Racial Politics, Power, and Dominant Party Autocracy in Malaysia
By Jennifer Haskell

"By the year 2020, Malaysia can be a united nation, with a confident Malaysian society, infused by strong moral and ethical values, living in a society that is democratic, liberal and tolerant, caring, economically just and equitable, progressive and prosperous, and in full possession of an economy that is competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient."1

Outlining his vision for the future of Malaysia in 1991, Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, prime minister at the time, proposed impressive goals that, if achieved, would move his country into the elite tier of developed nationhood by the year 2020. Malaysia is well on its way to achieving the economic aspect of these objectives, as the nation has sustained an average annual growth rate of 8% since the 1970s.2 Additionally, the A.T. Kearney Foreign Policy Globalization Index ranked Malaysia as having the eighth most global economy in 2004.3 While Mahathir’s words imply that his vision transcends economics and includes a reformation of society and politics, his rhetoric about forming a “democratic” and “liberal” society, however, contradicts both his actions and the governmental system in place. Malaysia is a dominant party autocracy, similar in structure to countries such as Singapore and Botswana. One party has held a super-majority in parliament since the nation’s independence, allowing the dominant party to consolidate power. While elections take place regularly, the opposition has little chance of winning, and if it did, there would be no way of knowing whether the government would peacefully step down. The lack of true democracy4 in Malaysia is especially puzzling in light of its great economic development, helping to disprove modernist theory which asserts a causal link between economic and political liberalization.5

Many factors have contributed to the stability of the dominant party regime in Malaysia. The most important factor is racial politics. In the past, the racial dynamics allowed elites of each ethnic group to unite in a mutually beneficial fashion. Despite social tensions that fueled appeals to racial nationalism, the elite coalition persisted, preventing the formation of a true democracy. More recently, a focus on economic growth has shifted rhetoric from nationalism to development, though communal ties are still exploited politically. Elites have used the term “Asian values” to denote a preference for economic and political stability over individual political freedoms. This focus, along with the hegemonic machinery of the ruling coalition and the lack of a preferable, ethnically uniting alternative, impedes full democratic development.

Racial Politics

In her forthcoming book Sustaining Dominant Party Autocracy and its Demise: Mexico in Comparative Perspective, Beatriz Magaloní refers to racial tensions as one reason for the persistence of dominant party autocracies.6 This theory especially pertains to Malaysia because of its diverse but communally separated racial makeup. In 2000, 58% of the population was Malay or of other indigenous groups (bumiputra), 24% Chinese, 8% Indian, and 10% of other ethnicities.7 While overt racial disputes are not a problem today, communal tensions predate the nation’s independence. When the British colonized what is now Malaysia, they inherited a feudal, agricultural society that they allowed the Malay elite to maintain. Even through legislation, the British encouraged Malay peasants to remain in agriculture, utilizing immigrant Chinese and Indians as labor for industry.8 These conditions created an economic disparity between the poorer Malay and middle class Chinese. However, non-Malays were denied political rights9 and both circumstances generated an environment of racial separation and communalism.

The end of World War II brought about global decolonization. In Malaysia, a violent struggle with Communist guerillas caused the British to declare a “State of Emergency” in 1948 triggering two important consequences. First, laws created to deal with the emergency formed the basis of the International Security Act (ISA), allowing the Malaysian government to imprison dissenters without criminally charging them.10 Second, in 1946, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), and the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) united to form the Alliance now known as the Barisan National (National Front or BN).11 This ruling government coalition has won every national election since the first held in the colonial state in 1955.12 The formation of the Alliance was the ultimate political move by the elites, as the parties represented the “class patrons of each ethnic group.”13 To achieve stability, the politically influential Malays and the business class Chinese joined together to secure enough multi-racial support, which allowed the British to grant the nation independence. In return for entering this alliance, the Chinese gained citizenship and other rights for non-Malay citizens.14 The Alliance proved to be mutually beneficial, so after winning the first election, all three parties chose to remain together. This move shaped Malaysian politics for the remainder of the century.

