

***Multiculturalism or Indigenous Canopy?:
Making Sense of the Different Trajectories of Pluralism in Southeast Asia***

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ABSTRAK

Kolonialisme Barat yang hegemonik membawa bersamanya proses pembaratan budaya. Proses ini tidak hanya berbentuk material ke Asia Tenggara tetapi juga berhasil memaksakan ide-ide intelektual yang membawa dampak transformatif pada masyarakat di kawasan ini. Salah satu yang terbaru, sebagaimana konsep JS Furnivall adalah pembentukan “masyarakat majemuk” di negara-negara jajahan yang akhirnya mencapai negara-negara merdeka yang modern. Beberapa diantara negara-negara merdeka ini berhasil melalui transformasi politik dan menghasilkan berbagai varian kemajemukan yang berakar dari model masyarakat plural. Malaysia dan Singapore adalah dua contoh yang berguna dalam konteks ini, tetapi keduanya sering diberi label sebagai “masyarakat multikultural” yang mempraktekkan multi-kulturalisme. Tulisan ini memaparkan argumen yang mungkin saja benar untuk kasus Singapura tetapi tidak demikian untuk kasus Malaysia.

Key Word: *pembangunan bangsa, negara bangsa, etnik, migrasi, kesatuan nasional, integrasi*

I. INTRODUCTION

Idea about social reality is value-loaded and relative in nature. The rich and powerful have not only the resources to determine but the ideology and institutional apparatus to impose their interpretation of the social reality on to others in the society. Thus, in the case of understanding Southeast Asian society and, especially Malaya/Malaysia, ethnic and sub ethnic diversity, Kerajaan and state, among others, could be problematic to comprehend, as there are contra-diction between such conceptual meaning among the local and that of the colonial masters. Thus, despite the colonial masters have been long gone from the region, their ghost if they were to exist, still blinded fellow citizens as they discourses the nation, nation-state,

nation-building, multi-culturalism, multi-ethnic society and etc.

The needs to understand local knowledge and the imported colonial knowledge are of utmost importance, as the intellectual origins of these two intellectual discourses differ from one another. The implications of their interpretation of the social reality if failed to manage would lead to misinterpretation, - and end in worthless conflict, though bloody in nature.

II. A SIMPLISTIC NOTION OF NATION BUILDING

A simplistic discourse on what is a nation-state simply means a community of individuals who

together live in a specific territory and share with other individuals a kinship tie, language, culture, religion and etc. This means that the community of individuals shared a common perspective on value and norm that defined the social structure and institutional framework of the nation. With such conception of a nation-state, a collective of individuals could easily share among themselves a common identity with a territory, the fellow citizens and the rules of law that would bind them together as a nation.

It's true that the above simplistic discourse of a nation-state might not fit empirically any concrete nation in the world, even the older nation of Germany, France, England and etc., but a number of academic works have been written along such an interpretation and do become the basis of political project by many leaders in the former colonised countries. Yet the acts of gaining independence in these post-colonial states often do not lead to stability and progress either. National unity and integration failed to develop among the citizens and often the battle cry by post independent leaders in the said countries, especially during time of election campaigns, is a call for unity and integration so as to ensure peace and development.

III. ROOT OF WESTERN INTELLECTUALISM AND INTERPRETATION OF THE THIRD WORLD

The coming of western imperial and colonial hegemonic to the third world, not only bring material development but an intellectual

tradition in state and nation buildings. This informed knowledge of state and nation buildings which rest on individual interests, sovereignty of the people, constitutional and political boundary should be located within the European social history and social reality. European social history has undergoes rejection of gods and church, of kings and feudalism in order to establish a society based on individual interests and the battle cry of liberty, equality, fraternity and nation.

Western intellectuals never seem to be able to free themselves from such an intellectual perspective. This could be observed in the work written and action taken on third world countries by the first world. No matter which stages of 'voyage, mercantilism, migration, imperialism, capitalism and globalisation', European interpretation of the third world is europocentric; development must be measured and model on western capitalistic experiences; market and the state as a unit of analysis, so to with governance in which religion and politics are separated; the local king handles religion and the colonial master the material richness, and nation building which differs from western experiences are called plural society, where with no internal consensus among their multi-ethnic population, has to depend on an external coercive power structure of the colonial master; locals are incompetence in running a state and sole properties right of the white to govern and bring prosperity. Independence if granted were thought would lead to increased polarization of ethnicity lead to not stability and development but crisis and conflict, inevitably bringing the nation to destruction.

