforts at unification.

The movement is commonly perceived by its supporters and the public as a collaboration between the national umbrella association of Dongzong and Jiaozong. However, power relationships between these two sister organizations have not been mutual. As was shown in Chapter Two, outspoken Jiaozong leaders successfully led the movement’s resistance in the 1950s and 1960s. However, strong suppression from the state—such as the revocation of Jiaozong Chairman Lim Lian Geok’s citizenship, deportation of Jiaozong Advisor Yan Yuan Zhang, dismissal of Jiaozong Vice Chairman Sim Mow Yu from all political positions in MCA, among others—drastically reduced the Jiaozong’s leadership capacities.

Chapter Three demonstrated that Jiaozong’s activity plunged when the state drafted all Chinese schoolteachers into the civil servant system and limited their involvement in anti-state activities. The establishment of the officially-recognized National Union of the Teaching Profession in 1974 replaced the role of Jiaozong as the sole representative organization for schoolteachers. Failing to overcome these changed,
Jiaozong’s role in the movement changed from that of a leader to a collaborator by the 1980s.

The collaborative relationship between Jiaozong and Dongzong was effectively maintained during the 1980s when they were housed under the same roof in the Jiaozong building in downtown Kuala Lumpur. Movement-related activities were conducted within a shared workspace, enabling like-minded individuals to develop emotional bonds and trust that helped to strengthen and unify the movement. Strong interpersonal relationships among leaders through which information, human resources and financial resources were shared solidified the movement.

Unfortunately, the disparities in resource capacities were magnified with the growing accomplishment of Dongzong in the 1990s. Rising as the leader of the movement, it continued to make milestones with the completion of a larger and more well-equipped movement headquarters at Kajang. In contrast, with dwindling membership and drained resources, Jiaozong’s significance among Chinese schoolteachers continued to fade; this led to the domination of Chinese schools principals in the senior positions of the organization.

Today, Jiaozong has become a mere shadow of its past. Chapter Three highlighted saw how it has been softening its approach in its dealings with the state to protect the interests of the Chinese schoolteachers’ community. By adopting a less risky, and more moderate approach, the Dongzong-led Chinese education movement has been perceived as ‘conservative’ by many, but such an approach remains the best way to solve the dilemma within these sister organizations.

Another obstacle to movement unification has been the division between conservatives and reformists. The former have consisted of core leaders of the movement, while the latter were predominantly senior members of the movement’s
executive branch. In the 1970s, to resist the suppressive state measures, structural institutions with thematic working committees were established to facilitate the needs of the *duzhong* revival movement. Since then, increasing numbers of full-time and professional personnel joined the executive branch to meet the managerial and operational needs of the movement, as was highlighted in Chapter Five. The participation of these dynamic non-business and non-teaching individuals was significant in sustaining the movement.

With the successful establishment of this executive community, decision-making in the movement has been divided into the leadership branch consisting of elected movement committees which dealt with external pressures, and the salaried executive branch which managed day-to-day operations of the movement. These two levels of decision-making have successfully generated amiable social capital between the *huatuan* societies and the movement actors in joint pursuit of their shared goal of furthering the interests of Chinese Malaysians.

Conflicts between the conservatives and the reformists began to surface after Lim Fong Seng’s retirement from the movement. Failure of the dual coalition system campaign with DAP in the 1990 resulted in a clear division between the pro-MCA conservatives and pro-DAP reformists. Both factions, with the former dominating the leadership branch and committees, and the latter dominating the executive branch, began to manipulate the unwritten norms of the movement to exert their influence. As was argued in Chapter Five, although the movement has developed characteristics of a matured structured institutions over time, such as written constitutions, rules and regulations; yet, these institutions only serve to fulfill the procedural needs and as symbols of formality, rather than as channels for meaningful participation. Unwritten norms dominate the actual implementation of the movement.
Although movement leader Quek Suan Hiang (Dongjiaozong’s leader from 1993 to 2005) was able to accommodate the interests of both sides by focusing most of the movement’s attention on accumulating financial resources to support the construction of the movement’s headquarters in Kajang, the tug of war between the factions continued. To consolidate power and control of the institutions and operations of the movement, both factions installed their preferred candidates as new committee members of the movement.

By 2008, competition for power between the reformists and the conservatives had escalated into a full-blown conflict that eventually led to the departure of the reformist faction. The conflict divided the movement largely into three factions: (1) the conservatives—who now control Dongjiaozong, (2) the reformists—who were forced to leave Dongjiaozong, and were later reassembled under the Lim Lian Geok Cultural Development Center and demanded for structural reform of the Chinese education movement, and (3) those—mostly veterans of the movement—who were frustrated by the power struggle between the former two factions. Although the reformists have yet to succeed in overthrowing the core leaders of Dongjiaozong at the time of writing, infighting has had nevertheless a destructive influence on the movement.

The factionalism in part stems, ironically, from the movement’s exclusiveness. To strengthen internal unity, sustain collective identity, and justify its legitimacy as the defenders of the Chinese community, the movement has constructed the movement’s activities based on the injustice and discrimination suffered by the Chinese community.

The exclusiveness of the injustice frame has been an effective in mobilizing support from the Chinese community. The greater the suppression by the state, the higher the mobilization capacity and support the movement received from the Chinese
community nationwide. As was shown in Chapter Four, continuous attempts from the state to ‘convert’ Chinese schools into a Malay-dominated national system in the 1980s unwittingly led to unification of the political power of the ethnic Chinese as was on display in the demonstration staged at Tianhou Temple in 1987.

