A STUDY OF CHINESE–MALAYSIAN STUDENTS’ CHOICES TO ATTEND A PRIVATE COLLEGE, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY TRANSFER PROGRAM

by

John Timothy Denny

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother. Although she passed away in January 1994 and my memory of her is fading, her unwavering love and caring for those around her is the thought that will carry me to my death. The memory of her thoughts and character has kept my desire to finish this dissertation strong.
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This dissertation has taken considerable time to complete, and in that time, I have incurred numerable debts to friends and those who have assisted me. I have learned an enormous amount from associating with a group of fine people both in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California and overseas during my data collection periods.

I hope that none of those that have assisted me through this journey feels upset over the direction my research has evolved. Many of the ideas for this research stem back to my early days at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, where my former professors and now close friends have assisted me in innumerable ways throughout the years.

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numerous folks at colleges and universities in Malaysia who have spent time discussing issues of the day, I have taken a bit of you with me through our conversations. In addition, to the students interviewed for this project, without their support none of this is possible.

I am extremely happy and yet slightly taken aback when I mention one last person. Dr. Molly Lee of Malaysia has been a true source of enlightenment and motivation. She is a rare breed, in the sense that her unceasing efforts and assistance could never be replaced. I cherish her guidance and support throughout the years and only aspire one day to be as diligent as she.
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In order to better comprehend the situation in which this dissertation is framed, it will be necessary to give ample background and historical information to build a better understanding of the forces which interplay to create a situation in which the ethnic Chinese Malaysians protect their educational endeavors.

Background

Malaysia, being a plural society, consisting of a multiracial, multiethnic and multicultural people, has seen some extreme violence in its growth process as a postcolonial state. The history of Malaysia is a story of communalism, tied to organizations based on racial/ethnic/lingual affinity and political ideology, all propagated through its [unique] process of identity
building in the quest to form a viable nation. Malaysia has gained and lost territory, but the over-riding inhibitor in this process has been, without doubt, the reluctance of its population to unite based on national ideological standpoints rather than racial/ethnic boundaries (Kua, 1987, 1992, 1993).

A highly centralized (top-down) governmental structure armed with interventionist ideology has been at the heart of Malaysian nation building at its heart. Through this, educational reform has been given top priority as noticed through the following two passages (Fifth Malaysia plan of 1986 and Sixth Malaysia plan of 1991 as cited in Morris and Sweeting, 1994, p. 149):

...education and training will continue to be geared towards fostering national unity and increasing participation of all Malaysians in National Development.

...the role of education and training in Malaysia is to produce knowledgeable, trained and skilled individuals to meet the manpower requirements as well as the growing social needs ... [we] require manpower to be innovative and equipped with knowledge and training in science and technology, management, and related skills. Equally important is the need for the national education system to
mould disciplined, diligent and motivated individuals.

These passages highlight the overriding emphasis on education planning as a means of development of the industrial/business sector. In turn, this development stance also translates to mean that Malaysia is taking a proactive role in directing its social and political character with education as the stimulus.

Access to education has been a divisive issue in Malaysia even before independence. The British typically used education as a tool to separate ethnicities. With the concept of “divide and rule” the British denied or developed educational opportunity based on racial lineage-social classification strata. With divisions in educational type and opportunity, the ethnicities of Malaysia were encouraged to grow as separate non-assimilated groups. This divisiveness continues until today and is of major concern in formulating national policies. Each consecutive 5-year plan reiterates its concern in dealing with this problem.
Of major consequence to educational opportunity in Malaysia has been the issue of higher educational opportunity/access based on ethnic/racial lineage. Higher education access has been increased through various methods, some of which include expansion of facilities, increasing the number of institutions and subsidy schemes.

If it is taken for granted that a free society might place increasing emphasis on educational attainment for upward social mobility, then it is expected that a corresponding increase in educational participation will be demanded by the populous. These demands must be met, either through public or private educational offerings. The main area of demand in Malaysia has been in post-secondary offerings, where the supply is far below demand for matriculation.

Fluctuations in policy objectives with regard to higher educational offerings have resulted in much dissatisfaction. As governmental programs do not meet educational needs, consequently a blossoming peripheral private sector in higher education has appeared. Thus, this
paper is focusing on this alternative form of higher education, and will detail them more subsequent chapters.

**Perspective on National Language Change Problems**

The history of Malaysia is filled with times of tension. Tension due both to internal and external forces including, of course, colonialist intentions. Malaysia has historically attracted international attention due to its unique geographical position and immense natural resource potentials.

On May 13, 1969, Malaysia suffered extensive rioting centered on inequalities between Malay and other ethnic groups (mainly the ethnic Chinese). Drastic social policy changes took place as a result of the widespread rioting. Among the policy changes, on July 11, 1969, the then Minister of Education (Tun Abdul Razak) announced that Public sponsored English-medium schools were to be converted to Bahasa Malaysia (the language of the ethnic Malays) one grade at a time, beginning with Standard I (the first year of primary school), in 1970. This policy stood
in direct opposition to Article 152 of the Malaysian Education Ordinance of 1957, of which Section 3 reads:

The educational policy of the Federation is to establish a national system of education acceptable to the people as a whole which will satisfy their needs and promote their cultural, social, economic and political development as a nation, with the intention of making the Malay language the national language of the country while preserving and sustaining the growth of the language and culture of the peoples other than Malays living in the country.

The groups other than Malays strongly opposed the changes in language of instruction, but have been unsuccessful in their attempts to convince the policymakers otherwise.

By 1982 language changes had reached the second and last year of Form VI (end of secondary school), when examinations were taken for the Higher School Certificate (HSC), (the HSC has since been renamed the STPM [Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia] which is equivalent to the A level exam). The policy to change the language of instruction from other languages to Bahasa Malaysia permeated not only lower level education but was also forced into post-secondary education where the incredible difficulty of language change is noticed.
Presently the universities require instructors to teach primarily in Bahasa Malaysia, the paradox comes through the fact that the libraries are heavily stocked with English language volumes. Thus, students, in order to do thorough research, must master English to access resources.

It is clear that this language policy (and forthcoming policies) were designed as reactive measures to the need for nation-building. The stated objective in each major language policy was to alleviate disparity between the ethnic groups.

Based on the original schedule for changing the language of post-secondary instruction in 1983, Bahasa Malaysia was adopted as the medium of instruction in public universities. Thus, the impact of this policy now extends to higher education.

The impact of the 1969 pronouncement was powerful and the reaction thereto by the Chinese included transfers back into Chinese-medium primary schools, some emigration, and for those who could afford it, sending their children abroad for secondary and/or higher education.
Due to the drastic language changes taking place in the early 70’s, the Chinese community took the initiative to establish a stronger hold on vernacular (mother tongue) based education. With this, they tried earnestly to establish a Chinese language based university. This effort was resoundly struck down by Malay politicians each time it resurfaced (Kua, 1987).

The 1969 Chinese - language university proposal has not been accepted based on the same issues of linguistic conformity that were endorsed and reinforced by the New Economic Policy, the National Education Policy and the National Culture Policy (Singh & Mukherjee, 1993, p 518 and Hsu, 1993, p. 15). The paradox of this setback to continue education in the Chinese language is that the Chinese had the support of the Malaysian Constitution, which shows support for diversity in culture and education. (Education Ordinance of 1957)

In order to better understand the ethnic groups of Malaysia the next section will detail geographical and demographic data.
Demographics

The following sections will present information on Malaysia’s demography. Before a tally of the groups in this pluralistic society can be presented, a description of the country’s geography is given.

Geographic Location

The Federation of Malaysia lies on the Southeastern most section of continental Asia, consisting of 127,361-sq. mi. of tropical mountainous and lowland coastal areas. All of Malaysia is just a few degrees above the equator giving the country a sultry hot tropical climate, with monsoon seasons occurring in all sections of the country. Malaysia is geographically divided into two distinct parts, that of West Malaysia lying on the southern half of the Malay Peninsula which is connected to Thailand by a thin strip of land in the north, and East Malaysia consisting of approximately the northern third of Borneo Island. East
Malaysia is where the states of Sarawak and Sabah are to be found.

**Ethnicity**

The ethnic diversity in these people is amazing. Approximately 85% of the population of Malaysia lives in West Malaysia. The majority are the ethnic Malays with slightly over 35%, followed by Chinese with around 35%, Indians are nearly 10% and the rest of the population consists of over twenty ethnic indigenous peoples, most of whom are found in East Malaysia where they are the majority.

It must be noted that in many census calculations determining ethnic diversity in the country, the minority indigenous groups are almost always lumped with the Malays, due to their apparent similarity in ethnic background. Little can be done to establish a statistically fair separation between the groups. The Malays are politically dominant and they benefit from affiliation with the indigenous ethnic population primarily found in East Malaysia.
Although much talk of the major groups in Malaysia refers to them as the Malays, Chinese, Indians and Indigenous groups, these classifications only reflect compartmentalization of the diversity within those major groups. The following table shows some of the diversity within these ethnic lineages. The major groups are represented by the top column showing Malay, Chinese, South Indians, North Indians and indigenous groups. On a day to day basis Malaysians may or may not self identify with one or more of the subgroups listed below, but it is fairly sure that they will always identify as either Malay, Chinese, Indian, indigenous or other groups not mentioned.

Table 1: Ethnic groups in Malaysia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Malays</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>South Indians</th>
<th>North Indians</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ethnic Malay</td>
<td>Hokkien</td>
<td>Tamilian</td>
<td>Gujaratis</td>
<td>Dayaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic decent</td>
<td>Hakka</td>
<td>Keralan</td>
<td>Parsis</td>
<td>Kadaizans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesians</td>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>others</td>
<td>Ibons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Malay with another ethnicity</td>
<td>Teochew</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hockchew</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hainanese</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kwongsai</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Henghau</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peranakan</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Others</td>
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<tr>
<td>(adapted from Ward &amp; Hewston, 1985, p.274)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is further interesting to know where these groups came from. The following sections will attempt to explain
the origins of the various ethnicities of present day Malaysia.

**Society**

Although the Malaysian society can be defined from different angles, it is impossible not to take into account the wide-ranging ethnic groups and their cultural complexities. The following section is an attempt to map out the various racial/ethnic groups found in West Malaysia and their relevant social structures.

**Malay**

This group consists of one of the first politically organized groups in peninsular Malaysia. Islam being their religion, the political-hierarchical structure is attached to the sultanate (a sultan is a ruler of a Muslim country) system. The Malays owe allegiance territorially to their sultans. “Culturally linked to Islam, and most specifically to a maritime branch of it where Malaysian
languages were spoken there was a common tradition of
culture, trade and intermarriage among the royal families,
whose rule extended along the coasts of Malaysia, Sumatra
and Borneo and parts of Java and other islands." (Silcock &
Aziz as cited by Ongkili, 1985, p. 1)

The Immigrant Communities

Chinese immigrants created their first footholds in
the Melaka area during the early Christian era, where some
of these early traders eventually settled, setting the
stage for future waves of immigrants. In the latter half
of the nineteenth century, the Chinese were attracted to
the rich tin mining area of Perak and Selangor (two of the
12 states of Malaysia). They eventually created a
stronghold in business through their crafty and sensible
ways. During the later part of the nineteenth century,
vast numbers of Chinese indentured servants were brought to
Malaysia to work in the mines and on rubber plantations
(Ongkili, 1985, p. 5)
Indian immigrants were mostly imported as servants and laborers on British rubber plantations. By and large they were recruited from the Tamil regions in the southern part of India. Unlike the Chinese, the majority of Indians settled only in West Malaysia and did not create any sizable communities outside of that region.

While the Chinese and Indians form a significant presence in Malaysia (together about 45% of the population), it can not be forgotten that the major notable force to reckon with was the British community. Although they were not large in numbers, they did comprise the foreign administration creating the infrastructure to direct Malaysia socially, politically and economically until and beyond independence. Their legacy continues on long after the British departed Malaysia.

Having a clear awareness of the ethnic groups and the tensions amongst them leads to a better understanding of the racially based policies of Malaysia. The following section will outline some of the major policies enacted after independence.
Post-Independence Goals and Policies

In 1970 Malaysia introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP) as a direct consequence of the May 1969 racial riots. The basic directive embodies the principle of eradication of poverty among all Malaysians, and the restructuring of society so that economic function and race are not synonymous (UNESCO, 1986, p. 13).

At the point in time when the NEP was drawn up, a close look the ethnic groups would reveal that political empowerment was defined predominately in ethnic terms by the Malays, while the economy was said to be held by the Chinese. Thus, implementation and creating of policy is surely going to be dominated by inputs from the policy empowered race. The result being that non-politically connected groups may not have their opinions and needs accounted for.

With regard to language policy, the Malaysian Constitution adopted at independence in 1957 made Bahasa Malaysia the sole official language. Of noteworthy significance the constitution did guarantee rights to other
languages for non-official purposes which includes education. The policymakers wished for a unified language policy with Bahasa Malaysia as the sole language of the country, but seeing that this was not possible, compromises were accepted at that time in the interest of national integration and identity. These included linguistic maintenance (implying continuation of the ethnically separated schools) and at the same time plans were laid to encourage a common curriculum and a single medium of instruction for the future. The overriding consideration was preparation for ethnic integration and creating unity amongst the different groups.

The National Education Policy of 1961 established Bahasa Malaysia, as a compulsory subject in government sponsored schools, but not necessarily as a medium of instruction. The obvious implication of a dichotomy in language policy was to allow and foster vernacular education. Nevertheless, public school examinations at the secondary level were given only in Bahasa Malaysia and English. By 1965 most Chinese secondary schools had adopted English as the medium of instruction, though a few
remained independent by teaching in Chinese. These developments increased access and expanded opportunities for populations that had been consistently deprived.

During the early post-independence years educational spending rose substantially, but the share of education in total public investments dropped slightly, from 15% in 1958 to 13% in 1968. The period of rapid expansion in higher education came in the 70’s and 80’s.

Education

Historical ties with Britain and the British education tradition had previously instilled elitist ideologies. The elitist tradition held true until recent times when we find talk of more egalitarian approaches for educational attainment at all levels. Opposed to the patterns of elitism in education, the government has calculated educational developments. They have both increased opportunity and access for those who otherwise had not attended but they have done so in a manner which will not
saturate the working sector with a large number of educated unemployed.

With the National Education Policy of 1961, Malaysia has gone forth with great expansion in all sectors of education. It must be noted that the major stumbling blocks have included the changeover from the vernacular languages to Bahasa Malaysia and providing education for the previously undereducated portions of the populous (focus on Malays). As it stands today, all government-aided secondary schools have fully switched to Bahasa Malaysia as a medium of instruction, as have the universities for the most part. The exception would be the International Islamic University, which uses English and Arabic as its mediums of instruction.

In primary education, vernaculars are still allowed up to the equivalent of the United State’s grade 6. A student attending such an institution would be required to take a “out year” (also called the remove year) before proceeding, in order to prepare for the Bahasa Malaysia Language requirement in upper grades (Malaysia Students Department, 1994). During that year the students intensely study Bahasa
Malaysia to bring their language skills up to par with the students in the equivalent grade level.

“In developing societies like Malaysia, universities have been concerned with the training of administrative and professional elite who will occupy leadership positions in society” (Marimuthu, 1984, p. 4). A country devoted to development, Malaysia must use its resources wisely so that educational resources meet critical areas of need. Malaysia uses higher education as a focal point for development. Thus more effort is placed on “credentializing” the work force in hopes of creating a world competitive economy. The absurdity of these policies is that universities serve to place the elite in positions of authority.