IV. THE MALAY ARCHIPELAGO SOCIAL REALITY

The Malay Archipelago area houses as many ethnic and sub ethnic groups equaling to the myriad of islands found. Within the archipelago Kerajaan, empire and sultanate changed hands, from the Funan Empire in Vietnam, to Langkasuka in Kedah, Srivijaya and Majapahit in Java, Malacca and Pattani on the Peninsular. These Kerajaan are more varied in term of territorial space and duration. These Kerajaan are often small in numbers and can be found scattered throughout the Malay Archipelago, ranging from the Sultanate of Aceh, Pasai, Jambi on the Sumatra Island, to Mataram on the Java, to Sarebas in Kalimantan, the Bugis in Sulawesi, and the Johor, Terengganu, Kelantan, Perak, Pahang, Selangor, Kedah, Negeri Sembilan and etc on the Peninsular. This means that numerous power structures and king-follower inhabitants, big and small in sizes and the length of duration recorded in history, could be observed in the Malay Archipelago and is embedded on any discourses that focus on Kerajaan and development.

Yet no 'nation-state' ruled by a Sultan in the Malay Archipelago is an island, a unit by herself and isolated from the others. Inter-island, peninsular and continental contacts have always prevailed. It may be an *ad hoc* contact of unplanned trip gone wrong but these contacts do lead to circular travel and migration between island, peninsular and continent.

Initially, such inter-border movements were to fulfill the need to collect local agro-products and

handiworks in exchange with what they have or collected from some other places. As barter trading was the mechanism of exchange, the type of economic activities and the volume of products exchanged are thus limited. Apart from barter trading, inter-border movements often take place because of a search for economic well-being for themselves and their families. In some cases, inter-border movements take place because the individuals, their families and the whole village feel their life fraught with risks from the local Sultans and their henchmen. These inter-border movements sometimes, lead to border clashes and wars leading to annexation and expansion of the Sultan existing Kerajaan.

These various types of border movements, carried out in a peace time situation, saw people of various sub ethnic and ethnic groups on moving to a new place would seek the consent of the local chieftain and king of the Kerajaan of the land. Each ethnic and sub ethnic group on being received by the local chieftain and king of the Kerajaan was allocated a settlement area, giving them an opportunity to build their own community, and accepting the indigenous canopy that would provide them security and a new identity of motherland. Thus it could be observed that the various empires and sultanates in the Malay Archipelago has never been in its origin a mono-ethnic population but rather the prevalence of various ethnic and sub ethnic groups but living under the canopy of the indigenous chieftain and Kerajaan. Plurality of origin of the inhabitants is the norm in the empire and sultanate found in the Malay Archipelago.

But the borders of these kingdoms are always fluid and changing as it would depend on the Kerajaan ability to maintain political control of the new areas annexed as well their own lands. The ease of changing border between kingdoms and the porousness of the border is related to a weak bureaucracy of the state due to the inability to have sufficient manpower and fund to implement and enforce the statutory regulation decreed.

These Sultans, just as practiced in the west and among the rich, often married off their daughters and they themselves take a second-wife from the family of the Sultans subjugated. Inter ethnic and sub ethnic gaps between them and their people are thus reduced. Ethnic boundary between the ethnic groups is thinned and secondary in nature, but ethnicity and sub ethnic identity, ethnic identification, ethnic groups and ethnic roles are empirical social realities.

Even with the coming of the various religious influences to the Malay Archipelago, from paganism, Hinduism, Buddhism to Islam, prior to the coming of the European colonialism, it would begin with the Sultan of the Kerajaan and spread downward to the masses. The various religions profess by the ethnic group changes but their ethnic identity, identification, ethnic group and ethnic roles persist.

But since the border movements and changing borders are concrete social reality, inhabitants of the Kerajaan established is often not mono-ethnic but contained various ethnic groups and sub ethnic groups among the Malay grouping from the Malay Archipelago. Thus, the

Kerajaan on the peninsular such as Malacca and Pattani, in Sumatera, Kalimantan and the Sulawesi areas, various sub-ethnic groups from the Malay Archipelago can be observed living side by side in these Kerajaan and Islam become the social binding force among them. While on the island of Java, the Kerajaan Majapahit in her glorious day, did mix Hinduism and Islam, splitting the sub-ethnic groups by religious faith but not sufficient to separate them totally as common language and culture still managed to socially bind them together too.