To enhance and maintain the movement’s exclusiveness, it has been staffed exclusively by ethnic, and Chinese-educated, Chinese. The core movement community generally ‘discriminates’ against applicants who are not Chinese-educated. Preferences are given to graduates from institutions that are not yet recognized by the state, such as duzhong, Nanyang University or Taiwanese universities. Many outsiders see this as a form of Chinese chauvinism, stemming from inferior complex and lack of appreciation towards the multicultural reality of the Malaysian society. In fact, the policy of exclusion has isolated many individuals with great potential from accessing the movement’s leadership.

The domination of an exclusive community within the movement also has prevented the movement from establishing interethnic alliances. The language barrier has been the hardest hurdle to overcome, as most members of the movement community lack the linguistic capacity to reach out to supporters of other ethnic groups. While all of them speak fluent Chinese, only a few can speak Malay or English fluently. Moreover, as one of the oldest social movements in Malaysia, the disparity in strength may have made it more difficult for the Chinese education movement to collaborate with other smaller, newer social movements.

Although the support of non-ethnic Chinese individuals in the Damansara SOS movement demonstrated great potential for interethnic collaboration against state suppression (Chapter Six), the Chinese education movement leaders failed to capitalize on this potential. By 2008, while other movement groups in Malaysia had taken
advantage of the political opportunity to broach a variety of issues ranging from human
rights, grievances of minority groups, and to demand for greater state reformation, 
Dongjiaozong’s response—or lack thereof—was disappointing.

Factionalism may potentially create more space for democracy, competition, 
dynamism and choice; however, failure to manage internal rivalry may do more harm 
than good. Burdened by exclusiveness, conservatism and internal faction, 
Dongjiaozong has failed to extend itself beyond a contained pressure group to play a 
more significant role in domestic contentious politics.

7.7. Suggestions for Future Research

There are three potential areas for future research: national comparative studies with 
other social movements in Malaysia, regional comparative studies on the development 
of Chinese education in Southeast Asia, and cross-regional comparative studies of 
minority social movements in non-liberal, democratic states in Asia, Latin America and 
Africa.

Due to limitation of time and a lack of funding to conduct additional fieldwork, 
an important area that this thesis could not include is comparison of the Chinese 
education movement with other social movements in Malaysia. Such comparative 
studies may reveal if patterns of movement repertoires differ between exclusive-based 
social movements (those based on ethnic, cultural and religious issues) and 
inclusive-based social movements (those based on environment, human rights and 
democratization issues).

A national comparison of movements constrained under the same political 
system can strengthen the causal implication of the role of informal, relational 
institutions in sustaining movement persistency. By comparing regime reactions
(in particular, the heterogeneous agents within the regime) towards multiple social movements at the same time, movement demands can be generalized.

The author also proposes future research to take a step further and compare the differences in the development of Chinese education movements in Southeast Asia. Despite demographic differences and varied development in post-colonial political institutions, it remains a puzzle why, in spite of the establishment of a significant number of Chinese schools in the early twentieth century in most of Southeast Asia, only the Malaysian version of Chinese education system continues to survive.

There are several regional comparative on Chinese education, notably Murray (1964) and Watson (1973). However, there has been little follow-up to their work since then. With the rise of China, realization of the increasing importance of Chinese schools as language- and cultural-learning institutions may allow researchers to generalize the impact of China’s political economy influence in the region. There are complexities, similarities and differences among Chinese communities and the formation of intercommunity networks in the region. Therefore, a bottom-up, culturally and politically sensitive approach to a regional comparative study may be worthwhile.

The author also suggests making a broader comparative study on minority social movements in non-liberal, democratic states across Asia, Latin America and Africa. Research on social movement repertoires of non-democratic states thus far has concentrated exclusively on one region, with hardly any cross-regional comparative studies available. Despite geographical and cultural differences, similarities such as colonization, problems of multiculturalism, and transitions in political ideology along

the democracy-anarchy spectrum allow comparison of social movements in these non-liberal, democratic states to be made. Making such comparisons will enable scholars to better understand variations in social movement phenomena across different political settings, especially in the trend of movement repertoires, the role of social capital and formation of alliances, and how social movements overcome constraints from formal institutions.

7.8. Concluding Remarks

This thesis has demonstrated that the capacity for social mobilization and endurance of a social movement depend on structural and relational institutions. The former delineate the role and responsibilities of each agency within the movement, install legitimate status upon social movement leaders to lead the movement, and enable these leaders to mobilize support from members and the larger communities.

As social movements comprise large numbers of agencies and individuals, having formal, structural institutions is, on its own, insufficient for engaging strong inter-agency commitments to the movement. Here is where relational institutions—with their more organic, dynamic and adaptive nature—can supplement and fill the gaps of structural institutions.

Due to the lack of access to democratic institutions, social movement leaders develop working relationships with members of the ruling regime to realize their demands through brokerage efforts. Brokers enable an informal yet important channel for conflicting parties to seek a common ground. Through bridging and enabling constructive interactions between conflicting parties, brokers strengthen their political

importance within the regime’s entity and receive support from the movement community for aiding and facilitating the movement’s interests into the state’s core decision-making bodies. However, the impact of brokerage is supplementary rather than primary, for brokerage alone seldom procures the ultimate goals of a social movement.