The first Prime Minister’s goal for higher education was to fulfill national needs by producing “...graduates who possess relevant skills to participate in the technological and economic development in the country” (Marimuthu, 1984).

The Malaysian system of education is intensely centrally organized. Responsibility for educational policy
falls under the national government (especially regarding policy and financing). The Prime Minister’s cabinet includes a Minister of Education, although the office has a Secretary General overseeing the running and day-to-day functioning of the organization. Directly responsible to the Ministry of Education are divisions overseeing various areas including planning and research, school division, teacher training, curriculum, examinations, technical education, schools inspectorate, register of school and educational media (Malaysian Students Department, 1994).

**Accessibility of Education**

The public schools of Malaysia are quite accessible to most. In 1990 the percentage of the primary cohort attending was 93% up from 87% in 1970. During the same time period female enrollment showed similar enrollment ratios, indicating that female participation is not a problem. Such strong attendance shows that primary schooling is virtually universal, meeting the Universal Primary Education (UPE) objectives set by UNESCO. At the
secondary level, with a 37% reduction in cohort attendance, enrollment drops significantly.

Schooling in Malaysia is free as stipulated in the National Education Policy: however, parents are expected to meet expenses like books, informal school fees, snacks, uniforms, shoes, transport and supplies.

The continuing objectives of national educational policy stipulate that free education will be provided, with preservation of languages and cultures of each community and a goal of uniting the various ethnicities creating Bangsa Malaysia (national unity as Malaysians). By and large this policy has progressed well in primary education where students are allowed to study in their vernaculars. At the secondary level national policy allows for government support for only instruction in Bahasa Malaysia, thereby discriminating against vernacular education while mocking the objective of preservation of languages and cultures of each community.
Emphasis on Development of Rural Areas

Due to social/historical dynamics, the rural Malay population has experienced a comparative disadvantage in educational and economical advancement. As a consequence, policies have been trying to compensate for this deficiency since independence. With this in mind a major policy objective since independence has been the provision of rural education in the form of more schools being built in isolated areas.

Through this initiative, quantitatively, the rural schools have come up to par with urban schools in terms of access to lower education. But in reality this says nothing about the qualitative aspect of education. An assessment of the great rural expansion can be found in the following passage

...During these years enrollments rose rapidly, especially in primary and secondary schools. From 1956 to 1968 total primary enrollment increased by 60 percent, while the English language instruction more than doubled. Enrollment in Malay-language schools increased by more than 50 percent and in Chinese-language schools by almost 30 percent. By the mid-1960s almost all children of the relevant age group
attended primary school. It was in secondary schools that the really big increase took place. Total enrollment between 1956 and 1968 jumped by over a factor of five, but enrollment in Malay-language schools jumped by a factor of 45 and English-language schools by a factor of 5.6. (Bruton, p. 246)

While the development has been significant, such development is mostly measured in terms of expansion not necessarily in terms of quality. As the figures show, enrollment increases in Malay schools was far above that of any other category. This indicates that the rural Malay areas had significantly increased access to education.

Although quantitative expansion was significant, third world rural underdevelopment could reduce educational outcomes, as a result of incompetent teaching, poor supervision, lack of supportive materials and incidence of multiple class teaching (UNESCO [APEID], 1986, p 15). These qualitative measures are not evident through enrollment statistics because, as was earlier stated, promotion is automatic, thereby negating the indicators of repetition, drop out rate and student participation.
Higher Education and National Goals in Malaysia

In Malaysia the financing of higher education and selection into higher institutions raises interconnected questions of equity, allocative efficiency in the investment in human resources (and how rapidly to increase those investments), freedom of choice, and the pursuit of excellence. The emphasis in Malaysia differs substantially; however, there is greater expressed concern in Malaysia with respect to participation in higher education by the poor and by rural people. This difference is closely interwoven with an over-riding concern for greater Malay representation in education, in relatively skilled occupations, and in positions of greater influence. Indeed, the position of the Malays relative to the Indians and especially the Chinese is an issue in virtually every aspect of political and economic policy. Higher education occupies an especially critical and a highly visible place in the efforts to achieve a balanced ethnic participation by means consistent with the goals of "moderating
inequality and furtherance of economic progress” (as put forth in the NEP).

The following sections will detail the statement of the problem in this study, research questions of the study, terms needed to be defined, assumptions of the study, delimitations, limitations and significance of the study

**Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study will be to explore factors that may contribute to Chinese-Malaysian students’ decisions to attend a private college, American university transfer program. In this study, I interviewed 20 Chinese-Malaysian students enrolled in private college American university transfer programs and 4 government university students, in Malaysia. The utilized a constant comparative methodological framework (Bogden & Bilken, 1992, p. 72) to result in a better understanding of their reasons for attending such programs and their motives for eventual overseas study. The study will further demonstrate and increase awareness of Chinese-Malaysians’ opportunities (or
lack of opportunities) to continue their university level study partially in country.

The paradigm of research methodology for this study is qualitative. Interviews are chosen for this research because they are more focused on inductive reasoning, and thus more suitable for answering the research question.

The Research Question(s)

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

The central and pervasive question,

- What are the factors [social, economic, political] motivating Chinese-Malaysians’ to attend a private college, American university transfer program?

The subquestions are:

- What general factors are identified by Chinese-Malaysians’ for attending a private college, American university transfer program?

- What political factors have influenced Chinese-Malaysians’ to seek a private/foreign education?

- What ethnic influences have influenced Chinese-Malaysians’ to seek a private/foreign education?

- What societal factors have influenced Chinese-Malaysians’ to seek a private/foreign education?
• Is a key factor from the students’ perspective, that private colleges in Malaysia, will provide access to an institution in the USA?

• Do the participants understand any existing conditionalities in their future hope to matriculate into an American university (e.g., GPA, SAT (equivalent), TOEFL, and time to complete degree factors)?

• How has attending a private college helped Chinese-Malaysians’ to prepare for an education in the USA (with regard to course content in Malaysia compared to what is expected in the USA)?

• How will a higher education from the United States improve Chinese-Malaysians’ social mobility?

• What increases/decreases in educational opportunity are perceived by attending a private college?

Definitions

The following is a list of terms that will assist the reader through standardized definitions in this study.

• Access - refers to the probabilities and opportunities for students who have diverse backgrounds to enroll in different types of post secondary institutions and fields of study.

• Accountability - Refers to a governments ability to be held responsible for its actions and policies
• Acculturation – this term can be used to describe the process of contacts between people, what ensues is:
  • The modification of the culture of a group or an individual as a result of contact with a different culture.
  • A process by which the culture of a particular society is instilled in a human being from infancy onward.

• American university transfer program (AUTP)– Any of the programs offered by higher educational institutes, in Malaysia, leading to transfer credit towards a degree from a university in the United States of America.

• Bahasa Malaysia – The national language of Malaysia. Frequently referred to as the Malay language or simply, Malay.

• Certificate – A document issued to a person completing a course of study not leading to a diploma.

• College – could be considered in a few different ways:
  • An institution of higher learning that grants the bachelor's degree in liberal arts or science or both.
  • An undergraduate division or school of a university offering courses and granting degrees in a particular field.
  • A school, sometimes but not always a university, offering special instruction in professional or technical subjects. Allowed to grant an associates degree (2 year degree).

• Degree – An academic title given by a college or university to a student who has completed a
course of study. In the Malaysian case only the university may grant a degree.

- Diploma - A document issued by an educational institution, such as a university, testifying that the recipient has earned a degree or has successfully completed a particular course of study.

- Equality - aims at the provision of similar treatment to individuals and enables individuals who have different ethnic, race, gender, urban or rural residency backgrounds: (1) to have the same opportunity to enroll in school; (2) to benefit from similar quality and quantity of resources such as, teachers, school facilities, and curriculum; and (3) to be able to attain similar number of years of education. In other words, equality requires the provision of similar educational attainment for individuals who have different backgrounds.

- Equality of Educational opportunity - A worldwide ideological commitment, primarily predominate since WWII, defined by the destiny to create a world where educational opportunity and access is distributed more equitably.

- Equity - the term equity often refers to social justice or fairness. It is interesting to note that in the West, the historical roots of “conception of justice lie in classical philosophy, the Judeo-Christian religious traditions, and the theoretical underpinnings of economic and political arrangements.”(Alwin 1992, p. 565) It is also critical that there can be many standards used to evaluate fairness or justice in social life besides the principle of equity. Indeed, there is often little consensus about the standards and criteria to be used to assess the fairness or justice of issues arising in society.(Alwin, p. 563) Alwin recognizes two
types of justice: “procedural justice” and “distributive justice.” He further elaborates that procedural justice refers to “the mechanisms or decision rules by which reward allocations of social goods are made, while distributive justice is concerned with the resulting allocation.” (Alwin, p. 572) According to Gappa, equity refers to the “fair and just treatment of all members of society who wish to participate in and enjoy the benefits of post-secondary education. Amplification of the meaning of fair and just treatment involves the meaning of access, representation, participation and barriers.” (Gappa, 1977, p.8-12) Gomoron also emphasizes that the goal of equity requires that education be used to overcome any pre-existing difference among students. (Gomoron, 1990, p. 155-173)

• Higher Education – Worldwide, the term higher education is being used to define, in a broad sense, post-secondary education. In some cases, it is also being used for only universities and prestigious schools of professional or artistic training. In this study, the term higher education in Malaysia covers all educational institutions, which provide at least two years of education after secondary education. These institutions consist of universities, graduate schools (institutes), higher institutes of technology, conservatories, and higher vocational schools.

• Interview – A purposeful conversation, usually between two people but sometimes involving more (Morgan, 1988)

• Malay – an ethnic group in Malaysia, defined in the Malaysian constitution as one who follows the customs and culture of the Malay people, one who proclaims Islam as his/her religion and one who uses the Malay language as his/her native tongue.
• Matriculation program – This a pre-university program used in place of the STPM. It is primarily designed to assist Malay students in their quest to enter a public university. Generally non-Malays are not allowed to enter these programs.

• Overseas education – that education which is obtained in a country other than one’s homeland.

• Qualitative research paradigm – Any of the research methods in which a researcher develops concepts, insights and understanding from patterns in the data; rather than deductive methods where one would collect data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses or theories.

• Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) – A standardized test taken at the end of lower secondary education (form 3). This test regulates entrance into the STPM or other options including matriculation programs.

• Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia (STPM) – A standardized national university entrance examination taken at the end of form 5, upper secondary. This test is similar to the British (A) Advanced level test. The A levels are still accepted in Malaysia as an equivalent of the STPM.

• Transparency – A situation in which information on governmental policies and operations are openly accessible by the citizenry.

• University – An institution for higher learning with teaching and research facilities constituting an undergraduate division that awards bachelor's degrees, a graduate school and professional schools that award master's degrees and doctorates.
• Vernacular – Refers to any language which is commonly spoken by a group of people.

Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions are implicit in this study:

• The students and other informants were accurate and sincere in their responses.

• The procedures and methods of data collection and analyses were reasonably reliable and appropriate for gathering data and to seek answers for this study’s research questions.

• The methods and procedures used were reasonable and appropriate in this type of study and sufficient to answer the research questions.

• It is assumed that the respondents were sufficiently fluent in English to respond appropriately.

Delimitations

Ways in which this study was narrowed include:

• The participants were selected from five private colleges and two public universities from two distinct areas of Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur and Penang).

• The study was confined to interviews with 20 Chinese-Malaysians’ enrolled in private college, American university transfer programs, and five Chinese-Malaysians’ enrolled in public universities.
• Particular emphasis was placed on the private sector colleges, and only those students enrolled in an American university transfer program.

• The interview covered questions mainly leading to student perceptions about their choice in entering a private college.

• Only those students identifying themselves as Chinese-Malaysians’ were invited to participate.

Limitations

Potential weaknesses in this study may include;

• In qualitative studies, there is a tendency to over-generalize, which must be guarded against.

• The study is limited in scope and depth since it is constricted to West Malaysia and to only the ethnic Chinese-Malaysians’.

• The study is limited to those anticipating eventual matriculation into a university in the United States of America.

Significance of the Study

A study exploring Chinese-Malaysian students’ rationale for entering a private college American university transfer program is important for several reasons. First, understanding the variables that entail
students’ decisions to attend a particular type of educational program will lead to a better understanding of Chinese - Malaysian students barriers and opportunities to attend higher education programs.

Secondly, the study sets the stage for a broader look at the significance of equality in educational opportunity whereby racial preference is a key to access, or lack of access, to particular program objectives.

Thirdly, the study is particularly relevant for policymakers and private college administrators in Malaysia, as it will help to guide their decision making when considering issues of recruitment and retention for Chinese-Malaysians’ entering American university transfer programs.
CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

In qualitative research the literature should be used in a manner consistent with the methodological assumptions; namely, it should be used inductively so that it does not direct the questions asked by the researcher. One of the chief reasons for conducting a qualitative study is that the study is exploratory, not much has been written about the topic or population being studied, and the researcher seeks to listen to informants and to build a picture based on their ideas. (Creswell, 1994, p. 21)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will be a review of the literature of theoretical and empirical research pertinent to issues faced by the subjects in the study.

It is widely known that Malaysian tertiary level students face issues of inequality in educational opportunity. With equality in educational opportunity as a conceptual framework, the review of the literature will be a basis for a search for a theory to answer the questions set forth in this chapter. The review will also demonstrate
two more areas of study, which will help to induce an answer to the problem of this study. Those areas are political socialization and a further look at private higher education.

At this point, a study of the factors motivating Chinese-Malaysians’ to attend a private college, American university transfer program has not been done. Thus, there is a gap of knowledge in the academic understanding of Malaysian education.

When looking at factors influencing student academic program selection, it is fair to say that not only does a student select a course of study, but also a country or system of education may create a selection process whereby methods to encourage or discourage students from university matriculation are used. In the case of Malaysia, the government has clearly created policy to assist or hinder based on ethnic affinity.

The purpose of this study, being an exploratory research to discern such variables as assistance or hindrance in Chinese-Malaysians’ matriculation to a private college program, will further dwell on the overriding
principal of equality of educational opportunity.

Hence, the review includes one main area: (1) educational equity/equality and access with a discussion of education in Malaysia, supported by (2) a look at political socialization as it affects this situation, (3) a discussion of private higher educational programs in Malaysia.

**Equality of Educational Opportunity**

It is evident that the concepts of equity/equality, with regard to educational opportunity have been elusive, despite the fact that many (Howe, Jackson, Gordon, Jencks, Wexler and Nagel to name only a few) have attempted to define the underlying concepts. In common usage, the words equity and equality have many times been interchanged, but in fact they are different. Equity refers to evaluation of fairness and justice primarily applied in situations of outcome (Alwin, 1994, p. 563). And equality refers to each person being treated with the same regard under the law.
Equality

Equality can be thought of as an ideal. Many societies are egalitarian (utopian) in hope, in so much as they wish for a society of people entitled to be treated equally. In reality people are inherently different. We have natural differences in sex, skin color, body size, character traits and natural endowments. These differences influence, or determine our inequalities as individuals. On the other hand, the desire of a moralistic society is a desire for equality of treatment or opportunity. (Humans desire to be treated in a similar fashion.) The question remains, in a situation of inequality, is it correct to create more inequality to gain equality? This leads us into the discussion of equality of opportunity and the usefulness of education in creating desired outcomes of increased social mobility.

Equality of Opportunity

Jackson (1994) describes equality of opportunity as a “linchpin of American society”. Thus he describes equality
of opportunity as the central cohesive unit that binds a nation together. In a sense, it could be called a major social institution binding our society through political expression and economic possibilities. It is an ideology that implies that everyone is afforded the same opportunity to achieve social, political and economic success. (In other words, everyone is supposed to have the same chance at obtaining the resources that may lead to increased social mobility.)

