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## Nation-building process

The process of nation-building is an effort to develop the spirit of patriotism and solidarity to create a country whose people share a common identity. The major aim is to foster national unity by developing a new nation and an integrated race (Hippler, 2002:1-3). In Malaysia, the idea of establishing a nation was initiated before Malayan Union was introduced, during the struggles in seeking independence from British colonization. One of the initiatives was the concept of 'Negara-Cita Melayu' with the slogan Melayu-Raya that involved the collaboration of nationalists in Malaya and Indonesia. The tie was made stronger as they share many common cultural elements such as religion, language, traditions, political system and economic background. However, it was an intricate mission to fulfill the aspiration due to the dissimilarities in the Malay community's social background and ideologies (Abdul Rahman, 2000: 44-45). The foremost objective for a colonized nation is to achieve independence, which was no different for Malaya. To realize the goal, the aspects of politics, economy and social were given the priority in order to achieve unity between the three major ethnics – the native Malays, who formed the majority; and the immigrant Chinese and Indians that formed the second and third largest communities in the country.

As a result, the differences between them were minimized in order to achieve the objective. To achieve political unity, the British proposed a merger between political parties that were ethnic based – United Malays National Organization (UMNO) that represent the Malays, Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) that stand for the Chinese and Malaysian Indian Congress (MCA) that represent the Indians. The alliance of the multiethnic political parties managed to stabilize the politics and the nation (Ratnam, 1965: vii, 1-3 and 4-19). The radical Malays' fight for independence involved parties like Parti Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya (PKMM), Angkatan Pemuda Insaf (API) and Angkatan Wanita Sedar (AWAS), who formed an ally through the slogan Indonesia Raya. In fact, the will to fight against the British colonization had resulted in a strong partnership between the left-wing factions, Pusat Tenaga Rakyat (PUTERA) with Pan-Malayan Council of Joint Action (PMCJA) from March to July 1947 (Mohamed Noordin, 2005: 41). Then, a coalition between PMCJAPUTERA-ACCC (All Chinese Chambers of Commerce) was realized, from August to October 1947 which received the backing of the Chinese Communist Party (PKM) (Purcell, 1965: 110). After the independence, the government's effort to unite the multi-ethnic residents of the nation in the economic sector was evident, especially after the May 13 social unrest, through the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP).

The implication was, the country's economic pie would no longer be ethnic-based, such as the Chinese's dominance in the mining and industrial sectors, and the Malay's reliance on self-subsistence economic areas. The purpose was to achieve a balance in the nation's economy, which might result in better unity among the nation's multi-ethnic society (Faaland, 1991: xvi-xvii). Even with the various means introduced by the past Premiers, unity among the multi-ethnic society is still fragile. Cultural elements that display any sign of ethnic sentiments are still disputed by certain quarters. Among the issues are the status of Bahasa Melayu as the national language, vernacular schools, the Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera, and the Malay's special privileges. The dominance of ethnic influence has caused some researchers to view it as an element or agenda that could be politicized by certain political parties with vested interests to garner the support of voters. In fact, there is even belief that a political party could rally support

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from the voters if it stirred up racial issues among the public. Hence, to strengthen national unity, the current Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak had introduced the 1Malaysia concept. It is a policy that aspires to integrate the society as one functioning unit without taking into consideration their background of diverse cultures and traditions. In fact, it is a new agenda that nurtures on shared elements or solidarity among the nation's different ethnics (Najib Tun Abdul Razak, 2008: 2-4).

The question is, how far can this objective be realized, and will the Malay, Chinese and Indians perceive themselves together as 1– Malaysians. This is because the concept of the Malaysian race was proposed by Tun during his tenure, but the issue is still debated up to this day. Therefore, is the 1Malaysia concept rhetorical, as it was already proposed by the previous leader, because in reality, it is considered an impossible mission to accomplish. The matter is highlighted because even if Malaysia has gained independence for 54 years, a national identity that should form the backbone of unity is still vague to the citizens. In order to determine how much impact has the concept made, the article aims to analyze the phases involved in nationbuilding. To support the discussion, a few nation-building strategies employed by foreign countries will be presented.

## **THE CONCEPT OF NATION-BUILDING**

The term of nation-building originates from the English language which was popularized by the Western society as they were the ones who conceptualized the notion. It is a two-word term where the word 'building' is translated as pembinaan in Malay (Kamus Inggeris Melayu Dewan, 1999: 202), while the word 'nation' brings a wider meaning, as it could refer to either race or country (Abdul Rahman, 2000: 12). However, the article will employ both meanings as they are very much related as a 'nation' consists of people from various groups, while 'nation' will cease to function without a country. Before a nation could be founded, there are five elements that must be fulfilled. One of the aspects is that, the country must have gained independence. Next, the society should have solidarity, which could motivate its people into governing the country. Third, there should be an organized political system, which provides space for a government to carry out their responsibilities. The fourth element is that, the country must have autonomy, where the government has the authority to endorse, grant consent, demand loyalty and support to make the country's administration more systematic. Fifth, the government-of-the-day must have the people's mandate. The people must be loyal and support the government, at least to work towards achieving political unity or become a member of the country where the pact will continue even when the government face crisis (Friedrich, 1963: 27).