First, the idea that the compromise transpired between elites is significant because relations between the lower
classes of both major ethnic groups were never completely stable. A great disparity between the wealthy and poor of both groups continued to grow throughout the 1960s, aggravating social tensions. In 1969, the Alliance won the election with merely 48.5% of the vote, not enough for its usual super-majority. The election results led to racial rioting prompting the Malaysian government to declare a “State of Emergency” and close Parliament. This tension resulted in major policy changes such as the addition of more parties into the Alliance, which then became known as the Barisan Nasional (BN). Consequentially, the power of UMNO increased as the coalition gained a larger vote base; but the Malay party remained the principal contributor to the union. Decision-making began to occur more and more within the party, not in Parliament, and government culture became more and more Malay, granting the UMNO “hegemonic sway” over the state.

The newly enhanced power of the UMNO and the grievances of the Malay people led to the implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP). The goals of the policy were to decrease poverty by 15% and to raise the bumiputera share in corporate equity to 30% by 1990. While the nation did not achieve its quotas, the economy grew phenomenally over this period, poverty decreased, and a substantial Malay middle class formed. However, the NEP widened the gap between rich and poor and led to a close fiscal connection between the UMNO and the new Malay businesses. The UMNO also began to assert its dominance on a cultural level. It declared Malay the official language and required it to be taught in schools. The Sedition Act reinforced this new Malay supremacy as it forbid any criticism of the special position of the Malays.

For the most part, the Chinese remained complacent as the UMNO asserted its power. Being a minority, there was little the MCA could do. Furthermore, as its political roots implied, the party’s main concern was protecting its economic interests, so it pursed projects to enhance economic development and educational opportunities for its race. The Chinese worked together as an ethnic group to “corporatize” small and medium sized businesses during the 1970s because they felt threatened by the programs of the NEP. The MCA has chosen carefully its battles with the UMNO. Still, the Malay party does have to maintain a congenial relationship with its Chinese counterpart and quietly provide concessions on various issues. The Chinese continue to supply a great share of the economic support for the BN and represent an integral part of the coalition.

William F. Case provides a good model for the dilemma of the political parties of both ethnic groups, but particularly the UMNO, in his article on semi-democracy and elite theory. In order to stay in power, “core elites raised tensions in ways that energized their own support, without going so far as to risk elite disunity and social disorder.” The UMNO increases its exclusive, communal rhetoric when necessary especially while campaigning to appeal to its constituency. Yet it cannot go as far as to push the MCA and other parties out of the coalition. Achieving this balance allows racially-based dominant party autocracies (or semi democracies as denoted by Case) to be a very stable type of regime, which is the case in Malaysia.

Race dynamics have greatly improved since the 1960s as other issues, including a focus on development and a resurgence of Islam, have detracted attention away from ethnic concerns. However, appeals to communalism reappear during each election cycle and the BN remains a compromise of elites. This gives credence to the assertion that “the peripheral position on non-bumiputera parties in the Barisan Nasional was thus a factor that enabled the government to keep ethnic issues in check but not solve them.” The greatest evidence that these issues have not been solved lies in the persistence of racially exclusive political parties. While the BN incorporates parties of all ethnic groups, the UMNO consists only of Malays and the MCA only of Chinese. These stark divisions and the success of these parties show that citizens still believe that only racially based political organizations can represent their interests.

The racial coalition continues to comprise the backbone of Malaysian politics. As Abdul Rashid Moten asserts, albeit somewhat condescendingly, “the reality, however, is that the average Malaysian still cannot overcome his race loyalties.” But this “reality” cannot be entirely blamed on “the average Malaysian,” for political circumstances necessitate voting by race. The two largest opposition parties the Democratic Action Party (DAP) and the Partai Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) are also communally based (both will be discussed later in further detail). Both attempt unsuccessfully to appeal to multi-racial constituencies, as DAP has remained entrenched in its Chinese roots while PAS, an Islamic party, responds to the Muslim Malay population. The BN likes to cite the peaceful relations between ethnic groups that its rule has fostered, but it has been hypothesized that the presence of rival ethnic communities in Malaysia, each organized to advance its own interest, encourages governmental responsiveness and promotes intercommunal bargaining. It also favors the ruling coalition. Rival ethnic communities necessitated ethnic cooperation to form a stable nation. However, now that the BN is well-established as a multi-ethnic ruling party, it is unlikely that the party will lose its dominance, unless internal turmoil dissolves it or an opposition party finds an effective method of unifying racial groups.
In the 1980s, and even more so in the 1990s, the focal point of Malaysian politics turned away from race and economic development. This change was caused by the general successes of the NEP and the election of Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad as prime minister in 1981. Mahathir the paragon politician had a philosophy of blended nationalism and capitalism and a distinctly authoritarian method. Throughout the 1980s, he privatized many industries, often to the benefit of UMNO supporters. In 1991, he announced his New Development Policy (NDP) in conjunction with Vision 2020. NDP represented both an extension and a change in direction from NEP, as its aim has been to promote growth but also to ease affirmative action policies. While disparities in both policy and circumstances still exist, more interethnic business relations have developed in the 1990s, thus generating increased support for the UMNO. In cultural policy, Mahathir instituted Bangsa Malaysia (meaning “Malaysian Race”) that emphasized a unified Malaysian identity instead of other racial identities.