Movement repertoires may vary from aggressive to collaborative, manifest to latent. Unlike social movement activists in democratic states who enjoy freedom from fear to express their demands openly, the choice of movement repertoires within non-liberal, democratic states are determined by the lessons social movement activists learnt from their previous interactions with the state. As interactions between social movement and the state are considerably influenced by the local political structure and social environment, social movement activists adjust their activities and repertoires according to the local milieu. Therefore, movement leaders who are constrained by a non-liberal, democratic setting have to choose the most efficient, most rewarding, least risky approach to mobilize support from the community.

The rigidity and ineffectiveness of democratic institutions within suppressive states has also given rise to strategies that rely on interpersonal relationships to meet the movement’s demands rather than through formal channels. Movement leaders expand their influence through social capital, and form networks and alliances with like-minded individuals and organizations. Although this form of collaboration may be fragile, and can collapse upon changes in leadership, it remains the most accessible and speedy approach for social movements to form a strong anti-state alliance under oppressive conditions.

Although political opportunity and resources available to a social movement may be scarce, the internal movement solidarity is the most significant factor to
successful social mobilization. Tension between factions is unavoidable; therefore, it is vitally important for the movement to be equipped with the ability to manage these challenges through a well-structured institution or through a well-connected and authorized leader. A united movement will be able to resist heavy repression from its traditional enemy, the state; but a divided movement will be too fragile and be easily torn apart by disunity from within.
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“PM: Hak Melayu ditarik”.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1  List of Interviewees
(The names of all civil servants are disclosed here in order to protect their identities. Their names are replaced with a code of initials assigned by the author).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Interview Location</th>
<th>Voice Record</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>February 10, 2008</td>
<td>Lu SS</td>
<td>Retired Chinese primary school principal.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>February 12, 2008</td>
<td>Tang Hong Heng (陈虹薑)</td>
<td>Assistant general manager, Kwangwahyitpoh.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>February 21, 2008</td>
<td>Leow Jing Yee* (廖靜仪)</td>
<td>Principal, Penang Chinese Girls Private High School.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>February 22, 2008</td>
<td>Janet Pillai</td>
<td>NGOs activist.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>February 24, 2008</td>
<td>Lim KC</td>
<td>Retired Chinese primary schoolteacher.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>February 24, 2008</td>
<td>Tan Kok Chye</td>
<td>General secretary, Penang Tan Kongsi.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>February 24, 2008</td>
<td>Tan JC</td>
<td>Retired Chinese primary school principal.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>March 5, 2008</td>
<td>Tan LH</td>
<td>Retired Chinese schoolteacher.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>March 16, 2008</td>
<td>Chen MM</td>
<td>Senior journalist.</td>
<td>Selangor</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>March 17, 2008</td>
<td>Choong Woei Chuan (钟伟前)</td>
<td>Head, Dongzong Department of Resource and Information Affairs.</td>
<td>Selangor</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position/Positional Details</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Approval</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 March 24, 2008</td>
<td>Loot Ting Yee (陆庭瑜)</td>
<td>Chairman, Lim Lian Geok Cultural Development Center; Former Jiaozong vice chairman.</td>
<td>Kuala Lumpur</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 March 24, 2008</td>
<td>Yow Lee Fung (姚丽芳)</td>
<td>Chief operating officer, Lim Lian Geok Cultural Development Center; Former Jiaozong chief administrative secretary.</td>
<td>Kuala Lumpur</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13 March 25, 2008</td>
<td>Wong Chin Lee (黄真莉)</td>
<td>Principal, Baixiao Temple School.</td>
<td>Selangor</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14 March 26, 2008</td>
<td>Sim Mow Yu (沈慕羽)</td>
<td>Former Jiaozong chairman.</td>
<td>Malacca</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 December 24, 2008</td>
<td>Lee LS</td>
<td>Retired Chinese secondary schoolteacher.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 December 30, 2008</td>
<td>Leong Tzi Liang (林子量)</td>
<td>Executive officer, Penang School Alumni Association.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 January 5, 2009</td>
<td>Yang Yun Gui (杨云贵)</td>
<td>Chairman, Penang Donglianhui.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 January 6, 2009</td>
<td>Goh Mai Loon (吴美润)</td>
<td>Former Dongzong-WC subcommittee member.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 January 7, 2009</td>
<td>Yeoh Ban Eng (杨万荣)</td>
<td>Former Jiaozong vice chairman.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 January 14, 2009</td>
<td>Leong Tzi Liang</td>
<td>Follow-up interview.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 January 15, 2009</td>
<td>Sim JT</td>
<td>Retired Chinese school principal.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 January 16, 2009</td>
<td>Kho Hai Meng (许海明)</td>
<td>Dongzong Standing Committee.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 January 17, 2009</td>
<td>Huang CC</td>
<td>Retired Chinese schoolteacher.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position/Role</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>January 17, 2009</td>
<td>Chai Yah Han (蔡亚汉)</td>
<td>Former chairman of Penang Chinese School Alumni Association; Former <em>Dongzong</em> General Committee member.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>January 19, 2009</td>
<td>Ng Miew Luan (黄妙鸾)</td>
<td>Deputy principal, <em>Hanjiang</em> College.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>January 20, 2009</td>