Thus ethnicity, ethnic identity, ethnic identification, ethnic groups and ethnic roles among the sub ethnicity in the Malay Archipelago are diverse, and split into various sub ethnic groups further by the changing religious beliefs. But it is found out that the concreteness of ethnicity in the social reality does not divide the sub ethnicities prevailed as the linguistic, cultural and the bond to the Sultan of the Kerajaan of which they all were a part of, developed a statehood that recognized, respected, accepted, shared and celebrated these sub-ethnic diversities.

V. OTHER CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN THE MALAY ARCHIPELAGO

The practice of recognising, respecting, accepting, sharing and celebrating diversities has been the basis of inter group relations and relationship in the Malay Archipelago. Thus as other cultural traditions and civilizations within the Asian regions interact with the Malay Archipelago such as the Indians, Chinese and the Arab travelers and commercial

communities, they were welcomed as individuals and groups representing their own ethnic groups intact with their own identity, identification and group roles.

These other Asian cultural tradition and civilization were allocated their own settlements. Despite coming from other linguistic, cultural and religious origins, they were allowed to have their own identity, identification and ethnic roles. The acceptance of the other Asian cultural and civilisational traditions were returned by their acceptance of the Sultan of the Kerajaan and his kingdom linguistic, cultural and religious traditions. This means that Malay language and its religio-cultural traditions were accepted by the other Asian culture and civilisational traditions when they come to this region to do commerce and settle down in the Malay Archipelago. Thus, existing indigenous political and cultural systems were accepted as the hegemonic tradition and become their canopy in order to secure prosperity and security.

Thus accepting diversity within their own sub ethnicities and from other tradition and civilization were trade mark and practices of inter-group relations in the Malay Archipelago region. This creates a society where the indigenous community recognized and accepted the various multi-ethnic and sub ethnic groups prevailing and provide the canopy of the Kerajaan to them; plurality and indigenous canopy of governance are the norms of the archipelago.

VI. THE COMING OF EUROPEAN COLONIALISM

Initial encounters with the Europeans were with the world voyagers and merchants who come to the region to buy exotic spices from the Malay Archipelago. These circular and transient movements among the Europeans did not influence much the cultural and politics of the region. They came to exchange and buy goods on the market without any other intent but to make profit out of the trade.

But post industrial revolution in the west transformed the world and the nature of interaction between the west and the east. This stage of world movement saw the coming of the Europeans to other countries not only to capture the local market, but also to obtain the material resources and, inevitably, to annex the territory concerned to their empires.

Thus the comings of the voyagers Marco Polo and Vasco Da Gama to the Malay Archipelago were transient in nature as their world voyages were to collect and trade with the local communities encountered in their journeys. But their voyages were later replaced by merchants that come to trade and with industrial revolution these merchants were transformed to look for new markets in which to sell the industrial goods and bring back the industrially needed local material resources for their industries. As these industrial European powers compete among themselves for material resources and territories for their markets, the initial need of having a seaport in this region lead to their government supporting the trading companies to enter into treaty and

annex the area concerned. So as to fend off other industrial power to meddle into their sphere of influence, the areas annexed are ruled under the colonial office.

The European colonial powers from Portugal, Spain, Holland, Britain, Holland, France and Germany carved the Malay Archipelago into their own sphere of influence. Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos belong to the French, Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo to the British, the Phillipines to the Spanish and American, and the Indonesia to the Dutch. Later on these spheres of influence were colonised under their control with the pretext of maintaining peace and stability so that commercial activities could continue and expand free of piracy, gang fighting and the infighting between local Sultan and Chieftain in their respective state such as Perak to control the mantle of the Kerajaan.

The European colonials entry into the Malay states begun with Malacca in 1511 when the Portuguese conquered the sea-port empire. It was taken over by the Dutch and was exchanged with the British in 1824 who was given Bencoolen as an exchange on the island of Sumatera. The kick start to carving up of the Malay Archipelago by the British powers had begun. Malacca, Singapore and Penang were grouped as the Strait Settlement State, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang as the Federated Malay State and Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Johore as the Unfederated Malay State. After the Second World War a Malayan Union Proposal was forced on the Malay Sultans but rejected by

the Malays and instead a Federation Malay Agreement was implemented. The federation structure of the Malay states was to be the basis of the political structure of Malaysia today.

