
【Summary】

Bumiputera Policy:
Economic Development and Its Dilemma in Multi-Ethnic Malaysia

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Reducing the enduring economic inequality among ethnic groups has been primary agenda of Malaysia's 'Bumiputera policy'. However, the government's New Economic Model suggests to double per capita income by 2020 by reforming the ethnicity-based Bumiputera policy to a policy on the basis of economic need. This paper reviews Malaysia's Bumiputera policy, in particular its effect on economic and social developments since Merdeka.

Malaysia has implemented some form of affirmative action or the Bumiputera policy, since the mid-1940s, even before Merdeka. Origins of Bumiputera policy can be traced back to Dato Onn bin Ja'afar's efforts to establish the Rural Industrial Development Authority (RIDA) in 1950 under the British colonial government. Article 153 of the Constitution of the Federation of Malaya has been the legal foundation of the Bumiputera policy. Actual implementation plans of the Bumiputera policy occurred under the New Economic Policy in 1971 and Vision 2020 (Wawasan 2020) after 1991.

These affirmative action programmes have worked well and have reduced inequalities to a significant extent; however, they also have contributed to pervasive rent seeking behaviour. For example, some Bumiputera who benefitted from the 30% corporate equity rule sold their reserved allotments and reaped windfall capital gains.

Further, to achieve the goal of increasing national income by 2020, the Bumiputera policy initiatives must aim at strengthening and nurturing entrepreneurship enhancing collaboration between Bumiputera and GLCs and promoting greater Bumiputera representation in high paying jobs. Creation of a middle class group, composed primarily of Bumiputera, also will eventually shift the emphasis of economic policy from ethnicity to social class.

【Summary】

The Establishment of Nanyang University
and the Chinese Community in Singapore

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Nanyang University (the University's alumni and the Chinese community call it Nantah with affection) was a university in Singapore from 1956 to 1980. During its existence, it was the only Chinese language post-secondary institution outside of China in the world. In 1980, Nantah was merged with University of Singapore to form the present National University of Singapore.

The idea of a Chinese university in Singapore to provide higher education to Chinese young people in Southeast Asia was first mooted by Tan Lark Sye, then chairman of the Singapore Hokkien Association in 1953 when Singapore was still under the British colonial rule. A huge fund was set up for this purpose, drawing donations not only from successful Chinese business people but also from Chinese people of all walks of life in Southeast Asia especially Singapore and Malaya. The Singapore Hokkien Association donated 500 acres in the western Jurong area.

But Nantah was not blessed by the authority. The British colonial government wanted to “Malayanize” various immigrant communities such as Chinese, Malays, Indians and others by promoting a single education system based on English medium of instruction and to create a new “Malayan consciousness.” And the authority feared that Nantah could become an inner citadel of the local communists who had excited about news from People’s Republic of China. On the other hand, the founders of Nantah led by Tan hoped to establish a plural society where each community could keep their language, culture and identity at the same time they regarded Malaya and Singapore as their homeland where their children could build their future in. They hoped Nantah to be a bastion of Chinese education and culture while University of Malaya established by the British in 1949 could develop as a bastion of English education and culture.

This paper describes how Nantah was established against this adverse wind and how the British authority, neighboring Federation of Malaya and Singapore’s political leaders reacted to the fever of the Chinese community to found their university.

【Summary】**Natural Disaster, Men and Animals among the Penan:
Beyond "Thunder Complex"**

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This paper aims to examine the meaning of natural disaster shared among the Penan of the Belaga in relation to “*thunder complex*”. The Penan of Sarawak, whose population is approximately 15,000, are divided into Eastern Penan and Western Penan. Some 500 Western Penan are living along the upper reaches of the Belaga River. The Penan of the Belaga, formerly hunter-and-gatherers, nowadays still heavily depend on hunting in the tropical rainforest for their living. In this particular community, nature is thought to be spontaneously growing and self-ruled (*merip petiken*).

First, how the Penan challenge natural disaster is discussed. The Penan are much afraid of meteorological catastrophes, which are the only and the most feared natural disasters for them. Usually in the afternoon, the sky turns dark, and then they have strong storms, lightning strikes, heavy rainfalls and flooding. Whenever they feel the meteorological change, someone start invoking *migah langit* phrases towards the sky, in order to calm the power of nature. The uncontrollable power is mostly represented as the Thunder God's rage. The only thing they can do is to attempt to reduce the natural power of the Thunder God ritually.

Second, what lies behind such Penan practical challenge is explored. Penan have a certain mode of thought behind those ritual performances. The so-called “*thunder complex*” is an idea that certain behaviors of human beings, notably behaviors considered offensive to animals, will result in meteorological catastrophe. Lightning strikes, storms, heavy rain, flood and petrification are generally regarded as being caused by human mistreatment of animals (“*penyalah*”). Therefore, Penan have certain rules such as “don't play with animals,” “one should butcher, cook and eat the meat quickly after hunting animals.”