<td>Yeoh LC</td>
<td>Retired Chinese school principal.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>January 21, 2009</td>
<td>Kho Hai Meng</td>
<td>Follow-up interview.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>February 6, 2009</td>
<td>Lim Ming King (林明镜)</td>
<td><em>Dongzong</em> executive committee member; Malacca <em>Donglianhui</em> committee.</td>
<td>Malacca</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>February 8, 2009</td>
<td>Bock Tai Hee (莫泰熙)</td>
<td>Former <em>Dongzong</em> chief executive officer.</td>
<td>Malacca</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>February 9, 2009</td>
<td>Pang Siew Fian (冯秋萍)</td>
<td>Deputy chairperson, Malacca <em>Donglianhui</em>.</td>
<td>Malacca</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>February 12, 2009</td>
<td>Lee Kim Jii (李金芝)</td>
<td>Researcher, University of Tunku Abdul Rahman.</td>
<td>Selangor</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>February 17, 2009</td>
<td>Yow Lee Fung</td>
<td>Follow-up interview.</td>
<td>Kuala Lumpur</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>February 18, 2009</td>
<td>Yau Teck Kong (姚迪刚)</td>
<td>President, Federation of Alumni Associations of Taiwan Universities of Malaysia.</td>
<td>Selangor</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>February 21, 2009</td>
<td>Thock KP</td>
<td>University lecturer.</td>
<td>Selangor</td>
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<td>No.</td>
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<td>Name</td>
<td>Position/Title</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>February 23, 2009</td>
<td>Cheng Yok Hoon (曾玉芬)</td>
<td>Senior executive, Lim Lian Geok Cultural Development Center.</td>
<td>Kuala Lumpur</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>February 23, 2009</td>
<td>Tang Ah Chai (陈亚才)</td>
<td>SOSC advisor.</td>
<td>Kuala Lumpur</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>February 23, 2009</td>
<td>Low Hing King (刘庆祺)</td>
<td>President, Nanyang University Alumni Association of Malaya.</td>
<td>Kuala Lumpur</td>
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<td>February 24, 2009</td>
<td>Choong Pai Chee (庄白绮)</td>
<td>Former SOSC executive secretary; Former Dongzong executive officer.</td>
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<td>41</td>
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<td>42</td>
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<td>Lim Jian An (林建安)</td>
<td>Executive secretary, SOSC</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>February 25, 2009</td>
<td>Hew Hwa (邱俊华)</td>
<td>Acting president, SOSC</td>
<td>Selangor</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>February 25, 2009</td>
<td>Lee SH</td>
<td>Senior reporter.</td>
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<td>February 27, 2009</td>
<td>Pua Eng Chong (潘永忠)</td>
<td>Principal, New Era College.</td>
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<td>46</td>
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<td>Shum Thin Khee (沈天奇)</td>
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<td>48</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>March 9, 2010</td>
<td>Teoh Shiaw Kuan (张少宽)</td>
<td>Historian on Chinese history in Malaysia.</td>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>Position/Role</td>
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<td>March 23, 2010</td>
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<td>Former Dongzong chairman; Former Johore Donglianhui chairman.</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<td>Chief administrative secretary, Jiaozong.</td>
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<tr>
<td>58</td>
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<td>July 26, 2010</td>
<td>Poh Wan See</td>
<td>Head, HLC Administrative Office.</td>
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<td>July 26, 2010</td>
<td>Hong Woan Ying</td>
<td>Head, New Era College Public and International Relation Office.</td>
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<td>Senior executive, New Era College Department of Human Resource.</td>
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<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>July 27, 2010</td>
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<td>Selangor</td>
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<td>No.</td>
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<td>Name</td>
<td>Position/Role</td>
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<td>Lim Kee Song 林纪松</td>
<td>Senior executive, Dongzong Department of Association Affairs</td>
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<td>65</td>
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<td>Executive officer, New Era College Department of Student Enrollment.</td>
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<td>66</td>
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<td>Dong SD</td>
<td>Dongzong executive officer (since 1980s).</td>
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<td>67</td>
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<td>Choong Ee Hoong 钟一泓</td>
<td>Assistant Executive Officer, Dongzong Department of Organization Affairs.</td>
<td>Selangor</td>
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<td>68</td>
<td>July 28, 2010</td>
<td>Liao Yang Ting 廖燕玲</td>
<td>Assistant Executive Officer, Dongzong Department of Organization Affairs.</td>
<td>Selangor</td>
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<td>69</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>July 28, 2010</td>
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<td>Deputy chairman, Merdeka University Company.</td>
<td>Selangor</td>
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<td>71</td>
<td>July 29, 2010</td>
<td>Tang Pui Kwan 邓珮君</td>
<td>Deputy head, New Era College Department of Registry.</td>
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<td>73</td>
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<td>74</td>
<td>July 30, 2010</td>
<td>Dong SG</td>
<td>Dongzong executive officer (since 1990s).</td>
<td>Selangor</td>
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</table>

Note: * marked a name translated into hanyupinyin and not an official name.
NA = not applicable (from 2009 and onwards, the author no longer request for voice recording the interview).
Source: The author.
### Appendix 2  List of Jiaozong’s Members