The *modus operandi* of these European powers, and so too the British, were to divide the fluid borders of the Malay Archipelago into political unit, totally alien to her neighbor. The indigenous state was recognized as the foundation of the British colonial legitimacy in the Malay States as treaties were made with the Malay sultans of the respective Kerajaan. The Sultans entered the treaties to secure their own political interests and stability of the Kerajaan, but the British agreed to such request on condition that the Sultans' political power was reduced to affairs of religion, marriage and death. While other aspects of governance rest in the British appointed Resident who was given full power to plan, administer, collect taxes and maintain security matters of the State. The coming of the British colonial power was not to ensure the development of the state and nation building among her people but to reap profit by the British companies operating as tin mining operators, rubber estate owners and the trading activities. The 'development of the state' embarked by the British Residents in each respective

Malay states such building ports, roads, railway line, telecommunication line and even school were all done to unsure further reproduction of the British capitalist interests without due regards for the well-being of the indigenous population.

In fact the traditional inter-group relations which was based on a

recognition of linguistic, cultural and religious traditions between sub-ethnic and other ethnic groups, was reinterpreted in a class based system in which the European people were the upper classes, followed by the Chinese and the indigenous population in the bottom place of the social stations. This class structure is supported by a pseudo-scientific understanding of human group as defined along racial lines and imbued with racial superiority. This western-based interpretation of human potentiality is alien to the eastern tradition. Thus in the Census carried out by the British, sub ethnicities were not recognized and instead Malay, Minangkabau, Javanese, Banjar, etc., were regrouped as a Malay racial category. Later on the Indian Muslim and Arab were included into the Malay category. The Chinese and Indians were not group with the indigenous population as they migrated to the Malay Archipelago from the Indus and Chinese cultural traditions in India and China, respectively.

Thus as the nation was on her threshold of gaining independence from the British, the Malay Sultan political power was markedly reduced and usurped by the British colonial power, the richness of the country was remitted to enrich the British Crown, commercial agricultural land, mining areas and trading, the financial and banking institution, commercial and industrial activities were controlled by the British. The Chinese populated the urban areas and controlled the retail trading and outlet activities; playing the economic middlemen to the British. The Indians, especially the Tamil sub ethnic group, were brought into the

Malay States to be rubber tappers on the British rubber estates, manual labourers to construct railway line and road, the other Indian sub ethnic groups such as the Sinhalese as administrators, Chettiar the financial sector and etc. The indigenous Malay community was destined to be fishermen, padi farmers and low echelon government clerical staff. The Malay aristocrats were given more leverage to acquire better educational standard and often worked as senior government officers.

Under British colonial administrator, the concept of ethnicity was replaced with a racial understanding, racial-economic line becomes the basis of organizing social relationship but political mechanism and culture of the Malay states as stipulated in the Constitution of the respective Malay States and the Federation Of Malaya/Malaysia are based on the indigenous conception of Kerajaan and governance. Hence the indigenous canopy as practiced in the Malay Archipelago persist in which Malay political and culture prominence were to be the basis of the canopy in managing the ethnic and sub ethnic plurality of the nation.

VII. NATIONALISM AND NATION OF INTENT

As the nation moved towards independence, indigenous-based, other country-based and an emerging nation-based nationalism could be observed taking root and competing for group loyalty in the Malaysian politics. The Chinese and Indian commercial communities wished to retain their British Crown subject status. While the recent Chinese commercial, miner and labour

migrants were using Malaya as a proxy war against the Chinese emperor, war lord, foreign occupation, especially, of the Japanese atrocity, in China. The Indians were the last to enter the nationalism project, as towards the end of the Second World War, concerned to liberate India from British colonial rule was kicked start.

Locally based nationalism could be seen to be developed rather early as the influx of Chinese and Indian migrant in the 1920's raising fear among the indigenous community that they would be a numerical minority without political and economic powers in their own homeland. However, they felt most threatened by an attempt by the British to turn Malayan into a Union and grant liberally citizenship to non-Malay group; these two fears brought the Malays together. Malays from the various Malay states were mobilized by the Malay state-based linguistic, cultural, literary, and etc., non-governmental organizations which led to the formation of UMNO. This Malay solidarity which was supported by the Malay Sultans and pro-Malaya British ex-government officials in Britain caused the Malayan Union to be dropped and replaced with a Federation of Malaya Agreement. The sovereignty of the Sultans, indigenous preferential and the restriction in granting citizenship to non-Malays were put in place.