Equality, Education and Opportunity

In his examination of the concept of equality of educational opportunity, Jackson (1994) elaborates that equality of educational opportunity refers to “the right of everyone to receive an education...”. He further says that the concept of equality of educational opportunity “cannot truly guarantee that everyone will receive an equal education or even a quality education...” This was followed with his postulation that equality of educational opportunity is “The primary struggle of education in the twentieth century [which] can be characterized as a
Jackson presents the basic paradox of equality. On one hand, it is a concept that we wish to achieve, but on the other hand it is a concept shrouded in only possibilities for action. It could be said that modern man sees a need for social justice and thus equality, but overwhelming social evidence supports the converse of this desire in that the wish has yet to materialize.

In order to clearly understand educational equality we must have a framework of understanding for addressing problems encountered in the quest for educational equality. Farrel (1982) offers four factors impacting on the achievement of equality in schooling.

- **Equality of access** – the probabilities of children from different social groupings getting into the school system.
- **Equality of survival** – the probabilities of children from various social groupings staying in the school system to some defined level, usually the end of a complete cycle (primary, secondary, higher).
- **Equality of output** – the probabilities that children from various social groupings will learn the same things to the same level at a defined point in the school system.
- Equality of outcome – the probabilities that children from various social groupings will live relatively similar lives subsequent to and as a result of schooling (have equal incomes, have jobs of roughly the same status, have equal access to the sources of political power).

The first three views; access, survival and output can be considered as measures of the ability of a school system and society to create an environment which encourages fair participation. The last viewpoint, equality of outcome, addresses the problem of equality in one’s ability to gain equal opportunity in one’s livelihood.

When framing problems in educational equality we must not forget that the issue is not only access and retention through quality education for all. We must also consider that societal forces may restrict certain groups from fair application of the education they may have received, thus an outcome of an equal educational opportunity must include equal access to life chances thereby insuring social mobility and reduction in social group based stratification.
Theoretical perspective

Equality of educational opportunity is embodied in a much larger framework of social equality. Social equality could be defined as a quest for giving all members of a society similar chances to gain access to resources and outcomes in life. This concept directly relates to equality of educational opportunity as education (in a 19th and 20th-century perspective) has been seen as the “great equalizer” by some of our country’s most outspoken forefathers of education (e.g., Horace Mann and Thomas Jefferson).

Amongst the major works on equality of educational opportunity written in the 70’s, Jencks (1972) and Wexler (1976) have set forth the argument that the major focus of sociology of education has in fact been the question of not only social equality, but they speculate that it is educational inputs and outputs that direct social equality. Thus, educational equality, or the relationship between schooling and inequality, is the framework for this discussion.

Inequality is expressed in this circumstance as a
measure of unequal inputs (access, opportunity, quality and morale). Inequality can also be measured in outcomes of the schooling process, whereby access and opportunity to equal employment opportunities would be a measure of equality.

The concern of social equality reflects a belief that fairness should exist. “Fairness should govern the competition for society’s resources.” (Hallinan, 1988, p. 251) A desire for fairness in a society reflects directly back upon a concern for equal access to educational resources. However, for the competition to be truly fair and society truly meritocratic, access to resources must be equalized and outcomes of the educational process must produce similar results regardless of an individual’s background.

Interpretations of Equality of Educational Opportunity

Two competing interpretations of equality of educational opportunity have been discussed in Howe’s book (1994), Equality of Educational Opportunity. In his
attempt to characterize equality of educational opportunity

Howe refers to Nagel’s (1991) two basic interpretations; “negative” and “positive”. He further elaborates that these two ways of reflecting upon equality of educational opportunity signifies one’s perspective or wish for governmental intervention to create fairness in public life. If we accept the fact that in a society social stratification exists, then some will choose to search for interventionist strategies to correct unequal outcomes and others will take a hands-off perspective in hopes that positive outcomes will arise from creating equal inputs.

Thus, the negative interpretation of equality of educational opportunity is more or less a non-interventionist perspective. Those who follow the negative interpretation strive for absence of legal barriers in order to access public education. Thus, they are noncommittal in terms of outcomes of, but not in terms of inputs into education. Opposing this view, those who subscribe to the positive perspective would be those who wish to see a proactive governmental policy aiming to take steps to eliminate differences in both inputs and outcomes.
through initiatives intended to create righteous or corrective interventionist measures (e.g., through introducing inequality to create equality).

Rather than framing the issue as “negative vs. positive intervention” (Howe, 1994), Hallinan (1988) explains that by “Taking an extreme position, some critics question the goals both of attaining social equality through a meritocracy and of reaching equality through the equal distribution of society’s rewards.” (p. 251) Nevertheless, the classic argument on intervention strategy presents itself as equalization of inputs vs. outcomes (equal access or equal outcomes?). There are those who believe that government must intervene to create equal access to quality education and those who believe that government must also intervene to insure equal outcomes in life.

Application of Intervention Interpretations

Both perspectives take stands based on the degree to which they would allow or disallow governmental
intervention. At its extreme some might say that the negative standpoint is hollow, due to its inaction, regardless of the level of disadvantage that a person brings to an educational situation. It is certain that human beings are unequal in various inherent categories, human beings represent different races, different mentalities and different motivations. Our individuality and uniqueness is celebrated, on one hand, and yet it is also a point of contention as our uniqueness has repeatedly lead to segregation. It is said that segregation leads to social stratification and consequently lays the basis for the formation of inequality.

Hence, the positive interpretation highlights that “proponents of this approach hold that equal educational opportunity must be measured by how well students demonstrate achievement in school” (Jackson, 1994, pg. 662). In terms of educational outcomes, this position demands mechanisms to assist those with lower-income levels and minorities to attain a quality education.

This perspective could be distinguished by those who believe in equity measures that are typically labeled as
affirmative action. In the United States affirmative action is an active effort (using preferential treatment) to improve employment or educational opportunities for members of minority groups and women. The main criteria for affirmative action are race, gender, ethnic origin, religion, and age.

Affirmative action leading to preferential treatment, based on racial lineage, has been a major point of contention in American education, having its recent origin in the Supreme court decision of Brown vs. The Board of Education of Topeka Kansas 1954. In this decision it was found that a previous ruling (Plessy vs Ferguson, 1896, ruled that schools could be racially separate but equal) allowing racially segregated schools was inherently unequal insomuch as racially identifiable schools can not provide an equal educational opportunity. The ruling in the Brown case showed also that racially segregated schools demonstrate a feeling of inferiority amongst its minority students, thus creating unequal outcomes of education. This ruling was just one of many to come in America’s quest for equal educational opportunity. Soon after the Brown
ruling, the Civil Rights Movement evolved with a major focus on educational opportunity as a mode for achieving greater social equality. In 1966, The Coleman Report (Coleman et al., 1966) set the stage for a stronger educational policy leading towards large scale school integration.

In 1966 Coleman presented a report to the U.S. Congress in which he concluded that poor black children did better academically in integrated, middle-class schools. His findings provided the sociological underpinnings for the widespread busing of students to achieve racial balance in schools, a practice that met with strong resistance from parents in many areas. In 1975 Coleman rescinded his support of busing, concluding that it had encouraged the deterioration of public schools by encouraging white flight to avoid integration. (Taken from Britannica online, Accessed 19 April 1998)

The commitment to equality of educational opportunity, born of the civil rights movement, remains in tact, but the means for achieving it fluctuate significantly.
Equality of Educational Opportunity in other countries

It could be said that post World War II (WWII), has been an age of education. Unprecedented educational expansion and educational opportunities have been the hallmark of this era, worldwide. Farrel (1982) has labeled this era of educational expansion an era of a drive for social equality.

Since WWII, the general theoretical understanding of worldwide social equality has undeniably been one of education as the pathway to upward social and economic mobility. This ideological perspective was one exported around the world based on a successful model found primarily in the developed countries. The educational expansion model was associated with America especially and seemed to work there; so thus this expansion of access to education was seen to be appropriate for national improvements around the world.

As a result of this view of educational policy, massive enrolment increases have occurred but the theoretical perspective debate continues. Early theorists
tended to try to implant models of American (or other developed countries) educational and economical expansion models on the developing world. The fallacy was that these models had been constructed to address and resolve educational problems experienced in industrialized nations (Farrel, 1982).

In the era of educational expansion was marked by many theorist intending to duplicate successes in equality of educational opportunity leading towards greater social equality (Chai, 1973). Though well meaning, this approach was foolhardy because they did not consider the uniqueness of each culture affected.

Equality of Educational Opportunity in Malaysia

Malaysia being a plural society based on multicultural, multiethnic, multiracial and multifaith mores, has faced issues of inequalities in social order before and since inception as a nation in 1957. “For the Malaysian government, equality among the country’s ethnic groups has been of primary concern...” (Pong, 1993, pg 245).
An uncommon feature of Malaysia’s ethnic/social inequalities is the situation whereby the group said to be more economically powerful does not control the government. Until recently the politically dominant group in Malaysia (the Malays) have been economically disadvantaged and thus disadvantaged with regard to educational opportunity. In order to remedy this disadvantage in educational opportunity, National Education Policy (1971) and National Economic Policy (1971) vigorously implemented Malay preferential benefits. (Kiltgaard & Katz, 1983, Ahmat, 1987, Ng, 1991, Pong, 1993)

The continuing objectives of national educational policy stipulate that free education will be provided, with preservation of languages and cultures of each community and a goal of uniting of the various races thereby creating Bangsa Malaysia (national unity as Malaysians).

Bangsa Malaysia is a notion in which the populace, regardless of its racial, socio-economic, religious and cultural differences, is united by its loyalty to Malaysia. (Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, Political Scientist, University of Malaysia, in an interview with Loong M. Y. & Chin, N. Star
By-and-large these policies have progressed well in primary education where students are allowed to study in their vernaculars. At the secondary level national policy allows for government support for schools only providing instruction in Bahasa Malaysia, thereby discriminating against vernacular education while mocking the objective of preservation of languages and cultures of each community.

In higher education, strict admissions quotas were imposed on non-Malays making university admissions no longer based solely on academic ability. (Wong 1975, Anis, 1991) In 1969 the racial makeup of Malaysia's flagship university, the University of Malaya, was 21% Malay, 60% Chinese and 19% Indians (Esman, 1987). Since the inception of the preferential policy, the percentage of non-Malays has steadily declined to approximately 20% non-Malay enrollment by 1998.

In 1970, Malaysia introduced the New Economic Policy. The basic directive embodies the principle of eradication of poverty among all Malaysians, and the restructuring of society so that economic function and race are no longer
At the point in time when this plan was drawn up, a close look at the ethnic groups would reveal that political empowerment was held predominately in racial terms by the Malays, while economic power was held by the Chinese. Thus, implementation of policy is surely going to be dominated by inputs from the politically empowered ethnic group.

The NEP, amongst its many functions, does tend to create equity programs to alleviate economic disparity. But this economic alleviation comes at a high price. Recipients of preferential treatment are sought on a Bumiputera only basis. In reality, the programs are solely biased in favor of the Malays, without consideration of their economic status, but instead with focus on their ethnic affinity.

Some of the programs created through implementation of the plan include, for the Malays, heavy admission quotas to universities and secondary schools, scholarships (overseas and domestic), rural school construction and upgrading of existing structures. In fact the list of special privileges is far too long to mention as it covers almost every aspect
of life, including discounts for car purchases, discounts on home purchases, interest free loans and more.

Through this series of legislation, the Malays have established preferential policies aimed at creating equity in educational allotments, with the hope that credentializing the Malays will lead to greater social and economical wealth for that group.

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

Political education in Malaysia has generally been a subject that has not been subject to either active or open discussion. (Murugesu Pathmanathan, 1994, University of Malaya)

This section helps to define ways in which a society may politically orient individuals. The focus will rely on Malaysia as a case example in the use of political socialization in order to create a unified nation through a pluralistic society.
What is Political Socialization?

Political socialization is a term in which gained popularity in the 50’s and refers to the usage of political intrusion in society, designed to direct or form an identity. It can be defined most precisely from a political science perspective as a “process by which political attitudes and orientations are formed” (Gecas, 1994, p. 1864). For purposes of this study I will focus on political socialization as it relates to education and schooling. (In the field of international development education, the term nation building is commonly used.)

“Political socialization emerged as a formal area of inquiry in the late 1950’s…” (Dennis & Jennings, 1970). Early theorists on political socialization tried to demonstrate that the basis of political socialization lies in the thought that ‘what is learned in early life is most ingrained in one’s character’. Thus, a relationship to schooling is extremely important as schooling forms the focus of one’s early life in many societies and is as such
an effective tool for governments to disseminate a unified social identity.

Use of Political Socialization in the USA

The United States in the 1830s had a greater diversity in social and economic status, as well as in religious and moral values, than Puritan New England two centuries earlier. To this heterogeneity, Mann wanted to introduce the "common school"— that is, a school common to all the people, that would provide a common and unifying experience.

The common school was a radical idea in 19th century America, and would be a radical idea for the rest of the world until after the Second World War. Europe continued to have a dual school system, in which the more prosperous classes were placed on a track leading to a university education, while the children of the poor were directed toward simple vocational training.

Mann wanted to eliminate the religious and class distinctions implicit in this dual system. The common
school would be commonly supported, commonly attended and commonly controlled; its ultimate goal would be sociological and national unity.

The common school is but one method used in the USA to create a unified nation. Although, today the government tends to reserve itself with regards to social culture, this was not always true. Most recently the Civil Rights Era, has brought about major political and social values changes that have helped to create a more humane or at least aware nation. The following section will discuss some ways in which Malaysia has used political socialization in order to direct social culture.

Malaysia as a Case Study in Contemporary Nation Building

The term nation building is used to describe efforts to unify and create a sense of national unity among a nation’s population. Political socialization dictates governmental participation in efforts to create socialization, thus leading to a unified and peaceful nation. The following discussion will be based on efforts
seen in Malaysia towards creating a nation out of an amalgamation of colonial holdings and unifying a diverse and inflexible plural society through a nation building/political socialization.

**Pre-independence**

The British colonials typically used education as a tool to separate the ethnic groups in their conquests. With the concept of “divide and rule” the British denied or developed (educational) opportunity based on racial lineage-social classification. With divisions in educational type and opportunity, the ethnicities of Malaysia were encouraged to grow as separate non-assimilated groups. This divisiveness has continued until today and is of major concern as elaborated in policy statements (most notably, five-year plans).

By the year 1960 the Federation of Malaya had achieved complete independence and they had formed a fully elected house of representatives. (At that time Malaysia consisted only of the Peninsular region). With recognition that the country would be more powerful if it could join forces with
Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei a plan was devised by the British and the first Prime Minister of Malaysia to unify the British territories of the region. If it were to succeed, all resources could be shared, therefore creating a more attractive unified state for foreign investment and internal stability. The British welcomed the development of the combined states concept as it would offer independence and faster stability in the region, then was expected with individual sovereign states.

By August, 1963, an agreement was finally reached between Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak and Malaysia. The former States, in spite of their unification, would hold special provision in areas of education and language. Singapore would retain multilingualism and the Borneo states would gain special sovereign provisions. Less than two and half years after the initial proposals for the formation of Malaysia, the plan was realized, so Britain granted full independence and support to all territories involved (Kennedy, 1993).