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
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<td><strong>United State-Level</strong></td>
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<td>Pahang (彭亨州华校教师公会联合会)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Sarawak (砂拉越州华小教师会联合会)</td>
<td>2002</td>
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<td><strong>Johore</strong></td>
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<td>Kluang District (柔佛居銮区华校教师公会)</td>
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<td>Muar (麻坡华校教师公会)</td>
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<td>Pontian District (笨珍华校教师公会)</td>
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<td>Segamat District (柔佛昔加末华校教师公会)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Southern Johore (柔南华校教师公会)</td>
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<td>Kelantan (吉兰丹华校教师公会)</td>
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<td>Raub (劳勿华校教师公会)</td>
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<td>Temerloh and Bera (淡马鲁暨百乐县华校教师公会)</td>
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<td>Penang (槟城华校教师公会)</td>
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<td>Kampar and Gopeng District (金宝务边区华校教师公会)</td>
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<td>Kuching and Samarahan (晋汉省华小教师会)</td>
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<td>Meradong (马拉端县华小教师会)</td>
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Source: The author.
## Appendix 3  List of Dongzong’s Members

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<th>Name of Association</th>
<th>Year of Registration</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Negeri Sembilan Chinese School Committees Council (森美兰华校董事会联合会)</td>
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<td>The Penang and Province Wellesley United Chinese School Management Association (槟威华校董事会联合会)</td>
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<td>The United Chinese School Committees’ Association of Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur (雪兰莪暨吉隆坡联邦直辖区华校董事会联合会)</td>
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Source: The author.
## Appendix 4  List of Converted Chinese Secondary Schools in Malaysia

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<td>SMJK Pei Hwa (培华国民型中学)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>SMJK Seg Hwa (昔华中学)</td>
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<td>SMJK Chio Min (觉民国民型中学)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>SMJK Keat Hwa (1) (吉华国民型中学一校)</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>SMJK Sin Min (新民国民型中学)</td>
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<td>SMJK Chung Cheng Kota Bharu Kelantan (中正国民型中学)</td>
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<td>SMJK Chung Hwa (中华国民型中学)</td>
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<td>SMJK Notre Dame Convent (圣母女子国民型中学)</td>
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<td>SMJK Pulau Sebang (普罗士邦国民型中学)</td>
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<td>SMJK Tinggi Cina (马六甲国民型华文中学)</td>
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<td>SMJK Yok Bin (育民国民型中学)</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>SMJK Chan Wa (振华国民中学)</td>
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<td>SMJK Chi Wen (启文国民型中学)</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>SMJK Chung Hua (庇劳中华国民型中学)</td>
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<td>SMJK Hwa Lian (华联国民型中学)</td>
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Notes:
SMJK = Sekolah Menengah Jenis Kebangsaan
SMK = Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan
SM = Sekolah Menengah

Source: The author.
Appendix 5  List of Duzhongs in Malaysia

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Source: The author.

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<td>–</td>
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<td>210</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

### Appendix 7  List of Translated Words

#### a) Original Text in Malay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Original Text</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civilisational Islam</td>
<td>Islam Hadhari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition for Clean and Fair Election</td>
<td>Gabungan Pilihanraya Bersih dan Adil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial management committee</td>
<td>Lembaga pengurus kewangan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Schools Project</td>
<td>Rancangan Sekolah Integrasi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malay-reserved land</td>
<td>Tanah Simpanan Melayu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysian Higher School Certificate</td>
<td>Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysian National Primary Syllabus</td>
<td>Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysian People’s Movement Party</td>
<td>Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysian Qualifications Agency</td>
<td>Agensi Kelayakan Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement to Eliminate PPSMI</td>
<td>Gerakan Mansuhkan PPSMI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Accreditation Board</td>
<td>Lembaga Akreditasi Negara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Cultural Policy</td>
<td>Dasar Kebudayaan Negara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Economic Advisory Council</td>
<td>Majlis Perundingan Ekonomi Negara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Front coalition</td>
<td>Barisan Nasional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Higher Education Fund Corporation</td>
<td>Perbadanan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Human Rights Commission of Malaysia</td>
<td>Suruhanjaya Hak Asasi Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Justice Party</td>
<td>Parti Keadilan Nasional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Union of the Teaching Profession</td>
<td>Kesatuan Perkhidmatan Perguruan Kebangsaan Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party</td>
<td>Parti Islam Semalaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Alliance</td>
<td>Pakatan Rakyat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Coalition</td>
<td>Gagasan Rakyat</td>
</tr>
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<td>People’s Justice Party</td>
<td>Parti Keadilan Rakyat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petaling Jaya Development Plan</td>
<td>Draf Cadangan Pengubahan dan Rancangan Tempatan Petaling Jaya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary School Evaluation Test</td>
<td>Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selangor Development Corporation</td>
<td>Perbadanan Kemajuan Negeri Selangor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons of the earth</td>
<td>Bumiputeras</td>
</tr>
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<td>Student Integration Program</td>
<td>Rancangan Integrai Murid Untuk Perpaduan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and Learning Science and Mathematics in English</td>
<td>Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik dalam Bahasa Inggeris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Malays National Organisation</td>
<td>Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeding Operation</td>
<td>Operasi Lalang</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Original Text in Chinese