The Malay radical group in the British Malaya was influenced by socialist thought and the Indonesian Revolution for independence of Sukarno. This radical Malay group and the Communist Party of Malaya cooperated among themselves to end

Japanese and British occupation of Malaya. The Communist Party of Malaya even agreed to make Malay Language as the official language and the citizen to be called Melayu. However, reading the Marxism-Leninism two stage revolution, such political joint-venture was forge to eliminate the colonial master and in the second stage to bring Malaya into a communist-based socialist state. This could be verified by the reign of terror practiced on the nation immediately after the Second World War and the long running battle of the Emergency between the MCP with the British and the Malaya-Malaysian government which lasted till the 1980s.

Despite the success in mobilizing Malay support to reject the Malayan Union Proposal, UMNO later on faced internal cleavage as the Islamic faction moved out of UMNO and formed PAS. PAS maintained a strong influenced among the Malay belt states. In fact, drastic and materialistic based social transformation taking place in the 1980-90s brought the emergence of a number of Malay based religious movement that managed to attracted not only the religious educated, but middle classes Malays who felt that their religious rooted are being eroded by the hedonistic and materialists political and economic classes.

A new discourse on the nationalism project emerged on the nation soil with the formation of Malaysia. in 1963 Lee Kuan Yew through the PAP and later inherited by the DAP, raised the nation of intent of a Malaysian Malaysia. The implication of the Malaysian Malaysia discourse means that every citizen is

equal under the Constitution. Such rejection of history and Constitution of the nation was rejected by the Malaysian leaders and caused Singapore to be expelled from Malaysia.

Yet the consequence of development, middle classes, modernity and good governance in Malaysia saw everyday life to be developed along the Malay Archipelago model of accepting the plurality of the nation. Thus the various linguistic, cultural, religious and purported kinship ties become the individuals and their group identity were recognized, accepted, shared and celebrated as they live side by side, at times crossing their group borders, to live within a national Malaysian indigenous-based polity.

Since the 1995 General Election and especially so in 2008, political parties, especially the opposition group such DAP, PKR and PAS were coming up with an inclusive strategy of governance based on need, welfare and justice. The government leadership, especially Mahathir, has been expounding a Bangsa Malaysia. While Najid Razak on coming to premiership after taking power from Abdullah Badawi has introduced a OneMalaysia nation building project. Non Malay government-linked political parties such as GERAKAN, PPP and MCA also have been raising the need to forge a one nation project.

Yet those who belief that plurality with an indigenous canopy should be order of the day in bring development and nation building among the Malays in UMNO and PAS, are also accepting the need to be inclusive and just in governing the nation. People want their leaders and

political parties to transcend ethnic calculations in their thirst to obtain vote and serve the communities.

VIII. NATION STATE AND NATION OF INTENT

The fall of the Kerajaan Malaccan and the encroachment of colonial powers into the Malay Archipelago, generated a continuous discourse of the indigenous canopy in managing linguistic, cultural, religious and kinship ties among Malay sub-ethnic groups and ethnic groups from outside the regions such as the Chinese and Indian. The continuous definition, redefinition and reconstruction of the Malaya-Malaysia nation state, at times seem contradictory and at times was too restrictively interpreted by the neo-conservatives leading to inter-groups misunderstanding and this problematic of identity, ethnic or national, reflects the failure to identify and manage the kind of society Malaya-Malaysia is socially constructed; the imagination of the polity of the nation is misconstrued.

The people of the Malay Archipelago, may be culturally, linguistically, religiously and kinship based diverse in formation, but they were referred to their archipelago as their 'nations'. When colonial masters come to the region, they brought idea of a nation that could be identified as a settler society formation. Such an idea could be seen clearly after the Second World War, especially with the attempt to introduce the Malayan Union Proposal onto the Malay Kerajaan and Malay society. It was totally rejected by the Sultans and their Malay subjects.

In a settler society such as USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and even Singapore, migrants could attain economic and political dominance of such a territory as the indigenous community was small in number and lack a cohesive leadership as well as a political system governing their society. Thus, calls for liberty, equality, rights, fraternity and nation are often made to justify the changing economic and political stakeholders from the indigenous to the newly migrant settlers. Only in the last decades are we hearing the need to recognize the First Nation of the Red Indian in Canada, apology of the Stolen Generation in Australia, recognition of the Treaty of Whanganui and the Maori language, at least symbolically, in New Zealand and the continuous silent in USA.