This historically unique union contained a combination of multiple religions, races and ideological components.
Ten million Chinese, Malays, Indians, Ibans, Land Dayaks, Melanaus, Dusuns, Kadazans, Muruts and Bajaus were combined to form a new nation with objectives of justice, peace and prosperity. (Wong, 1974, p. 95) Education was a major policy issue in the amalgamation of the four constituent states. "The formation of Malaysia has brought on the Central Government at Kuala Lumpur more educational problems than it anticipated: above all, the task of providing education - primary and secondary - for an ever increasing school population..." (Wong, 1974, p. 95).

By 1965 tension between the State of Singapore and the Federation of Malaysia had culminated to such a point that on August 9, 1965, Singapore and Malaysia separated. The formation of the Republic of Singapore probably was inevitable due to the striking differences in handling of ethnic issues. In view of the fact that, in Malaysia the Malays took an upper hand in politics, in Singapore it was the Chinese (Kennedy, 1993, p. 328).

The Chinese, however, held an upper hand in the Malaysian and Singaporean economies, posing a serious threat to the future political stability of a Malay
dominated government. Furthermore, Singapore refused to extend the Malay preferential treatment policies that were instilled in Malaysian policy. (Singapore preferred a more equal opportunity stance.) Although Chinese Singaporeans continue to prevail, all ethnicites in Singapore have a honest chance at advancement in Singapore, whereas in Malaysia there have been serious blocks placed on non-majority participation, especially in the religious, economic, and political arenas (Kua, 1987).

**Political Socialization in Malaysia Today**

Malaysia, being a plural society experiencing severe ethnic strife has seen some extreme violence in its growth process as a postcolonial state (Chai, 1977). The history of Malaysia is a story of communalism, tied to organizations based on race/ethnicity/lingual affinity and political ideology, all propagated through its [unique] process of identity building in the quest to form a viable nation. Malaysia has gained and lost territory, but the over-riding inhibitor in this process has been, without
doubt, the reluctance of its ethnicities to unite based on ideological standpoints rather than racial/ethnic boundaries.

A highly centralized top-down governmental structure armed with interventionist ideology has guided Malaysia with nation building at its heart. Through this, educational reform has been given top priority as noticed through the following two passages: (Morris & Sweeting 1997, p. 149, as cited from Fifth Malaysia Plan 1986 and Sixth Malaysia Plan 1991, respectively)

...education and training will continue to be geared towards fostering national unity and increasing participation of all Malaysians in National Development.

...the role of education and training in Malaysia is to produce knowledgeable, trained and skilled individuals to meet the manpower requirements as well as the growing social needs ... [we] require manpower to be innovative and equipped with knowledge and training in science and technology, management, and related skills. Equally important is the need for the national education system to mould disciplined, diligent and motivated individuals.

Through examination of those passages, one can understand the overriding emphasis on educational planning
as a means for develop the industrial/business sector. In turn, this development stance also translates to mean that Malaysia is taking a proactive role in directing its social and political character with education as the stimulus.

More recently, the government of Malaysia enacted a wide reaching plan called Vision 2020. In a speech given by the Prime Minister (Dato’ Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad) the following ideas were put forth:

“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.” (Pathmanathan, 1994, p. 5)

This far reaching plan-cum-legislation entails nine central objectives: (http://www.smpke.jpm.my/2020.htm, accessed March 12, 1999)

- The first of these is the challenges of establishing a united Malaysian nation with a sense common and shared destiny. This must be a nation at peace with itself, territorially ethnically integrated, living in harmony and full and fair partnership, made up of one Malaysia' with political loyalty and dedication to the nation.
• The second is the challenge of creating a psychologically liberated, secure, and developed Malaysian Society with faith and confidence in itself, justifiably proud of what it is, of what it has accomplished, robust enough to face all manner of adversity. This Malaysian Society must be distinguished by the pursuit of excellence, fully aware of all its potentials, psychologically subservient to none, and respected by the peoples of other nations.

• The third challenge we have always faced is that of fostering and developing a mature democratic society, practising a form of mature consensual, community-oriented Malaysian democracy that can be a model for many developing countries.

• The fourth is the challenge of establishing a fully moral and ethical society, whose citizens are strong in religious and spiritual values and imbued with the highest of ethical standards.

• The fifth challenge that we have always faced is the challenge of establishing a matured, liberal and tolerant society in which Malaysians of all colours and creeds are free to practise and profess their customs, cultures and religious beliefs and yet feeling that they belong to one nation.

• The sixth is the challenge of establishing a scientific and progressive society, a society that innovative and forward-looking, one that is not only a consumer of technology but also a contributor to the scientific and technological civilisation of the future.

• The seventh challenge is the challenge of establishing a fully caring society and a caring culture, a social system in which society will come before self, in which the welfare of the people will revolve not around the state or the individual but around a strong and resilient family system.

• The eighth is the challenge of ensuring an economically just society. This is a society in
which there is a fair and equitable distribution of the wealth of the nation, in which there is full partnership in economic progress. Such a society cannot be in place so long as there is the identification of race with economic function, and the identification of economic backwardness with race.

- The ninth challenge is the challenge of establishing a prosperous society, with an economy that is fully competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient.

As a whole the nine objectives clearly demonstrate the power of state authority in the creation of social engineering. Of particular interest is objective number four. In this objective the state directives of religious indoctrination radiate powerfully. There seems to be no room for the non-theist or the non-religious in the society they wish to create (especially section #4). Nevertheless, these objectives could simply be thought of as objectives because as of yet, there is no way to enforce each detail and indoctrinate each Malaysian towards one vision.

The following section describes the use of language policy with the hope to create a linguistically unified country.
Use of Language to Unify

Educational policy and the resolution of issues with respect to language materials (textbooks, curricula, etc...) and language teaching (research, learning also) were critical policy areas (Omar 1976, 1979, 1981, Ozog, 1993, Lee, 1993b). The goal of these socially oriented policies is to create a completely unified school system with Bahasa Malaysia as the universal language of instruction. This objective was probably not feasible nor practical at in the 60’s and 70’s, as it would and did create severe divisiveness.

At the time of independence, most secondary schools were English medium although Chinese medium schools were also prevalent. The first Malay language secondary school classes were provided in 1956 at English medium secondary schools. A language policy needed to be made as national unity was at stake and in the following quote from Snodgrass (1960, pp. 142-3 cites Silcock) a strong language based disparity can evidently be seen.
The English educated Malays could capture power only by coming to terms with the Chinese. Having a majority of the electorate, as well as a greater participation in the British system of government, they had superior bargaining power and they realized that emphasis on English education would favor the urban non-Malays. They could not, however, press for a completely Malay system of education without alienating the essential minimum of Chinese support. As a result, a mixed system with gradual pressure toward Malay as a national language was introduced. (Silcock 1964, p. 215)

It is with this in mind that the National Education Policy and the National Language Policy were planned with great care given to linguistic needs. Nevertheless, inevitably due to the friction caused by imposition of ethnic policy and especially due to imposition of language policies on the non Malays, riots broke out during the early years if independence in Malaysia (Kennedy, 1993).

On May 13, 1969, Malaysia suffered extensive rioting centered on inequalities between Malay and other ethnic groups (mainly the Chinese). In a pre-emptive move without benefit of popular following, on July 11, 1969 the then Minister of Education (Razak) announced that English-medium schools were to be converted to Bahasa Malaysia one grade
at a time, beginning with Standard I, in 1970. By 1982 this would reach the second and last year of Form VI, when examinations are taken for the Higher School Certificate (HSC). If pursued on into the universities, this meant that beginning in 1983 Bahasa Malaysia would be the medium of instruction in higher education. Responses to the 1969 pronouncement among the Chinese included transfers back into Chinese-medium primary schools, some emigration, and for those who could afford it sending their children abroad for secondary and higher education. It was at this time also that a proposal to establish a private Chinese-medium university was first brought forth. The 1969 proposal (Singh 1993, p. 518 & Hsu, 1993, p. 15) was not accepted based on the same issues of linguistic conformity that were affected by the New Economic Policy. The university was to be named Mederka in reference to the language guarantees in the 1957 constitution. In 1971, the NEP (New Economic Policy) was formulated, with the two main goals of poverty eradication and correction of economic status related to racial lineage.
The next section begins a discussion on post-secondary education alternatives.

**Student Mobility in Malaysia**

In Malaysia the demand for higher education has been increasing steadily. In fact the demand for higher education has not only met the entrance capability of Malaysia’s universities but it has created a situation in which admissible candidates significantly exceed the number of those who can be accepted into the public system. In 1988 there were 54,557 candidates seeking university positions, of these 15.7% (8,599) gained admittance into a local public university (Ghani, 1990, p. 6). These figures are indicative of the previous years also, showing that 80% of university candidates were unable to gain matriculation into a local program.

The level of demand for higher education in Malaysia is stimulated by interactions between social, political and economic factors. In addition, on a personnel level, this high demand for higher education may be seen as what has
been called “diploma disease” (Dore, 1976). The diploma disease is further explained by Little and Singh (1992) as a scenario in which educational certificates are used for entry into a labor market. Emphasis is more on acquisition of the certificate rather than on the relevance of an educational program. It is, consequently, this use of credentials given, that substantially determines an institution’s viability or usefulness.

Societal desire and acceptance of higher degrees, coupled with the fact that one who has higher education will usually be compensated accordingly, have added immensely to benefits of obtaining a higher degree. In Malaysia, as noted, the demand for higher education can also be in part attributed to policies enacted for the purpose of eradicating social/political disparities amongst ethnic groups which are exacerbated by inferior levels of educational achievement which tend to be, or have been, associated with particular racial/ethnic/religious groups within the national population.

Encompassing a plan to restructure society through educational measures, NEP is mainly centered on higher
education access for the perceived marginalized ethnicity. The original intent of the policy was to eradicate economic and educational achievement associated with ethnicity, through this the plan create equitable measures aimed at improving the opportunities of those disadvantaged.

The NEP was introduced in the Second Malaysian Plan for 1971-1975; shortly after its introduction a commission was assigned to identify the process and structure of higher education in Malaysia. Based on recommendations of the commission, measures were introduced to greatly increase Malay enrollment in local higher educational programs (Government of Malaysia, 1971). This enrollment could be achieved through scholarships, special tuition fees, preferential admissions, and special matriculation programs (special programs to assist Malay students to enter the university). It is these very same programs that cause great tension in the higher educational system in Malaysia today, as they are so heavily weighted in favor of Malay students at the expense of non-Malays.
Private Higher Education in Malaysia

In this section will be a discussion of privately funded post-secondary educational opportunities in Malaysia. Due to the non-allowance of a private degree granting institution, the Malaysians have created some unique programs, which are labeled as private colleges. These and other post-secondary alternatives will be discussed.

Background

More than anywhere else in the world, Asia has relied on private initiatives to provide access to higher education, especially found in countries like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines. Private higher education is a growing phenomenon in Southeast Asia (Lee, 1997).

The term “private higher education” in the context of Malaysia refers to the formal privately provided education that occurs after secondary schooling. In the Malaysian context this would include institutes that grant
certificates and diplomas but not degrees. Although in a general sense many countries would use the definition of higher education to encompass those institutions offering degree programs, in Malaysia, as we will see later, there are only public institutes of higher learning that can grant degrees. (University and Colleges Act of 1971 states that the Minister of Education must review all applications for university programs and grant acceptance to those that fit the NEP.)

A typical definition of private higher education would include the fact that they are “non-governmental institutions that grant officially recognized credentials (degrees)...” (Geiger, 1991, p. 233). Geiger explains private higher education as institutes having the ability to pursue their own chosen goals. Private as opposed to publicly controlled, allows the institute self-control in many aspects of administering an educational program. As Gieger shows, there are three typical systems of mixed private-public higher educational offerings in a country:
• mass private sectors with restricted public sectors. Where provision of public offerings are limited and highly restricted (i.e. Japan, Philippines, and Brazil)

• parallel public and private sectors. Symmetrical relationship between private and public offerings. Substantial government subsidization to equalize conditions, high national standard for degrees and existence of varying cultural groups with strong representation. (i.e.; Belgium)

• Comprehensive public sectors with peripheral private sectors. In this type of system the public sector should fulfill all the needs for higher education. Private institutes are tolerated but not assisted through governmental aid. As a consequence the institutes will tend to be associated with filling a particular need, or clientele. (i.e.; France, Malaysia)

Of particular interest is the private peripheral type of system. This seems to best fit the situation in Malaysia.

The 1980’s saw unprecedented levels of degree seekers heading overseas due to lack of access at home. With recognition that the country was loosing educational revenues, which might be better spent domestically, and a threat of brain drain, the government changed stances and actively promoted private establishment of educational institutions.
Starting out in the early 1980’s with only a handful of private higher educational institutes in Malaysia, today there are some 300 programs registered with the government. The programs cover most areas of study but tend to lean more toward those programs that generate most student interest.

Overseas Study

“It has been estimated by the Malaysian Ministry of Education that for 1987 there were more than 68,000 Malaysian students studying abroad.” (Ghani, p. 8) In 1985 there were approximately 65,000 (Tzannatos, 1991, p. 184, table 5) students studying in domestic (public and private) higher educational programs while the number of Malaysian students studying overseas in that same year was 57,464 (Ghani p.12, table 2.4). This shows that approximately 47% of the total number of Malaysians enrolled in a higher educational program were studying overseas.

There are very few countries that send their students overseas for higher education at such a high rate. Lack of
local educational opportunities could be cited as the prime reason for students looking overseas to pursue higher education. Lee (1982) also points out that many times a foreign degree is perceived as more useful. Even though a foreign degree is in many cases looked upon favorably, it still does not explain the extremely high rates of middle class Malaysians sending their children overseas for a higher education.

It may be said that higher returns from foreign degrees in the private sector indicate that such degrees have superior returns or productivity. This definitely applies in Malaysia, as we can see historical trends showing that there has always been considerable interest in overseas education. It may be that this phenomenon occurred due to lack of opportunities at home, but the power and influence that these returning students may impose upon a culture can not be disregarded.

It also may be that Malaysia’s history of overseas invasions from abroad by both colonial rulers and immigrant populations, has influenced Malaysians to increasingly seek international perspectives in part through education.
Nevertheless, it is this very unmeasured and unquantifiable desire for education (and overseas education at that) that may be a major factor in the educational dilemma that all Malaysians are facing today.

With an overriding desire for attainment of higher education, those not served by the public higher educational system in Malaysia have looked to overseas programs and, more recently, to the many domestically provided peripheral private programs. (outside of the mainstream of education, non-accredited and non-governmentally approved) These programs are becoming a more and more viable option as overseas study becomes increasingly expensive.

Local/Overseas Private Higher Education

Malaysia has had a tradition of overseas education dating back to the colonial period. The reasons for Malaysians seeking higher education may be found through further analyses of the human capital theory and society’s ever increasing demands on more education for social
mobility. Dore (1976) refers to this situation in his book “Diploma Disease”, where we might find an increasingly overly educated populous in a situation which threatens to create a class of educated underemployed.

Primarily since the mid-80’s there has been a tremendous increase in the number of private local programs established offering linkages to overseas institutions of higher learning. These programs are linked to universities in Australia, Canada, Great Britain and the U.S.A.

By enrolling in programs such as these, the students are increasing their opportunities for successful job placement (assuming they gain the credential sought). In reality the programs are creating a form of access to higher educational opportunities that were not readily available to some groups who were not considered in domestic-governmentally funded universities and governmentally funded scholarship programs. Lee (1993, p. 8) reports three categories of students that may seek private higher educational programs in Malaysia:

- those not placed in a local university or college,
- those offered position in a local public
institute but not in a course of their desire, and

• children of affluent families, seeking greater emphasis on English instruction and a better quality of education.