(* marked a name translated into hanyupinyin and not an official name).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English/Roman</th>
<th>Original Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Adoption Program</td>
<td>白小原校生领养计划</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Officer</td>
<td>助理</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent-based</td>
<td>人制</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance of Three</td>
<td>三结合</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ang Tian Se</td>
<td>洪天赐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Administrative Officer</td>
<td>事务助理</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia</td>
<td>马来西亚中华总商会</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Pahang</td>
<td>彭亨中华总商会</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of Chinese National in Cambodia</td>
<td>柬埔寨柬华理事总会</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness Campaign for Chinese Primary Schools’ School Committees</td>
<td>华小董事觉醒运动</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bahkutteh</strong></td>
<td>肉骨茶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baixiao Newspaper</strong></td>
<td>白小报道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baixiao Sponsors Special Meeting</strong></td>
<td>白小保校工作委员会赞助人特别大会</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beijing Normal University</td>
<td>北京师范大学</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bo Sun Zhong*</td>
<td>博孙中</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bock Tai Hee</td>
<td>莫泰熙</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bong Hon Liong</td>
<td>黄汉良</td>
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<td>Campaign to Strengthen the Role of School Committees in Chinese Primary Schools</td>
<td>强化华小董事会运动</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cantonese</strong></td>
<td>广东话</td>
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<td>Chairmen Group</td>
<td>主席团</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chan Chin Chee</td>
<td>陈正志</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chan Kong Choy</td>
<td>陈广才</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen Li Qun*</td>
<td>陈利群</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen Moh Chinese Primary School</td>
<td>精武华文小学</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen Pi Hua*</td>
<td>陈碧华</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen Wing Sum</td>
<td>曾永森</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheng Ho University</td>
<td>郑和大学</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheng Ji Mou</td>
<td>陈济谋</td>
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<td>Chew Mei Fun</td>
<td>周美芬</td>
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<td>Chew Saw Eng</td>
<td>周素英</td>
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<td>Chia Oai Peng</td>
<td>谢爱萍</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chian Heng Kai</td>
<td>陈庆佳</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
<td>首席行政主任</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiew Swee Peow Chinese Education Trust Fund</td>
<td>周瑞标教育基金</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Child
Chin Choong Sang
Chin Keh Kong
Chin Peng

China Press
Chinese assembly halls
Chinese associations
Chinese Cultural Congress
Chinese Education Card
Chinese Education Festival
Chinese Education Self-Improvement and Unity Dinner
Chinese Education Working Committee
Chinese guilds and associations
Chinese Language Society of Universiti Utara Malaysia
Chinese Resource and Research Centre
Chinese school committees chairman
Chinese schoolteachers’ associations
Chinese secondary schools
Chinese Solidarity Conventions
Chong Joon Kin
Chong Khoon Lin
Chong King Liong
Chong Min Chang
Choong Pai Chee
Chow Ba Mei*
Chung Hua Ladang Serapoh Chinese Primary School
Chung Hwa Damansara Chinese Primary School
Chung Hwa (High School)
Chung Ling (High School)
Clerk
Committee for Maintaining the School’s Original Premises and Seizing the New School Branch
Confucian (High School)
Damansara Chinese Primary School
Damansara New Village School Relocation Opposition Action Committee
Damansara Save Our School movement
David Chen

DDDF Investment Committee
December 1996 Thousand Men Fundraising Dinner

Declaration on Vernacular Education

Democratic Movement of Malaysian Youth and Students

Department of Association Affairs
Department of Chief Executive Office
Department of Computer
Department of Curriculum
Department of Early Childhood Education
Department of Examination
Department of Executive
Department of Finance
Department of Maintenance
Department of Personnel
Department of Physical Education
Department of Promotion
Department of Publication and Promotion
Department of Publishing
Department of Resource and Information
Department of Resource and Research
Department of Students Activities
Department of Students Affairs
Department of Teachers’ Education
Department of Teachers’ Training
Department of Vocational and Technical Education

Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Dewan Perhimpunan Tiong-Hwa Terengganu

Ding Pin Song

Dongjiaozong

Dongjiaozong Converted Chinese Secondary Schools Working Committee

Dongjiaozong Duzhong Development Fund

Dongjiaozong Higher Learning Center Non-Profit Private Limited

Dongjiaozong National Chinese Primary Schools Development Working Committee

Dongjiaozong National Conference for Duzhong Development

Dongjiaozong National Independent Chinese Secondary School Working Committee

Du Chun Mao*

1214 千万心宴

母语教育宣言

马来西亚学生与青年民主运动

会务与组织局

首席行政办公室

电脑局

课程局

幼儿教育组

考试局

行政组

财务局

庶务局

人事局

体育局

文宣局

出版及促销组

出版局

资讯局

调查研究及资讯组

学生活动组

学生事务局

教师教育局

师资培训组

技职教育局

董教总全国国民型中学工作委员会

董教总全国华文独中发展基金

董教总教育中心非营利有限公司

董教总全国发展华文小学工作委员会

全国发展华文独中运动大会

董教总全国发展华文独立中学工作委员会

杜春茂

379
Dual Coalition System
*Duzhong* Development Committee
*Duzhong* Education Alliance
*Duzhong* Principals’ Association
*Duzhong* Seminar
*Duzhong-WC* Sponsorship Program
*Duzhong-WC* Working Guidelines

*Ecole Chinoise Lieu-tou*
Education Affairs
Education Research Center
Education World
Educational Affairs Working Committee
Eng Ling Chinese Primary School, Perak
Establishment of New Independent Chinese Secondary Schools
Executive Officer
Family Learning Centre
Federation of Alumni Associations of Taiwan Universities of Malaysia
Federation of Chinese Associations in Johore
Federation of Chinese Associations Malaysia
Federation of Chinese Associations of Kelantan
Federation of Chinese Association Sabah
Federation of Chinese Guilds and Associations
Federation of *Hainan* Association Malaysia
Federation of *Hakka* Association Malaysia
Federation of *Hokkien* Association Malaysia
Federation of *Kwangtung* Association Malaysia
Federation of Malaya Chinese Senior Normal Graduate Teachers’ Union
Federation of *Teochew* Association Malaysia
Fifteen Leading Chinese Guilds and Associations (15-Huatuan)