In 1996, William Case hypothesized that even development likely would not ease race relations. While race has played a prominent role in Malaysia’s political history, national discourse and rhetoric has definitely shifted away from race and toward economic development. This shift probably materialized due to Mayaysia’s economic successes rather than Mahathir's elevated rhetoric in his goals and policies. Malaysian society has benefited from rapid economic growth, translating into increased votes for the BN.

Modernist theory predicts that economic liberalization and growth directly lead to political liberalization; yet Malaysia provides a counterexample. Despite the great economic growth during Mahathir’s rule, he simultaneously consolidated his own power and increased the authoritarian nature of his government. Accompanying the short-lived economic downturn of the late 1980s was an internal power struggle in the UMNO, during which the prime minister almost lost his position to another member of his party. At the same time, the Federal Court ruled against the government in a number of cases. As a result, Mahathir passed legislation through Parliament in 1988 limiting the power of the judiciary, and also suspending multiple judges who had ruled against his wishes. He made frequent use of the ISA to arrest dissenters throughout the late 1980s and 90s, yet continued to garner super-majorities for his party in parliament. These large electoral majorities won by the BN and the increase in authoritarianism seem to contradict each other because, in theory, a population would not willingly vote for a government characterized by such undemocratic tendencies. Economic growth helps explain this. If financial welfare improves, voters will support their existing government. In addition, prevalent patronage and deep-rooted connections between business and the BN add to the support for the ruling coalition.

Mahathir justifies his less than democratic rule with the concept of "Asian values." He and other Asian leaders have asserted that Asians have their own equally legitimate set of political values that lead to different systems of government from the West. These "Asian values" include: a preference for strong, stable leadership, "social harmony," consensus rather than confrontation, favoring the collective good over individual rights, and "concern with socio-economic well-being instead of civil liberties and human rights." The notion aimed to contrast Western political values. Asia perceived itself in constant competition with the West economically and politically; it also saw a degradation of values in the West which leaders did not want replicated in their nations. The most important "Asian value" to consider is the prioritization of socio-economic well-being over civil liberties, for it helps to explicate the Malaysian enigma of political liberalization without accompanied economic growth.

The validity of "Asian values" as a causal explanation is difficult to discern. Some condemn the idea as legitimization of authoritarian rule by Mahathir and other Asian elites, and Mahathir’s political savvy should not be underestimated. However, there is a basis in political theory for using a set of cultural values to determine and explain defining aspects of political systems. As Mahathir often points out, the West has its share of flaws in democracy, illustrated by the United States’ electoral problems in 2000 which nearly paralleled allegations of fraud in Malaysian elections. While the disparities between practice and ideal democracy in Malaysia represent much more systemic problems than in the two-party democracy’s of the United States, this becomes a moot point as much of the consensus for autocratic rule in Asia broke down in the late 1990s.

The economic crisis of 1997 hit Asia particularly hard. This, along with changes of government in Japan and Taiwan in 2000, created a new political environment in Asia, one which challenged the idea of "Asian values." With new democracies forming in the region, it may no longer be legitimate to ascribe Mahathir’s set of values to all of East and Southeast Asia. While Asians share a set of cultural values and that in the recent past these have emphasized economic well-being, it is difficult to accept the claim that these values prohibit democracy from forming in Asia. Francis Loh Kok Wah argues that the development-focused rhetoric of Malaysian elites prohibits democratic discourse, not an intrinsic set of values. In this light, it is easy to accept the assertion that “Asian values” and ‘Asian democracy’ represented an ideological project of the Asian elites who sought to restrict mass political participation within their own states while seeking a stronger voice for Asia within the community of states. Whether accepted as a causal explanation for the co-existence of sustained economic growth and autocracy or an attempt by elites to legitimize authoritarian tendencies, the discourse on “Asian values” is important to consider when analyzing the Malaysian political system.