Third, how we understand such Penan cultural institution in relation to natural disaster is examined. The Penan version of the “*thunder complex*” can be hypothetically understood as their efforts to prevent human dominance over animals. Penan hunters empirically realize human dominance over animals every time they hunt game animals in the forest. This is a primordial experience of Penan hunters. Penan are unconsciously afraid of human dominance over animals, because it denies the basic idea of nature in Penan society. They seem to try to sustain an impartial between men and animals.

【Summary】

The Change of the Malaysian Media Environment
during the Abdullah Administration

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This article discusses the change of the media environment surrounding the Malaysian mainstream media during the Abdullah administration. Malaysian mainstream media have been tightly controlled by the government since the Mahathir administration. This article, firstly reviews the Malaysian media environment during the Mahathir administration in terms of four factors which regulate the media; media regulation laws, the media industry, norm of the journalists, and the Internet as a new architecture. The article then examines the change of the media environment during the Abdullah administration. The government under the Abdullah administration maintained the control of the mainstream media by law and company's ownership. However, increased competition in the media market and the emergence of the Internet media as a new competitor changed the economic base of mainstream media. The mainstream media now confronts a dilemma between the media control by the state and fierce competition in the market.

【Summary】

A Research Note on the Shop Styles and Branching of Commercial and Islamic Banks in Penang Island

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This article aims to clarify the shop styles and branching of commercial and Islamic banks, which are private companies in Penang Island, Malaysia, as of September 2010. For this purpose, in Chapter I, the author analyzes the situation of the banking industry in Malaysia and the positioning of Penang Island from the perspective of the banking industry. In Chapter II, the author categorizes shop styles and branching of commercial banks and Islamic banks. Subsequently, in Chapter III, basing an argument on the above research, the author argues two topics of banking in Penang Island: (1) the characteristics of and causes for the maldistribution of bank branches, and (2) the relationship between shop styles and branching.

The author claims the characteristics of the shop styles and branching of both kinds of banks as follows. First, shop styles, or the buildings occupied by bank branches, are divided into four types: own building, bungalow house, tenant of a shopping mall, and shophouse. The number of bank branches that are established as tenant of a shopping mall and shophouse types are approximately thrice the number of branches that are established as own building and bungalow house types. This indicates that banks prefer to place their branches in densely inhabited areas and in spaces in or around popular shopping malls.

Second, Penang Island has high productivity that the number of bank branches and population density are higher than other states and federal territories. The bank branches in Penang Island are unevenly distributed. This maldistribution can be categorized into two types: the concentration of branches located in or around densely inhabited districts, and the interspersions along highways. The author points out that when banks select proposed sites to locate their branches, banks adopt three criteria; (1) number of population, (2) existence of shopping malls which can attract many customers and (3) proximity to arterial roads. As the result of this, the maldistribution of bank branches exists in Penang Island. In other words, the maldistribution of bank branches is affected by the uneven distribution of shopping malls, and highways in Penang Island.

【Summary】

An Empirical Study on Poverty Alleviation among Fishermen in Malaysia

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Fishermen have been one of the main targets of poverty alleviation programmes of the Malaysian government since independence. For uplifting the economic status of the Malays, the government has paid special attention to poverty among small-scale coastal fishermen and allocated significant amount of budget, which was disproportional with economic importance. In addition, it has subsidised boat purchase and offered vocational training programmes, premising that increasing the number of boats owned by fishermen and improving labour productivity will eventually reduce poverty. The premise is based on the observation in particular villages or interviews with small number of fishermen. However, few studies have attempted to verify this hypothesis quantitatively because of lack of statistics suitable for this purpose. Thus far, the only available data are the ‘socio-economic survey of fishermen’, which was conducted by the Fisheries Development Authority of Malaysia in 1995. The survey covers more than 40, 000 samples drawn from the entire peninsular Malaysia and the Sarawak state.

Using the above data, this study performed a multiple regression analysis. It translated the aforementioned hypothesis into a linear model with three independent variables (ratio of boat ownership, ratio of fishermen with more than five years of experience and ratio of dropouts from primary education) and testified their correlations with the ratio of poverty households. The model successfully accounted for the ratio of poverty households among traditional fishermen (R-square > 0.9, F-test was significant at the 1% level), whereas the correlation with poverty among commercial fishermen was rejected (R-square < 0.25, F-test was insignificant). The single regression analysis (ratio of boat ownership) and multiple regression analysis with two independent variables (ratio of fishermen with more than five years experience and ratio of dropouts from elementary education) presented the same result. Both analyses significantly account for poverty of traditional fishermen (R-square > 0.7, F-test was significant at the 1% level); however, neither accounts for the poverty of commercial fishermen (R-square < 0.25, F-test was insignificant).

The analyses results are as follows. First, the hypotheses are only applicable to traditional fishermen because these hypotheses were originally based on studies of small-scale coastal fisheries. Second, subsidies for fishing boat purchase are a viable option only for poverty alleviation of traditional fishermen. A commercial fishing boat is expensive; therefore, subsidies are an unrealistic avenue for increasing the economic status of commercial fishermen. Third, commercialization of fisheries can ironically deprive fishermen of opportunities to move socially upwards, because it reduces the leverage of assistance programmes offered by the government.