Fong Chan Onn
Foo Wan Thot
*Fujian* province, China
General Affairs
General officer
General Secretariat Office
Goh Chee Yan
Goh Kean Seng

两线制
独中发展小组
独中教育联盟
独中校长理事会
华文独中研讨会
全国华文独中发展基金常年赞助人
董教总全国华文独中工作委员会
织细则
察都公学
学务
教育研究中心
教育天地
学务委员会
永宁华小
申办华文独中备忘录
马来西亚留台校友会联会总会
柔佛中华总会
中华大会堂总会
吉兰丹中华大会堂
沙巴州中华大会堂
马来西亚华人行业社团总会
马来西亚海南公会联合会
马来西亚客家公会联合会
马来西亚福建社团联合会
马来西亚广东会馆联合会
高师职总
马来西亚潮州公会联合会
十五华团领导机构
冯镇安
胡万锋
福建省
总务
坐办
行政部
吴志渊
吴建成
Grand Three Associations of Chinese Education (Sandajigou)
Gu Hsing Kuang
Guangxi Association Malaysia
Guiding Principles of Educational Reform of Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools
Guiding Principles of Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools
Han Chiang College
Han Chiang (High School)
Handbook of Chinese Education Workers
Hanyupinyin
Harmony and Union University
He Yong Liang*
Head of Department
Higher Education in China Exhibition
Hokkien
Hon Choon Kim
Hong Leong Group
Honorary sponsors
Hoo Huo Shan
Hou Heng Hua*
Hou Kok Chung
Hua Lian Duzhong
Huang Wen Da*
Huang Yun Yue
Huang Zhen Bu*
Huaxiao-WC Sponsorship Program
Huaxiao-WC Working Guidelines
Hungry Ghost Festival
Implementation of the Joint Declaration of National Huatuans memorandum
Independent Chinese secondary schools
Indonesia Eastern Language Cultural Center
Industrial Index
Inspirational Heroes Dinner
Join BN, Rectify BN
Joint Conference of Chinese School Committees and Schoolteachers in Malaya
Joint Declaration of National Huatuans
Kajang Fah Kiew Chinese School Premises trustees