Islam

While the effects of blending Islam and politics have only recently become a focal point of worldwide discourse, it is nothing new in Malaysia. The Malay population predominantly practices Islam and Partai Islam SeMalaysia (PISMM) has played a prominent role in Malaysia's political history, national discourse and rhetoric has definitely shifted away from race and toward economic development. This shift probably materialized due to Mayaysia’s economic successes rather than Mahathir’s elevated rhetoric in his goals and policies. Malaysian society has benefited from rapid economic growth, translating into increased votes for the BN.
The most surprising political consequence of the Anwar crisis was the union of PAS and DAP under the BA. In Anwar's supporters and attempted to provide a multi-ethnic alternative to the BN. The significance of Islam in global politics has been growing since the early 1990s and PAS's position as an opposition party has also grown. It performed well in both the 1994 and 1999 elections, becoming the largest opposition party in the latter election. The party is especially noteworthy because it embraced the democratic process. For those who see Islam as incompatible with democracy, they only have to look to PAS and its successful participation in Malaysia's electoral process. The Islamic party has become one of democracy's largest proponents especially due to the Anwar crisis of 1998, during which PAS sided with other parties and opposed the government.

PAS began as a conservative, communal political party as it fights with UMNO to gain Muslim Malay votes. It passed legislation to institute hudud (Islamic) legal codes in the state of Kelantan, which PAS recently controlled; yet federal approval, necessary for constitutional change, is unlikely to occur. However, the party would rather have a "gradual evolution to an Islamic society" governed by moral choice. This seeming contradiction could mean that the party only promotes the institution of hudud to appeal politically to its more radical followers.

The UMNO must incorporate Islam into its policies and vision while maintaining a moderate stance on the religion both as a counter to PAS and to avoid alienating other parties within the BN. Symbolically, the government has created a litany of Islamic institutions, such as an Islamic bank and research center and has strengthened ties with other Muslim countries.

The UMNO's acquisition of Anwar Ibrahim, a moderate Muslim seen as a symbol of morality within politics, gave the party more credibility on Islamic issues. In conjunction with its promotion of Islam, the UMNO also emphasized US secularism and has attempted to paint PAS more radically than it actually is. Encouraging criticism of the opposition party, especially from abroad, Mahathir twice attacked PAS in front of the United Nations. At home, he frightens people with descriptions of how the institution of Islamic law would lead to backwards progress on issues of women's rights. PAS does advocate Islamic Law, as it passed legislation to institute hudud (Islamic) legal codes in the state of Kelantan, which PAS recently controlled; yet federal approval, necessary for constitutional change, is unlikely to occur. However, the party would rather have a "gradual evolution to an Islamic society" governed by moral choice. This seeming contradiction could mean that the party only promotes the institution of hudud to appeal politically to its more radical followers.

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Anwar Ibrahim: A Crisis in Democracy

In 1998 and 1999, all of the issues that had prevented democratic reform in the past were circumvented when Mahathir fired his deputy prime minister, Anwar Ibrahim, igniting a wave of democratic discourse. Seen as the prime minister's likely successor, Anwar had developed a political following in his own right, and by the late 1990s, the UMNO had somewhat factionalized behind the two leaders. Their developing differences became particularly evident during the economic crisis of 1997, for the two leaders proposed their own ideas for remediating the situation. It was the stagnating economy that made these differences so important, as they were "differences that under less critical circumstances may not have led Mahathir to the conclusion that Anwar was attempting to undermine him." It is possible that the prime minister did not realize the political consequences of his actions and the extent to which the people would follow Anwar.

"There may have been a much more fundamental issue at play here. Mahathir had given 17 years of sustained effort to building economic prosperity, vision modernity and UMNO hegemony, none of which he intended to see sacrificed ignominiously in a moment of domestic uncertainty."

Mahathir began by initiating attacks on Anwar's character in the media, including sexual allegations, fired him in September of 1998, and subsequently issued criminal charges against him. In the short run, the political fallout for Mahathir and the UMNO was costly. Protests began immediately after Anwar's dismissal and developed into a full-fledged call for reformasi, or reform. The incident brought to surface the government's authoritarian tendencies, which were only confirmed by the evident inequities of the trial and Anwar's twenty-four year prison sentence. While UMNO remained united behind Mahathir, the reformasi movement brought together several ideologically different groups in opposition to the government. In the 1999 elections for the first time in Malaysia's history opposition parties united under Barisan Alternatif (Alternative Front or BA), adopting Anwar's leadership and the slogan "Towards a Just Malaysia". The main components of the BA were PAS, DAP, and Parti Keadilan Nasional (National Justice Party or KeADILan) which formed from Anwar's supporters and attempted to provide a multi-ethnic alternative to the BN.