These categories have not mentioned ethnic affinity and appear to apply to all groups. As mentioned beforehand, the heavily Malay weighted preferential policies, granting Malays access to governmental educational opportunities results in ethnic stratification, delineated by public and private educational offerings.

The following section discusses the various types private college to foreign university, linkages available.

**Linkages**

Primarily, the private institutes realized early on that their survival was closely linked to their ability to offer a viable method to obtaining a recognizable degree. Seeing that the Malaysian government was not budging in its stance of not allowing accreditation and allowance for
degrees to be granted in the private sector, they sought recognition elsewhere.

A unique and creative relationship with institutions overseas was the solution to their problem. These relationships took place in the manner of both passive (the Malaysian institute handles all aspects of the program, the host institute accepts credit based on a non-participatory manner) and active (both the Malaysian and the foreign institute are actively involved (on-site) in the administration and teaching of the program). The linkages mostly follow a model whereby half of the degree program is done at home and half is done abroad at the host institute. In these programs the final degree is in the name of the host institute alone. This model is quite similar, if not irrefutably closely modeled after, the American community college model.

Primarily since the mid-80’s there has been a tremendous increase in the number of private local programs established offering linkages to overseas institutions of higher learning. These programs are linked to universities in Australia, Canada, Great Britain, the U.S.A. and
elsewhere. By 1990 there were more than 60 such programs in Malaysia; Ghani (p17, 18) has given a description of the various types of program linkages offered:

A. the branch campus model - where an overseas institution establishes a branch in Malaysia to run some of its programs,

B. the external studies model - where the local institutions prepare students usually through tutorials for the examinations set by the overseas institution,

C. the split-campus or twinning model - where local institutions offer courses for the first one, two or sometimes, three years of a program provided by overseas institutions and usually these courses are monitored by the overseas institutions.

D. the credit-transfer model - there the courses taken in the local institutions can be used as part of the total requirements of a higher education program of an overseas institution,

E. the joint degree model - where a local and an overseas institution develop a program of courses which may be offered indefinitely by each institution, and

F. the conversion model - where the qualifications, usually at the diploma level, from a local institution are accepted as advanced standing credits by an overseas institution.

Of these programs A, B and C are not commonly practiced by American universities in Malaysia. Model A,
the branch campus model, is the most active model, requiring active participation from both sides in most aspects of the program offering.

American institutions most recently employed branch campus methods with differing success in Japan throughout the 80’s. (At one time there were close to 20 American campuses in Japan, now only a few remain. The most notable and long-lasting of these models is Temple University’s Tokyo Campus established in 1984 and still operating).

In Malaysia the tendency seems to be usage of model C, the credit transfer model, or more typically called Articulation Agreements, whereby a passive relationship between the institutes is used. In this model there is an absence of active participation by either side. An agreement is drawn up based on credit to be given for courses completed. The credits are granted only for similar classes taught at the host institute. This results in much debate on quality of course offerings as the host American university has little to do with the curriculum at the Malaysian college. There involvement simply remains the
acceptance of credits, similar to our present day community college model.

Neither the joint degree model nor the conversion model are practiced by American universities in Malaysia. In stead they are models which are commonly practiced by Australian and British universities. American institutions do practice the joint degree model in others countries though. And have most recently been exploring the possibility of using the conversion model to accept Singaporean polytechnic diplomas as sophomore or junior standing in various American universities.

By enrolling in programs with linkages such as these, the students are increasing their opportunities for job placement (granted they may successfully gain the credential sought). In reality the programs are creating a form of access to higher educational opportunity that was not so readily available to some groups previously not considered either for domestic governmentally funded universities or governmentally funded scholarship programs.
Summary

This chapter reviewed some of the major ideas in three areas: 1) equality of educational opportunity, 2) political socialization and 3) private education in Malaysia. As is with many qualitative research projects the literature review forms a framework for exploration of further ideas. Thus this information will lead to better analyses of the research findings considered in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER III

Design and Methodology

This chapter provides a description of the research method used to explore the choices Chinese-Malaysian students made in deciding to attend a private college American university transfer program. The chapter is organized to include: a short description of the researcher’s point of view and biases on entering the study, epistemological basis for choosing qualitative methods as a research paradigm, the selection of participants to be interviewed, the interview process, a description of procedures used to insure validity and reliability of the study, and finally a section on data analyses techniques.

This study was conducted in an exploratory/descriptive fashion with an emphasis on the interview as a data collection technique.
Point of View

It is impossible for one to say that his or her mind is a blank slate while starting any research project. In my case, my past experience with the subject at hand has influenced my values and caused an undeniable motivation for conducting this study. With this in mind, I would like to describe my life relationship to the subject and my interpretations of personal motivation towards this study.

My childhood was spent in rural America; having been born and raised in an area relatively isolated from international events, my curiosity about the world outside of my own country only grew stronger with age. In graduate school I made friends with many Malaysian students and through my close relationship with them I learned about their lives in a far off land. I vowed to travel to visit my friends in their home country and since have done so repeatedly.

My desire for knowledge of Malaysia has remained alive throughout the years. Through repeated visits, I have been able to form lasting friendships with many Malaysians from
diverse backgrounds. Possibly due to my early upbringing and isolation from human diversity, I have thus focused my Malaysian knowledge base on humanistic understanding. I have spent much time, during my trips to Malaysia, trying to understand the pushes and pulls between the rich and poor and the light skinned and dark skinned. As reviewed in Chapter I, Malaysia is a pluralistic society consisting of multiracial, multiethnic, multi-lingual and thus multi-perspective peoples.

Varying perspectives of these people have generated much unrest in Malaysia, since and possibly way before, colonial times. The ethnic groups in Malaysia have traditionally lived separately, much as we do here in the United States of America. Consequently, they have lived with racially based resentments against those from differing groups.

Extended periods of time spent in Malaysia by the author provided opportunities to read about and discuss Malaysian historical and contemporary issues, which inevitably include those reflecting the ethnic tensions, which are so evident even to the casual observer.
Epistemological Bases

For this investigation a qualitative paradigm is preferable over a quantitative design. The purpose of the study was to explore and understand through categorization (Polkinghorne, 1991) and theme building, details about Chinese-Malaysian students' choices in deciding to attend a particular type of college.

Both research paradigms offer trade-offs in knowledge generation. Choosing a quantitative design would ensure mathematical reliability and the possibility of greater generalizations based on extrapolation theory. The present methods chosen do not allow such generalizations but instead allow a different kind of objectivity.

In qualitative procedures, objectivity is based on patterns of consistency resulting in themes and categories. Thus, the main data collection procedure used has been the interview as the interview also provides a method to
decide, categorize and create meaning out of discussions with the participants.

Selection of Participants

The study employed a practice of sampling called theoretical sampling. "... theoretical sampling means selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to your research questions, your theoretical position and analytical framework, your analytical practice, and most importantly the explanation or account which you are developing." (Mason, 1996, p. 93-94)

For the purposes of this study, 20 Chinese-Malaysian private college student participants who were enrolled in five American university transfer programs were chosen. Although having only American university transfer students would address the research question, a selection of five Malaysian public/government university matriculated students was added to cross compare answers from the two groups.
Before starting the interviewee selection in Malaysia, it was expected that a gender balance could be obtained and it was hoped that 50% of the participants would be female. It was found that getting a good gender balance was not an easy task, as such, 6 of the 20 private college students interviewed are female, which represents a respectable 30% of the pool of participants. For the government university interviews, two females and three males, or 40% female participation was obtained.

Being that this research is not seeking gender dependent data, it was felt that this representation was sufficient and insured that gender differences are represented. Regardless of the gender distribution, sufficient data were gained through the interviews to answer the research questions. It could be said that the reason for not obtaining a perfect gender balance was linked to the selection process. Speculation might be drawn based on the interviewer’s gender and a feeling of uneasiness that female participants might have had in talking to a male interviewer. Nevertheless, as the focus
of the research was not gender dependent this must be overlooked as a category.

This selection explicitly excluded those of any background other than being self-identified as Chinese, due to the consideration that inclusion of others would create an extensive and uncontrollable quantity of factors. Thus, studying only one ethnicity created a more focused and manageable research.

Participants were sought in two areas of Malaysia; from Kuala Lumpur, the national capital and largest city, and Penang, the second largest city of Malaysia. The purpose of using two areas was to get a cross section of category representation from those attending schools in different sections of the country. The results from this cross section may or may not appear to be different. Further, the study concentrates on only areas in West Malaysia, specifically excluding East Malaysia.

Although qualitative data collection does not dictate a certain desirable number of participants needed to obtain understanding, in this study the principle investigator
decided that 20 participants was sufficient to create a viable data set.

Therefore, the criteria for selecting participants were: (a) matriculated private college students, (b) students enrolled in an American university transfer program, (c) those calling themselves Chinese-Malaysian, and (d) 50% female and 50% male. Before starting the research, with regards to gender selection, it was anticipated that it would be easier to recruit male students, as they would be more willing to talk to a male interviewer. Nevertheless, it was necessary to get adequate responses from females as their responses might show different and interesting reasons for choosing a private college program.

The Interview

Substantial consideration must go into designing an interview setting in which data can be methodologically
collected and assessed. The process in which data was
collected is outlined in the following text.

Patton (1990) discussed three approaches to collecting
qualitative data using the interview. Each approach entails
differing levels of preparation, conceptualization and
instrumentation. The three approaches are:

A. the informal conversational interview,
B. the general interview guide approach, and
C. the standardized open-ended interview.

The approaches primarily differ concerning the extent
of prepared questions versus free flowing question formats.
The informal conversational interview is one in which
questions are essentially free flowing and spontaneous. On
the other hand, the standardized interview entails a more
rigidly designed set of questions, carefully worded and
pre-tested, with a lack of impromptu probing possibilities.
For the purposes of this study, a middle of the road
approach was chosen as it was determined that a general
interview guide approach best fitted the research needs.

In this approach a list of questions or issues to be
explored was prepared beforehand. The issues in the
question outline need not be taken in any particular order
and detailed probing was allowed. The list of proposed
questions essentially form a guide to the interview session
to insure that relevant topics are covered. The questions
could be better viewed as a checklist than as a procedure
to be followed (Patton, 1990). This allowed greater
flexibility in the interview sessions. The flexibility was
absolutely essential, since the participants were
volunteers and as such it was important not to bore them
with a standardized question-answer session.

An interview checklist (see appendix A) was developed
to keep track of the questions asked and the issues to be
covered during the interview. The checklist was used in a
pilot study and tested on a group of Malaysian students
attending the University of Southern California. A few
changes needed to be made to the original. For each
interview a separate printout of the general questions to
be asked, and a brief demographic account to keep track of
each participant was used as a place to keep memos
(fieldnotes).
The following section discusses procedures used to insure a productive interview.

**Interview Preparation**

Prior to the interview an attempt was made to establish a friendly relationship with each interviewee. The interviewees were selected by a variety of processes:

- **Chatting on the internet** - by joining internet chat groups with a focus on Malaysia, I was able to locate suitable candidates for the interview. I would then find a suitable time to meet them to discuss the project.

- **Hanging out around the college area** - I was fortunate enough to have chosen to live in an area with several private colleges. Thus, this made it more accessible to meet students on campus and in local businesses (i.e., restaurants, cafes, food courts, etc.).

- **Introduction** - After meeting one suitable participant, that participant sometimes introduced friends who fitted the research project profile.

The previously mentioned methods for meeting students worked better than expected and it was found that students were very willing to be interviewed after a brief discussion of the study’s objectives. Before commencing the
interview, participants were briefed on the purpose of the study and the focus of the questions that were to be asked in the interview. There was no pre-determined length of time for each interview, but consideration was given to the participants’ schedules.

It turned out that interviews ranged from one to two hours and the recorded section of the interview was from 30 minutes to 1 hour. (these interview procedures/techniques were in part taken from Siedman, 1995)

Each interview was held in a non-threatening environment on the students’ campuses. In almost all cases interviews were held in empty classrooms in the students' respective campuses. In a few cases interviews were conducted in a quiet corner of the campus cafeteria.

As sound quality was of utmost importance when using a tape recording device, care was taken to locate a place where outside interference was reduced to a minimum. Therefore, in most cases, reasonably sound-proof classrooms in the respective private colleges were used.
The following section details the procedures used for data collection and the way data were handled for further examination.

**Data Collection/Recording**

All interviews were recorded on a cassette tape recorder with a single line microphone. While taping the interviews the researcher simultaneously used the question checklist to record memos of the meeting. All interviews were transcripted and saved as computer word processor documents. The documents were printed and examined for coding and category formation. The interview tapes were transcribed by the researcher and some tapes were also reviewed by a competent professional.

The following section explains the procedures used to manipulate the data for use in a discussion of the findings.
Analyses Procedures

A non-mathematical procedure was applied to produce the findings from the interviews, along with some limited observations, and documents pertaining to Chinese-Malaysian students’ circumstances. Through a systematic collection and analyses of data the researcher constructed an inductively derived theory of the area under study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) which is presented through a narrative of the situation studied.

When using non-mathematical procedures to evaluate a case, the researcher must be aware of the few detailed methods available. Of the approaches designated under qualitative procedure “the grounded theory approach” is one of the most prevalent these days. Simply, “Grounded Theory is but one of the interpretive methods that share the common philosophy of phenomenology” (Stern, in Morse, pg. 213). These types of methods are used to describe the relationships between a subject’s intrapsychic experience and the surrounding world. The genre of phenomenological methods, being detailed and overly concerned with word
meaning, will not serve correctly in leading to the types of answers in this study.

In order to answer the questions put forth in this study a more direct and simpler approach employed the reasoning of a planned method and yet the ability to employ changes as needed while the study was in action. Mainly, the attempt to answer research questions using verbal material (interviews) is a researcher’s interpretive method, thus a procedure is needed in order to uphold validity in the research findings. But this procedure should not be strict as a strict mechanical procedure will inevitably create gaps in understanding.


- **Identify topics** - compare interview data with questions, finding topics in the data;
- **Cluster topics into categories** - scrutinize data in order to create categories;
- **Form categories into patterns** - to discover patterns that hold from subject to subject;
• Make explanations from the patterns – think of ways to explain the patterns; and

• Use the explanations to answer research questions – present plausible theories to answer the questions.

In this study, dependent on verbal data, the data could be prone to errors due to researcher-bias and subjectivity of interpretation. In order to combat this problem initial analysis of data took place immediately after contact with each participant, as this insured trustworthiness of the information gathered.

Thus, as soon as the first participant was interviewed the analyses began. Data analyses and collection in a sense must be tightly interwoven and occur alternately because such analyses direct the collection of further data. The outcome of this back and forth movement between data collection and data analyses provides an overall theory for the situation being studied, and resembles Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The procedure used in this study, not only did it allow the testing of existing theories relevant to the study, but in several areas contributions were made by:
building of new theory, validating that theory, reducing biases brought about through normal processes of research, and creating a theory which closely represented the reality of the participants.

In this study, the intent was to make a discovery, to build upon knowledge that has not been researched to this point and to create an understanding (low level theory) which may be used in subsequent studies to further enhance our understanding of Chinese-Malaysian students in private college American university transfer programs. The analyses herein are an interpretation of reality and should be viewed as such.

The Interviews/Transcripts

Since the data were in the form of recorded interviews it was possible to examine them in their transcribed form. Thus all taped interviews were transcribed with use of a typist and tape player.

The data, in the form of transcripted interviews, were coded. The coding, which loosely followed the guidelines
set forth by Strauss and Corbin (1990) separated sections of data based on responses to similar questions. Because the open ended questions asked during the interview process were mostly the same for all respondents, the answers were similar enough in many cases to draw comparisons based on the responses generated by the respondents.