三大机构华文教育中央委员会
顾兴光
马来西亚广西公会总会
独中教育改革纲领
华文独立中学建议书
韩江学院
(中)
华教工作者手册
汉语拼音
协和大学
何永良
行政主任
中国高等教育展
福建话
韩春锦
丰隆集团
荣誉赞助人
胡火山
侯亨桦
何国忠
华联 独中
黄文达
黄润岳
黄振部
华团反侵略大会
全国华文小学发展基金常年赞助人
董教总发展华文小学工作委员会简章
中元祭
贯彻华团联合宣言
华文独立中学
印尼雅加达东方语言文化中心
工商指南
壮志宴
打进国阵，纠正国阵
全马华校董教联席会议
全国华团联合宣言
加影华侨学校产业受托会
Kam Kei
Kang Chin Seng
Kang Siew Khoon
Kedah Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Kelantan Chung Hwa Independent High School
Kerk Choo Ting
Khew Khing Ling
Khing Ming Chinese Primary School
Khoo Kay Peng
Khoo Seong Chi
Khor Peng Teng
Kluang Chong Hwa High School
Koh Kim Leng
Koh Swe Yong
Koh Tsu Koon
Kua Kia Soong
Kuala Belait Chung-Hua Middle School
Kuala Lumpur University
Kuang Hee Pang
Kuen Cheng (High School)
Kuomintang
Kwongwahyitpoh
Ladang Hillside Chinese Primary School
Lai Chong Kong
Lai Soon Keat
Lau Pak Kuan
Lee Ban Chen
Lee Boon Chye
Lee Chang Jing
Lee Foundation
Lee Hau Shik
Lee Kim Sai
Lee Kim Sim
Lee San Choon
Lee Sang
Lee Sok Jing
Lee Thean Hin
Leong Yew Koh
Leung Cheung Ling
Li Da Ting*
Li Hui Jin*
Li Jia Zhi*
Li Min Guang* 李明光
Li Yi Qiang* 李毅强
Li Yue Tong* 李岳通
Liang Sheng Yi* 梁胜义
Liau Kok Fah 廖国华
Liew Chin Tong 刘镇东
Liew Kan Ba 刘崇汉
Lim Ah Lek 林亚礼
Lim Chong Eu 林苍佑
Lim Chong Keang 林忠强
Lim Fong Seng 林晃升
Lim Geok Chan 林玉静
Lim Kee Song 林纪松
Lim Ken Zhi 林肯智
Lim Keng Yaik 林敬益
Lim Kit Siang 林吉祥
Lim Lian Geok 林连玉
Lim Lian Geok Awards 林连玉精神奖
Lim Lian Geok Cultural Development Center 林连玉基金
Lim Thuang Seng 林传盛
Lin Mei Yan* 林美燕
Lin Yu Lian* 林玉莲
Ling Chia Nien 林嘉年
Ling Liong Sik 林良实
Liu Huai Gu* 刘怀谷
Liu Tian Ji 刘天吉
Loo Ting Yee 陆庭瑜
Low Sik Thong 刘锡通
Mah Cheok Tat 马卓达
Malacca Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry 马六甲中华总商会
Malaya Chinese Senior Normal Graduate Teachers Union 马来亚联合邦华文高级师范
Malaysia Chinese Student Council of Universiti Teknologi 工华裔学生理事会
Malaysian Chinese Association 马华会
Malaysian Chinese Organisations Election Appeals 华人社团大选诉求
Malaysian Federated San Kiang Association 马来西亚三江总会
Malaysian Seven Major Clans Association 七大乡团协调委员会
Management Handbook for Chinese Primary Schools 华小管理机制指南
MCA Central Working Committee 马华中央工作委员会
Memorandum for the Return of Vernacular Education 还我母语教育备忘录
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum of General Demands on Chinese Education</td>
<td>本邦华人对教育总要求</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum on National Cultural Policy</td>
<td>国家文化备忘录</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum Opposing the Conversion of Vernacular Schools into National Schools</td>
<td>反对改方言学校为国民学校宣言</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum to Accord Rightful Status to Chinese Language</td>
<td>争取华文地位备忘录</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merdeka College</td>
<td>独立学院</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merdeka University</td>
<td>独立大学</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merdeka University Formation Working Committee</td>
<td>马来西亚独立大学筹备工作委员会</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merdeka University Founders’ Assembly</td>
<td>马来亚独立大学发起人大会</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merdeka University (Limited) Company</td>
<td>独立大学有限公司</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-lunar month celebration</td>
<td>中秋节</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multi-Cultural Scholarship</td>
<td>多元文化奖学金</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myanmar Mandalay Fuqing School</td>
<td>曼德勒福庆学校</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nan Hwa Duzhong</td>
<td>南华独中</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanyang Shangpao</td>
<td>南洋商报</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanyang University</td>
<td>南洋大学</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanyang University Alumni Association of Malaya</td>
<td>马来亚南大校友会</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Chinese Civic Rights Committee</td>
<td>全国华团民权委员会</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Convention for the Strive for Citizenship of Chinese Registered Guilds and Associations</td>
<td>全马华人注册社团争取公民权大会</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Convention of Chinese School Teachers’ Associations in Malaya</td>
<td>全马教师公会代表大会</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Convention of the Chinese School Committees and Schoolteachers</td>
<td>全国华校董教大会</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Convention on Chinese Education’ Expansion</td>
<td>全马华文教育扩大会议</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Duzhong School Committees and School Principals Joint Meeting</td>
<td>全国独中董事及校长联席会议</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Huatuan Cultural Consultation Committee</td>
<td>全国华团文化咨询委员会</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Huatuan Cultural Foundation</td>
<td>全国华团文化基金</td>
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<td>National Huatuan Cultural Program</td>
<td>全国华团文化工作总纲领</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Huatuan Cultural Working Committee</td>
<td>全国华团文化工作委员会</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Huatuan Education Policy Committee</td>
<td>全国华团教育政策委员会</td>
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<td>National Seminar for Converted Chinese Secondary Schools Committees</td>
<td>全国国民型中学董事交流会</td>
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<td>National Taiwan Normal University</td>
<td>台湾师范大学</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Taiwan Normal University Division of Preparatory Programs for</td>
<td>国立侨生大学先修班</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overseas Chinese Students</td>
<td>国民型学校</td>
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<td>National-type primary schools</td>
<td>全国校长职工会</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Union of Heads of Schools</td>
<td>森美兰中华大会堂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negeri Sembilan Chinese Assembly Hall</td>
<td>新纪元学院</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Era College</td>
<td>董教总教育中心基金, 新纪元学院建设发展基金</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Era College Development Fund</td>
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华南师范大学
东南亚华文教育通讯
东南亚华文教学研讨会
南方学院
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前进阵线
第九大马计划的建议书
孙中山
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陈祯禄
陈祯禄华文小学
陈祯禄大学
陈嘉庚
陈胜尧
陈香琴
陈修信
陈大锦
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Tunku Abdul Rahman University
Tuw Ah Mei
Twenty-First Century Old Friends Club
UCEC Junior Level
UCEC Senior Level
UCEC Vocational and Technical
Unified Curriculum Subcommittee
Unified Examination Certificate
Unified Examination Subcommittee
Unified Federation of Malaysian Chinese Assembly Hall
United Chinese School Alumni Association
United Chinese School Committees’ Association
United Chinese Schoolteachers’ Association
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Vietnam Ho Chi Minh City Representative
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Wang Yoon Nien
Wee Ka Siong
Wen Tien Kuang
White Terror
William Leong
Wong Cheng Yoke
Wong Chin Lee
Wong Kim Foong
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Wong Sue Kau
Wong Yau King
Wong Yew Kong
Wu Teh Yao
Xiamen University
Xiamen University Nanyang Research Institute

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Yan Yuan Zhang* 严元章
Yang Qing Liang* 杨清亮
Yang Ya Ling 杨雅灵
Yang Yin Chong 杨应俊
Yap Hon Kiat 叶翰杰
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Yap Sin Tian 叶新田
Yap Swee Seng 叶瑞生
Ye Hong En* 叶鸿恩
Ye Xia Guang* 叶夏光
Yeoh Ban Eng 杨万荣
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Yik Ching Duzhong 育青 独中
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Yong Xu Ling 杨旭龄
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