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the DAP has a chance of winning in Penang, PAS for moral leadership. Internal problems hurt the DAP's chances of success.

Despite the Anwar crisis and what seemed like a large-scale call for reform, the BN retained its hegemony and even won the 1999 elections with its usual two-thirds majority in parliament. UMNO as an individual party did lose seats, as PAS appeared to be the biggest winner; it emerged from the election with a larger base of Malay votes, as the largest opposition party, and with the newly won state of Terengganu. DAP lost the most credibility. It gained one seat from 1994, but its two major leaders lost their seats. The party, as a long time advocate of democratic reform, should have benefited much more from the Anwar crisis. The DAP-PAS alliance did not appeal to the DAP's usual constituency, and many Chinese opted to "vote for economic rewards," 60 which the BN represented.

The ruling party managed to stay in power by utilizing both an effective campaign strategy and a systemic advantage. Mahathir set the date of the election, which allowed for only a nine-day campaign period, benefiting the BN with its massive organization and large amounts of money. It also disqualified thousands of new voters, a group that probably would have voted for the opposition, as the Electoral Commission claimed it could not process their registrations in time. 61 Along with intimidating the population with the threat of radical Islam if PAS were to win, the ruling party focused on development and stability. 62 This strategy had been effective earlier in the year during the state elections of Sabah in which the BN had unexpectedly positive results. 63 Many people sympathized with the opposition on moral grounds but voted for the dominant party because of the growth and stability of the past decades. 64 This fits with Beatriz Magaloni's assertion that citizens often will choose to vote for the dominant party if it has handled the economy well will veer from opposition because its economic leadership is unknown. 65

The results of the Anwar crisis do not bode well for democracy in Malaysia. While, for the first time in thirty years, the opposition almost had a chance to remove the ruling coalition, the reformasi movement did not produce large, tangible electoral results. It is also unfortunate that the movement did not generate democratic debate beyond activism geared towards "the 'drama' of the Anwar affair itself." 66 While underlying problems of corruption still have the potential to affect BN in the future, 67 any loss of credibility that the UMNO sustained was reversed in the parliamentary election of 2004. The Anwar crisis provided a brief consideration of democratic discourse and the possibility of overthrowing the ruling party. It seemed as if circumstances, such as a poor economy (though it was beginning to improve in 1999) and exposure of the government's authoritarian tendencies, had converged to provide the opposition a great advantage. The BN's victory only proves its hegemonic control over the government, its systemic advantage, and the weaknesses of its opposition.

**2004 Elections: Stabilization of the Hegemonic Rule**

The elections of early 2004 only confirmed the 1999 results that the BN's position as a hegemonic party would continue. However, the crucial difference between 1999 and 2004 was the absence of Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad. The prime minister decided to step down in October of 2003, a convenient few months before the elections, to make way for his successor Abdullah Badawi ("Bravo"). While Mahathir stands for economic development and progress, he also built up a reputation for corruption and authoritarianism. In contrast, Badawi's "unsullied and gentlemanly reputation," as well as his position as a moderate Islamic scholar, offered "a breath of fresh air" compared to Mahathir. He ran an anti-corruption campaign, co-opting the BA's platform from 1999. It remains to be seen whether he will adhere to his promises.

In the election, PAS sustained the worst blow, losing seventeen of its original twenty-seven parliamentary seats. It also lost Terengganu to the BN and sustained losses in its stronghold of Kelantan. DAP gained two seats and once again became the largest opposition party, but the BN's victory represented its largest mandate in Malaysia's history, as it won 90% of the seats in parliament. Indeed, some electoral fraud probably transpired. An electoral watchdog group called Malaysians for Free and Fair Elections could not trace one in ten addresses; an issue the Electoral Commission wrote off as a technical error. 68 However, a great majority undoubtedly endorsed the BN, for the

70 Stanford Journal of International Relations new electoral climate significantly changed the political outlook. The outrage over the Anwar crisis had died down years before, and the culprit of corruption and dirty politics was thrust out of the picture. Badawi gave the UMNO a new, more appealing face. Many Malays no longer turned to PAS for moral leadership. Internal problems hurt the DAP's chances of success. 69 While it has been asserted that the DAP has a chance of winning in Penang, 70 this no longer seems plausible because of the party's
internal discord and the fallout of its alliance with PAS in 1999. The 2004 elections only helped to strengthen the BN’s stronghold on power in Malaysian politics.