The research did not take a look at word level analysis, as one of the predominant assumptions of the study has been the acceptance of answers. The study assumed that the participants have answered in an honest and realistic fashion.
Introduction

While watching a recent documentary on Margaret Mead in Bali and elsewhere, a question was posed “how does this Balinese baby become Balinese?”. The picture on TV showed a baby emulating the calculated and learned moves of a Balinese dancer. The answer to the question may sound simplistic as it could be said to be socialization which creates the Balinese.

The Balinese baby grows up listening and watching its elders and the others around. Through time, the baby learns to imitate, its powers of observation and the long-term effects of social education transform the baby into a Balinese. Consequently, in time, the baby will participate in the culture and become an accepted member of that society. Thus, the documentary is an eloquent way to exemplify some particular aspect of human interaction. In a
fairly homogenous society, like that of Bali, the answer is more simplistic as the baby will most probably learn to become a member of that society by emulation of the members of society with whom that baby comes into contact.

In Malaysia the process of socialization becomes more complex. Malaysia is a country consisting of multi-ethnic/racial peoples professing and emulating different ways of life. There is a strong omnipresent struggle which coalesces Malaysians along ethnic lines rather than along a Malaysian line. Thus, a Malaysian youth experiences the pushes and pulls of acculturation to his/her ethnic line, all the while observing ethnic traditions around him/her but usually not participating in any but the traditions that their narrow ethnic identity dictates.

Malaysia, like other pluralistic societies presents a complex mix of cultural choices in which its youth may follow. However, there are various ways in which the case of Malaysia may differ. Being a new nation, consisting of strong willed ethnic groups, Malaysians have confronted the need to place national effort on assimilation of ethnicities, in order to create a harmonious society.
This dialogue is a reference to state supported social engineering. The use of blatant social engineering policy on a national scale is not unprecedented by any stretch of the imagination. In this particular case we can see a series of social experiments in forced amalgamation of varying cultures to create what still remains a segregated community of peoples as disparate as they ever were. Of course, the hope of the people of Malaysia, we would think, would be continued prosperity and harmonious relations within their community.

Nevertheless, what the astute observer will see is a people begging for ethnic recognition against the will of a unilateral policy toward support for one dominant way of life. It is with these thoughts in mind that a discussion of the research findings begins. The findings are based upon in country observations, limited documents and interviews, leading to an answer to the research question presented in Chapter I.
The Research Question

This study is concerned with describing and analyzing factors that may contribute to Chinese-Malaysian students’ decisions to attend a private college, American university transfer program.

This objective was the focus of the study’s research question, in addition subquestions were planned to clarify the intent of the main question:

The Research Question(s)

- What are the factors [social, economic, political] motivating Chinese-Malaysians’ to attend a private college, American university transfer program?

The Subquestions are:

- What general factors are identified by Chinese-Malaysians’ for attending a private college, American university transfer program?

- What political factors have influenced Chinese-Malaysians’ to seek a private/foreign education?

- What ethnic influences have influenced Chinese-Malaysians’ to seek a private/foreign education?
• What societal factors have influenced Chinese-Malaysians’ to seek a private/foreign education?

• Is a key factor from the students’ perspective, that private colleges in Malaysia, will provide access to an institution in the USA?

• Do the participants understand any existing conditionalities in their future hope to matriculate into an American university (e.g., GPA, SAT (equivalent), TOEFL, and time to complete degree factors)?

• How has attending a private college helped Chinese-Malaysians’ to prepare for an education in the USA (with regard to course content in Malaysia compared to what is expected in the USA)?

• How will a higher education degrees from the United States improve Chinese-Malaysians’ social mobility?

• What increases/decreases in educational opportunity are seen from the possibility of attending a private college?

These research questions were addressed by describing the results of interviews with students, the use of supporting documents where it is deemed appropriate and descriptions from the researchers point of view. This effort was supported by use of a ‘narrative-form’ description of the situation in Malaysia, which is believed
to have brought about changes that direct Chinese-Malaysians to private colleges.

Through the process of constantly comparing data and categorization during and after the data collection period, topics of major concern emerged from the data. These topics will be discussed in this chapter. The results of this in depth discussion will generate answers to the research question(s) prescribed in the statement of the problem found in Chapter I.

The remainder of this chapter is organized into topical sections. Topics build upon each other to create a better understanding of the situation which forces Chinese Malaysians to seek alternative forms of post-secondary education. At the end of some sections will be found tables which detail questions or topics talked about in the interviews. The questions/topics are listed on the right column and responses on the left column.
The problem explored in this research, although it may appear simplistic, has proven to be a very elaborate and intertwined combination of complex variables based on both historical and modern ethnic trends in Malaysia. The following narratives will demonstrate this very point.

For the observer of Malaysian society, the most striking feature that should appear is that Malaysia is not the harmonious nation that government pamphlets and glitzy tourist brochures lead one to believe. Instead one will see a country where the main ethnic groups (namely Malays, Chinese and Indians) appear as separate entities or clusters in which the members live their lives within their respective communities rather than as members of a nation of citizens. In fact, the word citizen may or may not apply here as the basic rights of citizenship, amongst which one will find access to rights and power, freedom of speech and equality before the law (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 1994, p.54), are many times circumvented by the ruling elite's policies.
The divergences created by ethnic policies reflect social paths based on socio-religious lines rather than nationalistic lines. What occurs is a situation whereby machinations created by the government serve to segregate the population more than bring it together. Gavin, a male student in a private college related his feelings in this way:

It's true that the Malays in my country have got special priorities in almost all aspects. For instance, if one is going to borrow from the bank to purchase a house, there's gonna be different interest rates for different races. For Malays, the interest rates are definitely lower than for Chinese and Indians. But, surprisingly, Chinese still manage to survive until now. We (Chinese) have not been treated equally by our government. We know about it but we still work in our best interests. Of course, as far as the Malays and the Chinese are concerned, the distribution of wealth is not equal because Malays tend to have more priorities and special treatments than Chinese. But, we just do whatever we think is appropriate

Most of the Chinese associate with only Chinese as do the other groups with their members (see Table 2). It is possible that the perpetuation of segregation is due in part to the substantial numbers in each respective group. Thus each group can and does support societal activities
based on ethnic lines. Of major assistance to the segregation of ethnic groups may be the languages spoken, feelings of alienation when in a group of different ethnicities and others reason which serve to keep the groups from interacting. This is not to say that some members of each group do not cross the ethnic lines to form friendships, but by-and-large they do keep their distance from each other, thus, promoting racial segregation.

The following table reflects the interviewed students ideas on their willingness to make friends with those of a different ethnic group in Malaysia. The students were asked the question: Do you make friends with non-Chinese? Or a question similar to that. Their responses are reported on the right half of the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exact or similar question asked</th>
<th>Response or response rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you make friends with non-Chinese?</td>
<td>10 of the 20 responded by explaining that they don’t mix with others ethnicities, 4 said they don’t try at all, 2 said they have many friends from other groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of major importance in the continuance of segregation in the social arena has been the importance of different religious mores, eating habits and languages. The following is an outline of some of the features to draw a better understanding of the situation. Thus, the next three sections will be labeled food, religion and language. These three sections will detail ways in which the people of Malaysia perpetuate social segregation, thus making it more difficult for them to unify as a nationalistic population.

Food

Muslims throughout the world adhere to a diet based on Halal foods. This diet, strict in its prohibition of swine (pork), follows strict preparation guidelines and forbids the consumption of alcohol. The Malays (all being Muslim) must follow the Halal guidelines in order to remain pure in the eyes of their god (Allah). Thus, this also means that they do not eat the food prepared by others, unless they are certain that it was prepared in a Halal manner.
The Chinese diet has few restrictions. In fact the Chinese can and do eat any type of food they wish. The only exception may be those who follow strict Buddhist teachings whereby they should not eat beef or beef products. This is similar to the Hindu protection of cows and strict rejection of beef products.

Food is a big part of any nation’s culture, and as noted there are great obstacles restricting the interaction of Malaysia’s ethnicities with regard to food. The people are rarely found eating together or sharing their cultures’ foods. Of course the non-Muslims may eat Muslim food, but there is little incentive to try your neighbor's food if your neighbor rejects yours. As a result food and the social interactions invariably associated with eating together form a strong barrier dividing Malaysia’s major population groups.

Religion

It has been said earlier that the definition of a Malay (constitutional, not anthropological definition) is
one who professes Islam as his or her religion, one who
speaks Bahasa Malaysia as a native tongue and one who
practices the cultures and customs of the Malay people. As
one can see, the Malays must follow Islam as their chosen
religion, they have no choice in the matter. In fact there
are some ways which are permitted to covert to others
religions but the process is so complex and demoralizing
that practically none would try it. Instead they may simply
stop practicing Islam, but they would not allow others to
know this, as it would surely lead to ostracism and
possible legal action.

Many Malay youth do not follow the strict doctrines of
Islam as many commit Haaram (sin) on a regular basis. One
can find them fornicating in hidden places, drinking
alcohol and smoking cigarettes, to name a few of the
practices they do engage in. All of these are taboos under
the laws of the Qur’an (the Islamic holy book). This lack
of adherence to the strict rules presents many complex
issues. One must remember that Islam is the State religion
which the government uses to label and segregate races and
ethnicities.
The Chinese follow varying religious traditions -- some from their ancestral homeland and others who follow the Bible as a holy book. And yet, surprisingly, more and more seem to be rejecting religion all together and labeling themselves as freethinkers, agnostics and even atheists. The students interviewed in this study may be indicative of Chinese Malaysian youth of today. Of the 23 asked their religion, five answered Catholic, four answered Christian (of which one is Lutheran, one is Presbyterian, one is Baptist and the other simply said Christian), five answered freethinker, four answered Buddhist and one each answered Taoist and Buddhist/Taoist (see demographic, educational and religion data found in Appendix D).

This represents the relative diversity in religious beliefs amongst the Chinese Malaysian college students. Most striking is that few self-profess to following their ancestors’ religious doctrines. These students’ ancestral lineage are traced back to the Hakka, Hokkien, Cantonese, Teo-Chew and various other southern coastal Chinese provinces. Thus, their ancestral religions may be linked more to Asian philosophical heritages including Buddhist,
Taoist and Confucian practices, but their modern day practices are divergent from those heritages.

The Indians in Malaysia generally are free to pick and choose their religion as are the other non-Malays. Thus they tend to follow a mixture of religious heritage as do the Chinese, but in particular they follow the religions of their ancestors, both Islam and Hinduism.

The indigenous peoples of Malaysia are also free to follow the religion of their choice, granted that they have not previously been converted to Islam. Thus they follow mixtures of ancestral animist and tribal religions along with some who have been converted to the various Christian beliefs dating back to the European colonial periods and the religious values imposed by the colonial rulers.

One may think that there is no religious conflict in Malaysia because so many religions coexist and the government professes religious freedom. Nevertheless, strife is brought about due to the dominating effect of a state religion imposing its beliefs upon the populace. Without agreement amongst the minority groups, Islam is represented as a national religion and receives state
support in many ways. The result is a hidden tension and resentment on the part of the non-Muslims.

The values and doctrines of Islam reign supreme and are visible through the massive Islamic infrastructure which may seem to be omnipresent at times. Mosques are placed throughout the land without regard for the local inhabitants’ religious needs. A central feature on all public university campuses is the Mosque, a place where the devout may congregate and or socialize when the time is right. The use of the Arabic language can be seen throughout Malaysia, as all government buildings and many private offices are inscribed with Arabic words to emphasize their religious dominance. This is somewhat paradoxical as few if any in Malaysia use the Arabic language, so thus the writing on buildings and elsewhere are simply symbolic in nature.

Religion in the Educational System

An interesting feature of the Malaysian educational system is moral education. “The stated aim of the
curriculum is the development of a ‘morally-mature’ person who will be able to make independent judgements in moral conflict situation.” (Mukherjee, 1983, p. 125) Of major consequence is the fact that Muslim students are not required to take this course.

The course is designed to indoctrinate the non-Muslims with virtues deemed unavailable in the non-Muslim moral values. The course follows a planned sequence of experiences and activities, both formally and informally designed to direct students to identify and clarify values based on religious tradition (mostly traditions from Islam). Furthermore, the class instills the principles outlined in Rukunegara, which is the “five pillars of the nation” (i.e., Belief in God, Loyalty to King and Country, Upholding the constitution, Rule of Law, Good conduct and Morality).

Language

Language in its simplest form can be thought of as a way to communicate. Communication works only if the
parties understand each other’s form of communication. In Malaysia a major divisive issue has been the lack of a commonly accepted form for communication.

As with all immigrant societies, the new-comers need to learn the language of the new land in order to succeed. In Malaysia, after time, the immigrants were able to form large enough communities to circumvent a need to communicate in any language but their native tongues. The groups were able to perpetuate their cultures and conserve their mother tongues with efficiency. This obviously has created a society in which linguistic based tensions have reinforced ethnic segregation.

During the British colonial times, the language de facto of power and prestige became English. Thus, much of the educated and business class communicated in their mother tongue, plus English. Until today, the English language has remained a language of almost universal commonality in Malaysia. This of course does not bode well with the stern policy objective of the early 1970’s to create a unified nation abiding by the Malay language,
Malay culture and Islamic religion pursuant to state approved policy.

Today it is not uncommon to find more and more families of all ethnicities but primarily the Chinese and Indians, using English as a first language and encouraging the use of English in the general public. The paradox of this is that Bahasa Malaysia is the state supported language and thus the sole publicly supported language of instruction.

Of the students in this study all rated their English skills above those of their Bahasa Malaysia (see Table 3). Thus, a pattern of rejection of Bahasa Malaysia is apparent. Although all students are encouraged to learn Bahasa Malaysia, they rarely wish to continue its usage after schooling. Instead they are encouraged to use a combination of their mother tongue and English, when in either social or familial situations.

Some Chinese-Malaysians take their rejection of Bahasa Malaysia to extremes. In an interview with one female student, the issue about language came up. She said that she converses with her friends in English. I asked “What if
you see a Malay? What do you do?” she said “I do not talk
to them” I said “you don’t talk to them at all?” she said
“No. I just talk in English. If they talk to me in Malay, I
just talk in English.” This shows she has no desire to use
Bahasa Malaysia, possibly rejecting it because of its being
imposed upon her ethnicity. Her lack of caring and respect
for the Malays demonstrates an ingrained pattern of
rejection. Earlier in the interview I talked to the same
girl about her experiences with Malays. She discussed how
much she dislikes Malays and told a story about how she has
been the brunt of hateful practices at the hands of Malays.

This is just one example of how the Chinese reject
Bahasa Malaysia as a common language of communication. In
fact all of the students interviewed responded in a like
manner suggesting that they did not wish to use Bahasa
Malaysia regardless of the context. Thus, they revert to
their first language more and more, whether it be English
or one of the Chinese languages. With the added incentive
for this group to master English for future studies abroad
there may be a lessening need to use Bahasa Malaysia.
With a clearer understanding of cultural features which serve to segregate Malaysians we can now focus on the research findings. The following section will discuss governmental discriminatory practices leading to a greater disunity and ultimately the need for the Chinese Malaysians to seek private education.

**Keeping the Chinese Out**

The interviews with Chinese-Malaysian students in private college American university transfer programs revealed significant insights with regard to reasons for their persistence in the private colleges. Those significant were related to issues which could be categorized as governmental discrimination, and which have resulted in Chinese-Malaysian students' enrollment in the private colleges.