In these settler society, call for liberty, equality, rights, fraternity and nation, that is, social, political and economic inclusiveness are made to all migrants but under the Anglo-Celtic-French hegemony in Canada, White Anglo-Saxon Protestant in USA, Anglo-Celtic in Australia and New Zealand and Chinese in Singapore; these settler societies that profess multiculturalism do not adhere to a socially playing field either.

These are nations that espoused multiculturalism and equal opportunity for all, though in real life color bar is the structural constraint. USA is being true to this hegemonic discourse because of late its neo-conservative segment of the society is raising the argument that multiculturalism is antithesis to the American values. The Spanish-related sub ethnicities, the Asian and the Islamic groups are demanding the call

for liberty, equality, rights, fraternity and nation to their own groups and are being rejected by the WASP hegemonic group as demands that would destroy the American values-read WASP hegemony.

Malaysia as a nation state belongs to the host society nation discourse in which the nation is supposed to have a common linguistic, cultural, religious and kinship ties. Germany, France, Holland, Spain, Portugal, England, among others, are said to belong to the same club of nation. An indigenous canopy or hegemony prevails over other groups of new comer to the land. But in some of this host country, citizenship is a closed system. Germany does not accept others but only Aryan-blood German to be her citizen; hence the status of guest workers accorded to the Turkish migrants who have settled there since the First World War. Or the assimilationist policy of the Franchophile, Thailand, Indonesia, Phillipines, among others, towards the other ethnic groups within their respective territory Sri Lanka just subdued the Tamil-Hindu community to enforce her Sinhalese-Buddhist hegemony. While in the Northern Ireland, Mindanao, South Thailand and Fiji 'civil war' escalated as the other ethnic groups refused to be subdued to the hegemonic group in their respective nations.

In Malaysia, though belonging to the host society, she does not follow the conservative model but was found to be more inclusive towards linguistic, cultural and religious differences. That why, despite having a national policy on most matters, still includes the other ethnic languages in

the school and the mass media. Malaysia also allows cultural practices to be held and even declaring holiday for the respective festivities. They take a giant step further as these cultural and religious festivities were celebrated together nationally. Hence the practices of KONGSIRAYA among the Malay and Chinese festivities and DEPARAYA among the Malay and Indian festivities are product of such acceptance and celebration of cultural diversities.

Malaysian public policy is basically market-based. Market failures saw the government to intervene on a need based public policy so that the low income group, the socially disadvantaged and marginalized are given due social justice. Yet the empirical social reality, history and the Constitution defined a governance path that demands not only inclusiveness to her citizens but also the provision of a special right of the indigenous community to the Pribumi Orang Asli, Malays and natives of Sabah and Sarawak.

This means that the Malaysia nation state does call for liberty, equality, rights, fraternity and nation among her citizen but to be subsumed under the indigenous canopy model. I do not see the relevance of a Malaysian Malaysia and multiculturalism under such an indigenous canopy nation state. But compare to the other host society, Malaysian nation state proves to be more inclusive than the other host society. Such practice of governance could be located in how the Malay Archipelago has managed linguistic, cultural, religious and kinship ties in

the past; recognizing, accepting, sharing and celebrating diversity. Such social history has moulded the present day governance to embrace the nation to be truly Asian under the indigenous canopy model of the Malay Archipelago.

IX. CONCLUSION

The meeting of the British and the migrant from India and China intellectual histories with the Malay Archipelago social reality need to be studied further if good ethnic relations are to prevail. We should not take things for granted, as the political border carved out by the colonial master's sphere of influence into nation state failed tremendously to take into account the local conditions. That why when the colonial masters moved out, often the fragile and pseudo-boundary of the states collapse into social crisis, conflict and anarchy. Hence ,often the calls for more draconian rules in these newly independent nation.

Malaysia avoids such spirally downward development of the nation-state because despite of her indigenous canopy, she also play an inclusive game to the other ethnic and sub-ethnic groups. Yes, the discourses of the nation of intents among her citizens will go on, but extremism on both sides of the continuum will be rejected, as the traditional practices of recognizing and accepting differences have become the basis of a consensus political practice in the nation and in the life of her citizens' everyday affairs.

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