Is it possible that Abdullah Badawi will use his mandate to initiate any type of reform? One good sign came in August 2004 when the courts overruled one of Anwar’s convictions and released him from prison, something Mahathir never would have allowed (“Malaysia’s Anwar”). While this is not complete evidence that Badawi will change the system, it is hopeful that the current prime minister will not follow the footsteps of his predecessor. However, the UMNO has denounced Anwar, alienating him from mainstream politics. Will he become a leader of a viable opposition? Only time will tell.

Conclusion

Malaysian history helped decide the fate of its politics long before the country’s first elections. Colonialism divided the nation into communal groups based on ethnicity, and because of the inter-group political and socio-economic differences, the only way to bridge this divide came through a compromise of elites. This setup led those elites to walk a fine line between exploiting communal nationalism and working together to build a stable society. While economic development took center stage in the 1980s during Mahathir’s rule, race still remains ingrained in the political system. The BN’s perfect formula for uniting all ethnicities into one ruling party led to the current dominant party autocratic system.

While this system may allow for authoritarian abuses, at the time, the BN was probably the only solution appealing to racial communalism and the maintenance of stability. William Case questions, “But what if constituents are uninterested in empowerment and are motivated less by memories of the state’s authoritarian harshness than by their own violent rivalries with other social constituencies?” The racial political divisions that prevailed may not be as relevant today, but the divisions are so entrenched in the political system that they remain impossible to change. The two major opposition parties have racial bases as well; as 1999 proved, it is not possible for the opposition to unite and provide a strong alternative to the BN. Even if it did, this new party would still be a coalition of groups divided by race but united only by compromise. The new focus on development only reinforces the equilibrium already in place. Whether one accepts the idea of “Asian values” or not, Malaysians often have voted based on economic interests. The development policies of the BN have, economically, benefited Malaysian society as a whole.

Because of its political makeup, there is little chance for Malaysia to change to a truly democratic system in the near future. The 1999 election demonstrated that even the combination of an economic downturn, internal political strife, and a crisis in democracy could not cause the ruling coalition to lose power. With Anwar out of prison, it is possible that he might help change the opposition into a viable force; yet, this remains merely a possibility. For now, Malaysia’s system based on racial politics will remain a dominant party autocracy.

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ENDNOTES

1 The Government of Malaysia
2 Department of State
3 Foreign Policy and A.T. Kearney. This economic ranking is based on an analysis of trade, foreign direct investment (FDI), and investment income.
4 “True democracy” in this sense refers to the definition of democracy often used by political scientists, which includes that the fact that there are free and fair elections that more than one party has a chance to win.
5 Loh 49
6 Magaloni, 28. As this book has not been published, the tentative title of Sustaining Dominant Party Autocracy and its Demise: Mexico in Comparative Perspective was given to me by the author. My modified citations for this text will follow the format (author, chapter number, page number). The page number will be the page number within the chapter in the file’s PDF format, as page numbers in the text as a whole have not yet been determined.
7 Central Intelligence Agency
8 Gomez, 172; Munro-Kua, 10-2
9 Munro-Kua, 13
10 Munro-Kua, 32
11 Kingsbury, 273
12 Munro-Kua, 27
13 Hilley, 28
14 Vasil, 84, 104-5
15 Hilley, 30
16 Gomez, 180
17 Loh, 26
18 Gomez, 182
39 In Liberal Tradition in America, Louis Hartz argues that the United States has its own set of political values, based on its history and culture, that are unique from other nations and that these values shape the US system of government and the way it interacts in the world. The same could be argued and developed for any nation and could apply to regions as well.

40 Tribbett. The 1999 Sabah elections as well as the 2004 parliamentary elections in Malaysia generated accusations of forgery on the part of the BN (Moten 805-6, Tribbett). These accompany other electoral advantages that the BN has including the ability to gerrymander districts, indirect control over the media, and a huge campaigning network (Case 448, Moten 804).