The students interviewed consistently responded to questions regarding their reason for attending these colleges with remarks on politics and the ethnic based quota system in Malaysian universities. They
overwhelmingly felt that they have been unjustly shutout from the public university/tax supported educational system due to heavy-handed policies restricting matriculation based on ethnic affinity. In order to probe their understanding of these policies they were asked, ‘Did you apply for a public university?’ (Appendix A, Question Checklist).

William, a 19 year old business administration major, responded by saying:

no… Because it’s very difficult to enter… First thing is politically, in Malaysia, although there are few [universities], there are {pause} it's like five to six local universities which are government universities and up to now we have no privatize university. So the [quota] is very heavy in favor of the Malays.

It is clear that William and the others like him, do have strong feelings about the quota system that keeps them from attending the public universities (see Table 3 for questions and responses to similar questions). William thinks that the quota system has helped to reduce the quality of education in the public universities. When asked ‘What is your perception about the public universities in Malaysia?’ he responded:
Since they [the government] are setting this quota, I don't think the quality [of education] is very good, because why? For example, they set a quota of 75 percent for native students [Malays]. ... In case they don't have that number of Malay students they would try to squeeze the Malay students in, no matter how they scored on their SPM test.

The quota referred to is a common issue of discourse when discussing inequality. Although the quotas are cited time and time again, the reality is that few know the real quota percentages as this information is tightly controlled by the Malaysian government. Thus, the students and academicians alike can only go on estimates. Regardless, those like William have ingrained the notion that they will be shut-out due to their not being from the correct ethnic group.

Due to the widespread understanding of the way the quotas discriminate against non-Malay students, the Chinese are highly discouraged to even attempt to apply to the public universities (see Table 3). Many learn early on that it is useless to focus on attempting to gain admission to a public university. Su, a 26 year old psychology major, represented this defeatist idea well when she said:
... unless you happen to do STPM and if you think about going to a local university. I mean, people still do, but it's not first on their mind. It's like it's the last option if they don't get what they want, if they've not been offered what they want to do, or even if they have no ambition.

Su expresses her feeling that Chinese-Malaysians attempt to enter public universities as a last choice. In fact they may choose various other options if they have the money. Presently, the degree is not as important in Malaysia as it is the USA. In Malaysia they may choose to enter a diploma course for some skill or trade. Su asserts that many students don’t give the public system much thought, in the following quote she shows that the alternative to public education may be a decent choice.

"...they'll say, "Oh, I'll just go do a diploma in secretaryship or certificate in marketing," ... and then you come out and you can start working. ...people [Chinese-Malaysians] are conditioned that way, and people don't try too hard to fight for what they know they don't get at the end of the day.

The admission quota for public universities is not a simple problem. The students revealed that it is not only an issue based on the number or percentage admitted according to ethnic affinity, but also the alienation
generated by this policy is even more deep seated. In an interview with Ketty, a 17 year old business and mass communications major, she revealed her resentment was not only based on the fact that there is a strong quota, but also on the way in which they choose students to enter the public university. Ketty discussed the deplorable way in which Malay students are allowed advancement into the university based on much lower entrance scores than the Chinese.

This resentment stems not only from the way students are admitted but also from the fact that those not admitted are then forced to pay high fees to gain a university degree. Chee, a 19 year old management information systems major, said:

... they give them [Malays] chances to enter [public university] in order of their race, like they got to study at U [university], ... We have to pay ourselves for our education. It's not fair... I'm Malaysian also, right? So I am supposed to get this opportunity to get to study in a local U, if I get such a good result back [on the SPM and STPM]. They just give the Malays all the chances. ... although the Malays just get average result.
Eric, a 20 year old Engineering student, feels that the government makes it easy for the Malay students to enter the public university. He stated:

It's because of the quota -- the government sets a quota and makes it easier {pause} they make it easier for the Malays you know? ... and they've got a lot of scholarship opportunities, and generally they are the first accepted into the universities.

From Eric’s perspective not only do are the standards appear lowered for the Bumiputera (mainly the Malay) students, but they get added incentives through scholarships. This even extends to ethnic based student loans and other financing options for education not available to non-Malays. In a 1985 study by Mehmet and Hoong, they concluded that “the distribution of government scholarships is heavily pro-Malay”. This lopsided distribution of public scholarships deeply hurts the non-Malays.

Thus, when Chee talks of resentment for having to pay more, he is not only referring to tuition costs, but to a whole host of expenses that go toward college support (room, board, tuition, books, supplies, transportation and
etc...). The extra expenses are a burden for the non-wealthy and a double burden for the non-Malay as they carry the burden of their resentment for their being excluded.

From the students’ perspectives they are not only being denied chances to fairly enter an educational system, but they are being financially punished because of the added expense for private education. Whether right or wrong the students have created a pattern of resentment toward the Malay-centric system of education.

Many of the Chinese students learn early on that it may be futile to even try to apply to a public university. Su, says that they are conditioned to understand the differences between the Malay and non-Malay:

... it's just very obvious that Chinese feel that way. The lack of priorities we get, the lack of privileges we get. We've been made to feel that way since we are young, so we know.

From childhood the Chinese learn their place in society, and that that place will be different from the place of the Malays. Many aspects of life in Malaysia present dual systems for the Malay and non-Malay,
especially university entrance has been an area on which Chinese disapproval focuses.

In order to gain entrance to a public university the Chinese must complete the Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia (STPM). The STPM is actually a test at the end of one’s upper secondary schooling, but it is many times referred to as the last two years of secondary school. Upper secondary is a standardized preparatory education meeting the entry requirements of the public universities in Malaysia. The STPM is the only route available for Chinese students to enter a public university, while the Malay students may take a different route (Malaysian Students Department, 1994, Kua, 1993). They can enter a matriculation program (2 year university preparatory program for Malays only) after completion of the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM). This ethnically biased matriculation scheme for university entrance creates great division and instills negativity amongst the non-Malays towards the Malays.

The Chinese are under the impression that the Malay route to higher education is watered down, while they have
to study harder and obtain much higher scores than their Malay counterparts in the matriculation programs. Further, from examples experienced they have learned that even scoring highly on the STPM is no assurance of gaining entrance to a university, not to mention a university of choice or an intended program of study. Eric stated:

...because there are a lot of cases where students study for their STPM, and they are not given a place in local universities, and most of the time when they enroll for one subject and one course and they're given another course instead.

Su says:

... you would have to fight and struggle to go through quite a sickening process. We have heard tons of stories that hardly any Chinese get to go in the university anyway, so why bother? And you can be sure that even the laziest Bumi [Malay] kid in town who lives in the rural area will probably get a chance to get in and not you, so why bother, right?

In many cases a Chinese student feels that it is useless to attempt the route to a public university. Their friends and families many times encourage them to not attempt the STPM as it is a gamble. They are not only gambling on their chances to enter a university but the gamble is also measured in time. With the route to a
private college before them, they can see that the STPM is an unneeded burden in their lives. Alternatively, Malaysian private colleges accept students right after the SPM, thus saving them two years of study in the STPM.

Having understood that the government emphasizes on Malay participation in educational endeavors at the expense of the non-Malay, it is easy to comprehend the domino-like-effect that pushes the non-Malay from any desire to persist in efforts to enroll in public supported post-secondary education.

We can conclude that the major reason for Chinese-Malaysians in pursuing a private education is the governmental policy of preferential treatment granted to the Malays at the detriment of the non-Malays. Without this heavy-handed policy there would be no issue to discuss, as this policy is the preemptive factor of educational discrimination by the government. (see table 3 for further reason for not attempting to attend a government sponsored university)

The preceding sections discussed significant reasons for Chinese-Malaysians to attend private colleges. The next
will consider the quality of education and following thereafter is a discussion on the acceptability of a private/overseas degree.

Table 3: Reasons for not attempting matriculation to a government university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic or question asked</th>
<th>Response or response rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How is your English compared to your Bahasa Malaysia?</td>
<td>All said that their English was better. Half of them feel their English is better than their Chinese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you apply to a local university?</td>
<td>Of the 20 asked, only 2 applied to a local university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who discouraged you from applying to the public university?</td>
<td>Most answered their parents and friends (15 out of 20), a few answered their teachers and classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did they discourage you from attempting to enter the public university system?</td>
<td>Quotas -- 20 out of 20 Quality of education -- 5 Language of instruction -- 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel you were shutout of public higher education?</td>
<td>17 out of 19 answered emphatically yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why don’t you attend a public university?</td>
<td>All of the respondents talked of the quota system as being the reason blocking their possible matriculation to the local universities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quality of Education

“How far the schools do develop desirable mental attitudes and abilities emerges, thus, as the central underlying question of the education/development debate.” (Dore, 1976, pg. 95)

As Dore has said, the school’s central job is that of developing desirable mental attitudes and abilities. In the case of Malaysia, as we have seen, the government is using education as a mode to equalize a perceived imbalance in life outcomes. If the central focus is on equity, then quality can not be the major focus. The need for equity is based on the notion that the Malays have been oppressed economically and educationally, thus they need assistance to gain ground and increase their chances to achieve better social mobility. Rather than a focus on better quality education, the policy statements focus solely on increasing the numbers of Malays placed in university programs. Coupled with a lack of focus on quality of education the system does not encourage critical and open thinking. Kua Kia Soong, a former professor of sociology in the UK, Malaysia and Singapore says:
The lack of democracy in schools, universities and in Malaysian society in general has led to the negative and adverse aspects often bemoaned by observers: Students are not trained to think critically and rationally; they are not taught to be independent-minded and problem solvers nor encouraged to freely express themselves. The Universities and Universities Colleges Act, for one, prohibits students from taking an active part in real political and social issues. (Kua, 1992, p. 138)

The method chosen to assist the Malays is publicly funded educational advancement at the expense of the non-Malays. The negative side of this may be that public education actually declines in quality due to and inordinate amount of unqualified candidates (both students and staff) being placed in positions they have not earned.

Consequently, the students interviewed had a negative perception of the quality of education in the local universities. They have determined that private sector college education linked to overseas university studies offers the best quality of education available to them. Edwin, a 19 year old mechanical engineering student, said:

...When you graduate with a local degree, you will not have as much quality as a person from overseas. I think the local universities,
lecturers, are not that qualified compared to overseas lecturers. And the problem of the main language they're using BM [Bahasa Malaysia], some are in English, and I'm not sure about this, but I heard friends saying that they are taught in English and the exams are in BM, so I do not know how that works out.

Edwin presents the argument that the local universities are not at an academic standard comparable to private colleges and overseas education, due to language differentiation. This shows that the Chinese not only wish not to use Bahasa Malaysia in everyday life, but they also reject the possibility of Bahasa Malaysia being a plausible academic language. Many of the Chinese become convinced in growing up, that Bahasa Malaysia is not a valuable language. Their families many times do not support or encourage the children to use Bahasa Malaysia. Su says:

...so I guess I happened to be brought up in an environment whereby my family is not very pro-Bahasa or pro-Malay, you know. They're not racist but they're just not for it.
In fact this problem of a lack of value being placed on Bahasa Malaysia is more severe than it may appear. Until the late 70’s all universities in Malaysia used English as an instructional language. The curricula were designed pursuant to the British model and faculty could be freely exchanged from British to Malaysian universities.

With the change of language of instruction came a change in the ethnicity of the faculty and staff (shifted to more and more Malays) along with the curricula and quality of education. These days demanding university instructors complain of their students’ lack of preparedness to study. In fact many qualified instructors are leaving academia or seeking jobs in the private educational sector. The leaving instructors state that they find no incentive left in the public university system, that standards have declined throughout the past years and they feel their skills are not being used to the fullest. Silverman (1996) discusses the issue of educational quality decline and the shift to a more complacent public higher education.
The lack of quality in education can be expressed through a lack of standards but it also can be seen in terms of the methods that the Chinese have experienced in order to exclude them from the local university system. When exam scores are based on ethnicity and not on the quality of one’s work, a feeling of hopelessness for the system of education develops. Most Chinese have stories of how they, or someone they know, was cheated of rightful grade(s) due to an over zealous system which promotes Malays at the cost of others. Su related a story of her friend who was cheated of her proper grade:

... I had a family friend who was the top girl in school, the top academically, everything top, and yet the so-called marking system for the SPM failed her Bahasa Malaysia so she couldn't go to a local U, she couldn't advance to do her STPM ...

In Malaysia there are many stories of the improper marking of exams at the expense of the non-Malays (see table 4). It may be that they are exaggerating their fears and anxieties about failing and thus placing the blame on the Malays. While this is impossible to prove the stories
are their perceptions of the reality, which may or may not hold credence.

The final significant finding from the interviews with Chinese Malaysian students showed that they have developed a sense of bias in favor of the overseas degree. This bias is an extension of many factors, but primarily it may be linked to work opportunities based on the type of degree obtained, public or overseas. Through numerous interviews with employers in Malaysia, it was found that the private sector prefers those with English overseas education. On the other hand, the civil service remains the domain dominated by the public schooled.

Table 4: Perceptions on quality of education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic or question asked</th>
<th>Response or response rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents want them to have better English skills</td>
<td>9 students said their parents encouraged them to work on their English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students wanting advanced knowledge that they thought they would get from the US.</td>
<td>All of the students were under the impression that education in the US is more advanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of speech in the US will promote their knowledge</td>
<td>Most of the students believe that freedom promotes learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewees had a negative perception of quality of education in local universities.</td>
<td>7/20 had extreme feelings while 13/20 had mild feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is private or public education better?</td>
<td>2 of the 20 students asked feel that public universities offer better education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are private colleges better because</td>
<td>3 said they prefer Chinese but</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acceptability of Degree

Beyond the reasons discussed in the previous section, the students showed great admiration for degrees obtained overseas. On the one hand, a degree is the essential certificate for entrance to a life of upward social mobility. On the other hand, they clearly see that an overseas degree is valued even higher than that of a local degree. Salary is a significant factor when computing one's opportunity costs for attending higher education, thus Edwin says:

... even for basic pay, you get more [salary] if you graduate from a foreign university.
Education is not just for learning in their perspective. With the high costs involved in higher education, especially private and overseas education, students feel compelled to justify their educational choices based on income probabilities.

In addition to income, the students focused on the benefits of improving their English as a way to justify private education. Pok, a 21 year old business major, said:

... so my choice -- so I choose to go to private school because I want to improve my English.

Going on, he combines his desire for better English skills with his parents’ directive that he must gain experience and basic skills:

Because they don't want us to touch his [father’s] business right now, and because he wants us to learn more knowledge so that when we come out from the school we can be of help. And my parents want us to know how to write, especially in English. For my parents, also influence our thinking because they think that English is the most important communication nowadays, and beside this my father always deals with other foreigners, so speaking English is very important for us.
It is not clear how much influence his parents have in his choice, but what is clear is that his community ingrains the notion that English is good for one’s life. In addition, his parents, as do the other Chinese parents, reinforce this notion by sending their children to private colleges.

The developing world has been entrenched in a concept that things from the developed world are better. This notion is reflected in their buying habits and through their adaptation of things from the so-called modern world (especially the USA). With little doubt, it can be said that the United States is a world focus for advanced knowledge. But, this notion carries with it a reciprocal negative bias on knowledge produced in the developing world. The students in this study many times stated that one reason for seeking American education was based on the advanced knowledge that they would gain from a program of studies in the USA. (see table 5 for more student responses on similar questions) Hui-Min, a 23 year old management information systems major, said this:
... I think we learn more from the USA, like they are more advanced, as compared to here. ... in technology, and science, and I think the freedom of talk and exchange opinions whatsoever, helps.

Her bias may be reality in some sense, but throughout their lives these students have been ingrained with the notion that that which is American is more advanced. She adds an interesting qualification to advanced knowledge by dwelling on freedom of speech. A common belief in the USA is that knowledge is stimulated through one’s ability to express and explore ideas freely. The significance of this point is much deeper than words can explain. Malaysia, since independence, regards free speech in a nature similar to the USA before our civil rights movement. The government through series of legislation has quelled any chance that the people may speak freely. Malaysians are compelled to self-censor their thoughts on social issues, lest they may be imprisoned for breach of the Internal Security Act or possibly the Official Secrets Act (see Appendix B for a description of these acts). These acts were created in the early 70’s to suppress opposition thought. They were enacted following protests and violence; the government
devised this method to crack down on the so-called dissidents (Kua, 1993).

The Internal Security Act made it illegal for students to “do anything which may be construed as expressing support, sympathy or opposition to any political party or trade union.” (Silverman, 1996, p. 25) This act is not only for students but in fact it is a breach of public trust for the whole of the nation. All Malaysians may be held for 15 months in jail without trial under this act.

The intriguing point about this is that little is known about what kinds of actions will lead to incarceration. Thus, Malaysians remain self-censored and refrain from openly discussing anything to do with politics, ethnic tensions or the special privileges enjoyed by the Malays. Furthermore, a lack of governmental transparency of policy and statistics keeps any debate from reaching critical status due to a lack of solid information available on any specific issue which may generate more tension.
Table 5: Why is an overseas degree more acceptable?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic or similar question asked</th>
<th>Response or response rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is an overseas degree is valued higher than a local degree?</td>
<td>All respondents seem to think an overseas degree is more valuable than a locally earned degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why are overseas degrees higher valued than local university degrees?</td>
<td>Better English skills gained through study in an English speaking country. Advanced knowledge acquisition. Freedom of speech promotes better learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through informal interviews with teachers and employers. Found that they too value overseas degrees because...</td>
<td>The quality of education in the local universities has dropped dramatically. Thus a student educated overseas has a better chance of a quality education. Employers prefer their workers to be fluent in English. Thus a bias for private college and foreign English university educated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

In this study the students clearly showed their perceptions and negativity towards an oppressive system which treats them as second class citizens. On one hand one must understand that Malaysia historically must concern itself with intervention to stimulate a harmonious society. Being a pluralistic society with no clear majority group, the Malays latched onto power and asserted their eminent domain on policy to better those they wish to assist.
The negative side of policies which assert ethnic superiority is rejection by the non-empowered groups. The non-Malays in this circumstance represent the groups with little say in the direction of policy decision making as such are relegated to a backseat. Equity programs, as those found in Malaysia, straddle a delicate balance of helping one group at the cost of another. The key to success in these programs is a most difficult task; it is the ability to know when enough has been done or when the program is effective or not effective in accomplishing equality in a society. If the students interviewed are a good indicator of how successful Malaysia’s equity program has been then it is clear to say that the program has overstepped its boundaries and has sustained negative results.

The next chapter will conclude with summarization points, and recommendations for further study.
CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This final chapter will be a compilation of summarizing points, conclusions of the research and recommendations for further study.

Summary and Conclusions

The findings of this study have opened a new perspective for educational studies on Malaysia. This study was not done in the typical method for studies on Malaysia. It is the first study on this topic and the first, as far as the author can tell, which uses student perceptions of the situation (tracking them into private colleges). This is unique, as many times, educational researchers overlook the students’ opinions in search of the experts' opinions on educational phenomena. In this case, the students’ perspectives were the focus and surprisingly resulted in
findings which contradict many present reports on education and society in Malaysia.

Malaysia was found to be a country under complex social tension which guides its policy and everyday thought. Thus, this study helps to create a better understanding of not only the working of society but in particular the thoughts and patterns of Chinese-Malaysians. It is not problematic to find academic literature about Chinese-Malaysians, but it is difficult to locate academic literature with their personal perspectives included in the study.

The major goal of this study was to explore and report on factors which influenced Chinese-Malaysians to attend a form of education which is considered peripheral to the public system. Private education in Malaysia is not simply a renegade system of education but it represents the empowerment of a group of people shut-out from the traditional system of education but who persist in educating themselves. Without assistance, and many times under severe attack by the government, private colleges in Malaysia have risen to a respectable level and have thus
proven worthy as a viable alternative means of quality education for those not seeking matriculation into the public system. The key to this success has been the students, and those who support them; their undying efforts for higher education have not been stopped even when they realized they could not be accepted into the tax supported system of higher education.

The study showed clearly how the government has established barriers, not only through ethnic quotas but also in social engineering, and yet the Chinese-Malaysians have circumvented those blockages by creating new opportunity from what was not there previously. The blockages created are largely the hidden quota system for matriculation into a public higher educational system. These results ensued by these blockages could further be described as the ethnic relations created through an umbrella set of policies which could better be defined as social engineering.

The fallacy inherent in social engineering to create ethnic harmony lies in the act of forcing humans to succumb to any particular way of life. It is commonly believed
that nation building must include assimilation and thus assimilation is the goal. This line of thought also asserts that assimilation of varying ethnic groups leads to harmony and of course a harmonious nation becomes peaceful and thus flourishes.

These notions are commonplace and yet defy reality. Those who advocate assimilation, like the government of Malaysia, have ignored the fact that cultural homogeneity may not bring about peace and prosperity. In fact the results of some social engineering projects may be worse than the original circumstances. In the case of Malaysia, one of the world’s most far-reaching equity plans has been enforced. This series of plans have continued since independence and picked up speed in the 70’s. But the reality is that 30 plus years of social engineering has done little to unite the Malays, Chinese, Indigenous and Indians into a common cultural/linguistic/religious or nationalistic entity.

One may look no further than South America, or the Arab nations which serve as good examples to show that the same religion and language is not enough to unite peoples
of differing ancestry, geographical regions and/or historical attributes. And yet Malaysia has rallied to the very principal that forcing its citizenry to follow one culture will create unity.

In contrast, Switzerland (one of the richest countries in the world, measured by GNP per capita) is probably the most effective example of a nation allowing, nurturing, and practicing multi-culturalism and multi-lingualism on a national scale. Switzerland’s four national languages transcend its cultural differences. And its two major religious groups contribute little to segregating its people.

With regard to Malaysia, a country rich in history and of great international significance, a policy of uni-cultural assimilation has shown to create schisms in societal relationship. A nation which used to be more accepting of differing cultural values, is now torn between its desire to propagate a national identity based on a narrow ethnic source.

The students interviewed in this study clearly showed how the governmental quota system and extensive
preferential policies for Malays has divided their loyalties. It may be true that Malaysia may never be able to get rid of some level of preferential policy, but to continue unequal treatment based on ethnicity alone is to proclaim that the state does not recognize equal status among its citizens. The Chinese-Malaysian students want nothing more than to be considered equals in their country, they want to love and cherish their nationality but are constantly reminded of their second class citizenship and thus harbor ill feelings based on the unequal treatment applied to their life standings.

Recommendations for Further Studies

This study was limited in scope due to various factors. As in all studies the number of participants must be limited to an obtainable and reasonable number in order to complete the study in a timely and yet thorough fashion. Now that the factors that lead to an understanding of Chinese-Malaysians’ matriculation in private college
American transfer programs are better understood, it may be possible to carry out a larger scale quantitative or qualitative study to substantiate reliability in the findings.

This study was concentrated on only the Chinese attending private college American university transfer programs, but in fact, it may be that the factors influencing Chinese students' entry into an American programs versus those of any other country may be the same factors. A useful study would include a comparison of factors for students attending not only the American university transfer programs but also the British, Australian, New Zealand and Canadian programs.

Basing the study on only Chinese students was a way to reduce comparisons on an ethnic level. In order to increase understanding among the other ethnic groups one may wish to do a further study in a similar manner on the Indian, Indigenous and Malay students.

And finally, more qualitative research should be done on the groups attending public higher educational institutions in Malaysia. At this point very few studies
are completed based on interviews with students. A focus on interviewing students should be continued as the results from talking to this under-interviewed group show striking contrast to the usual academic and or administratively generated data.
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APPENDIX
APPENDIX A - Question Checklist

Checklist of questions asked:

The first section is demographical information collected for ease of tracking students and possible further synthesis. The second section consists of open-ended interview questions. Questions were changed and adapted as needed to answer the research questions presented in Chapter I.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution name</th>
<th>What kind of secondary school did you attend?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘O’ Level Public Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locality</td>
<td>‘A’ Level Public Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Gender Male Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#1 Questions/demographics</td>
<td>What kind of primary school did you attend?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What was the language of instruction at your primary school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malay Chinese Tamil English Other Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion? Islam Christian Buddhist Hindi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other
____________________
age

your ethnicity/Race
Chinese
Malay
Indian
Other
____________________

Your intended area of Study
Humanities
Science
Social Studies
Other
____________________

#2 FAMILY
Family income *****
needs to be related to the SES strata present in Malaysia today *****
____________________

Parental education
Mark the categories completed:

Father
primary education
1. primary

Mother
primary education
1. primary

Secondary education
GCE ‘O’ completed
GCE ‘A’ completed
N/A

Secondary education
GCE ‘O’ completed
GCE ‘A’ completed
N/A
Sec ed. stream  
technical  
teaching  
arts  
science  
N/A

higher education  
certificate  
diploma  
degree  
N/A

Degree-level attained  
bachelors degree  
Masters degree  
Doctoral degree  
N/A

Field of Study (if known)  
Humanities  
Science  
Social Studies  
Other  
N/A

Father’s occupation  

Mother’s occupation  

#3 Educational desires  
Did you apply for a public institute of higher education?

Were you accepted at a public institute of higher education?

Why did you choose to go to this school?

English language emphasis

Overseas component

curriculum

teachers

Other ____________________

If accepted at one of Malaysia’s public universities would you attend?

Was school financing money a consideration when choosing this school?

Who pays your tuition and other schooling costs?

Did you apply for any scholarships before attending this school?

Why did you choose to attend this college?

Did you apply to other Schools?? if so where?? Why?
What is the attraction of attending a program overseas??

Knowledge acquisition

What do you feel about your experiences here at this college thus far? Is it rewarding?

How will you apply your knowledge learned in college to your future work??

What are your professional desires..
APPENDIX B - Internal Security Act

As cited from the HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH
{accessed March 24, 1999}


Internal Security Act

Malaysia's Internal Security Act provides for preventive detention for up to two years with the possibility of renewal every two years. Any police officer may, without a warrant, arrest and detain anyone he has "reason to believe" has acted or likely to act in "any manner prejudicial to the security of Malaysia." The act also allows for restrictions on freedom of assembly, association, and expression, freedom of movement, residence and employment. It allows for the closing of schools and educational institutions if they are used as a meeting place for an unlawful organization or for any other reason are deemed detrimental to the interests of Malaysia or the public. The right of ISA detainees to be fairly charged and tried is restricted not only by the provisions in the ISA for indefinitely renewable detention without trial, but also by a June 1989 amendment removing the jurisdiction of courts to hear habeas corpus petitions from ISA detainees. It was used to arrest political opponents of Mahathir in a major crackdown in 1987-88, as well as politicians in Sabah, east Malaysia, in 1990, whose party was considered a major rival to Umno. In November 1997 ten people were arrested under the ISA for allegedly spreading Shiite teachings deemed detrimental to national security; Muslims in Malaysia are Sunnis. In recent years, the law has also been used to arrest producers of false identity documents and work permits for foreign workers in Malaysia.

Official Secrets Act

Malaysia's Official Secrets Act is a broadly-worded law which carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, as
well as significant lesser penalties for the actions associated with the wrongful collection, possession or communication of official information. Any public officer can declare any material an official secret -- a certification which cannot be questioned in court. The act allows for arrest and detention without a warrant, and substantially reverses the burden of proof. It states that "until the contrary is proven," any of the activities proscribed under the act will be presumed to have been undertaken "for a purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of Malaysia." It is not necessary for the authorities to show that the accused person was guilty of particular act, and states that even if no act is proved, the accused person may still be convicted on the basis of "the circumstances of the case, his conduct or his known character...".
## APPENDIX C - Interview Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Date Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>William (male)</td>
<td>INTI</td>
<td>6/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kenny (male)</td>
<td>UKM</td>
<td>6/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mathew (male)</td>
<td>INTI</td>
<td>6/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ketty (female)</td>
<td>KDU</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Felix (male)</td>
<td>KDU</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chee (male)</td>
<td>KDU</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Eric (male)</td>
<td>TAYLORS</td>
<td>6/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Thomas (male)</td>
<td>KDU</td>
<td>6/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Raymond (male)</td>
<td>INTI</td>
<td>6/25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ben (male)</td>
<td>TAYLORS</td>
<td>6/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Angeline (female)</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>6/29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Seng Jiunn (male)</td>
<td>INTI</td>
<td>6/29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Edwin (male)</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>6/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Kelvin (male)</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>6/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Su-yen (female)</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>6/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Hui Min (female)</td>
<td>INTI</td>
<td>7/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Jumin (female)</td>
<td>INTI</td>
<td>7/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Eugene (male)</td>
<td>INTI</td>
<td>7/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Lee (male)</td>
<td>USM</td>
<td>7/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Tan (male)</td>
<td>USM</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Tee (female)</td>
<td>USM</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Susan (female)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Irene (female)</td>
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<td>Pok (male)</td>
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<td>7/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Patrick (male)</td>
<td>KDUP</td>
<td>7/17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D - Interviewee Characteristics
Index for Appendix C and D

Gender:
m = male f = Female

Colleges:
Inti = Inti College
Ukm = University Kebasaran Malaysia
Kdu = Kolej Damansara Utama
Taylor = Taylors college
sc = Sunway College
usm = Universiti Scien Malaysia
kdupg = Kolej Damasara Malaysia, in Penang

Language of instruction in primary and secondary schooling:
pub m = public education, instruction in Bahasa Malaysia
pub c = public education, instruction in Chinese
pub e = public education, instruction in English
pri c = private education, instruction in Chinese

Family income:
f inc = family income
mid mid = middle middle income status
up mid = upper middle income status
low mid = low middle income status

Intended major of study:
badmin = business administration
elec = electrical engineering
financ = finance
bs/masscom = business and mass communications
enginer = engineering
internat = international
mech = mechanical
comp = computer
mis = management information systems

Religions
Rel = religion
cath = Catholic
christi = Christian
budd = Buddhist
free = freethinker
luthe = Lutheran
bapti = Baptist
tao = Taoist
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/gender</th>
<th>college</th>
<th>age</th>
<th>primary</th>
<th>secondary</th>
<th>study</th>
<th>work</th>
<th>religion</th>
<th>fathers job</th>
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<td>PUB M</td>
<td>BADMIN</td>
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<td>MID</td>
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</tr>
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<td>UKM</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>PUB C</td>
<td>PUB M</td>
<td>ELECTR ENGINEER</td>
<td>MID</td>
<td>MID</td>
<td>CHRISTI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>21</td>
<td>PUB M</td>
<td>PUB M</td>
<td>FINANC</td>
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<td>BUDD</td>
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<td>PUB C/M</td>
<td>PUB M</td>
<td>MIS</td>
<td>MID</td>
<td>MID</td>
<td>PRESB</td>
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<td>PUB M</td>
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<td>PUB M</td>
<td>PUB M</td>
<td>ELECTR ENGINEER</td>
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<td>PUB M</td>
<td>ENGINEER</td>
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<td>MID</td>
<td>PROFESSOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pok M</td>
<td>KDU</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>PUB C/M</td>
<td>PUB M</td>
<td>BUSINESS</td>
<td>UPPER</td>
<td>MID</td>
<td>BUDD/TAO TOYS IMPORTER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick M</td>
<td>KDU</td>
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