Based on the elements, it is determined that Malaysia has fulfilled the requirements. The issue and the predicament that arise are more concentrated on the establishment of a nation that shares an identical national identity. The main objective of nation-building, whether in a single-race or multi-racial nation, is in forming unity which can be channeled towards developing a country. Hence, each citizen must be prepared to embrace a one-nation concept that involves the restructuring of socio-politics, socio-economy, and socio-culture of the present society, to be adapted with the newly-founded nation and the needs of the government to improve unity and development of the country (Ribeiro, 1971: 40-41). Nation-building does not only aim to establish solidarity among its people, but it also labels the citizens with a new identity. By instilling unity, the spirit of integration could be nurtured, which could lead to loyalty towards the country of residence that surpasses their devotion towards their own ethnic.

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## OBJECTIVE

National unity will be the final goal of the NDP as a united community is important to strengthen the social and political stability and maintain sustainable economic development

NDP SET A STEP TOWARD ENABLING Malaysia to achieve a developed nation status in all respects in terms of social, values , ethics and morals ,political stability , quality of life ,efficiency of government , and economic excellence .

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

1. Maintain the basic strategy of NEP is the eradication of poverty and restructuring social and economic imbalances between the races and this contribute to strengthening national unity
2. To ensure balance development of main economic sectors (mining, service, agricul true, and farming)
3. Building a society that has social value and appreciate the positive feelings of pride and patriotism
4. Reduce and eliminate social inequality and to promote the sharing of the national economic in a more fair and equitable benefits
5. Reduce the inequalities in economic development between urban and rural areas
6. Concentrate on the development of a community of Bumiputera Commercial and Industrial
7. Ensure appropriate attention is given to environment of protection and ecology so that in the long term to ensure sustainable development of the country continued
8. Making science and technology as an integral part of the planning and socio-economic development

## NEW APPROACH

### Competition in International Markets

# NDP has taken into account the country's ability to compete in the international market.

### Vision 2020

#encourage society to utilize the national resources wisely to build good eco. And attain develop country level

### Poverty Reduction

#Training provided to youth in rural areas will enable them to get skilled jobs and higher income

### Restructuring Society

#Eliminate the identification of race with economic function and restructuring of ownership will continue to be a key program under this strategy.

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## IMPACT OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The Malaysian economy grew at an average rate of 6.2 per cent annual during the 1991-2005.

This strong rate of growth was achieved even the challenges faced from events such the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis

Growth was achieved with inflation averaging a low 2.9 % per annum

Low unemployment averaging 3.1 % per annum

Quality of life of Malaysian increase since 1991.

(Education, working life, communication, health)

### Achievement of NDP

- women participation in the labour force increases to 53.6 per cent
- rural road coverage increases to 51,262 km
- rural electricity coverage increases to 98 per cent
- rural water supply increases to 94 per cent
- 5,737 villages connected through the wireless village programme
- RM175 billion invested in five regional economic corridors, creating 427,100 jobs
- Malaysian life expectancy increases to 74.8 years
- 102,200 affordable houses completed
- unemployment rate decreases to 2.9 per cent
- 1.8 million new job opportunities created
- 90.7 per cent pre-school enrolment
- 36.5 per cent academic staff with PhD qualification in public universities
- 15 per cent household waste recycling rate
- forest cover increases to 61 per cent
- 23,264 hectares of forest gazetted as Permanent Reserve Forest
- 93,100 km of new roads built
- 46 per cent increase in passenger rate at KL International Airport (KLIA)
- KLIA2 opened and third runway operationalised at KLIA
- urban rail commuters increase 32 per cent
- 70 per cent households with broadband penetration
- 14 areas nationwide with access to Digital Terrestrial Television
- 95 per cent of population receives clean and treated water
- services sector contributes RM2,550 billion to GDP
- manufacturing sector contributes RM1,111 billion to GDP
- agriculture sector contributes RM455 billion to GDP
- construction sector contributes RM194 billion to GDP
- small and medium enterprises contribute RM1,606 billion to GDP
- Malaysia ranked 18th out 189 economies in the 2015 World Bank 'Doing Business' Report
- Malaysia ranked 33rd on the Global Innovation Index out of 143 countries

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Malaysia has enjoyed one of the best economic growth records in Asia despite a multitude of challenges and economic shocks.

The 11MP report states that the country's growth achieved a stable real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 6.2 per cent per annum since 1970, successfully transforming the nation from a predominantly agriculture-based economy in the 1970s, to manufacturing in the mid-1980s and to modern services in the 1990s.

The national per capita income expanded more than 25-fold, from US\$402 in 1970 to US\$10,796 last year, and is well on track to surpass the US\$15,000 threshold of a high-income economy by 2020.

All these gains are made possible by Malaysia's development philosophy which places the prosperity and well-being of the rakyat at the heart of economic growth.

This commitment can be seen in each successive development policy started with the New Economic Policy 1971-1990, National Development Policy 1991-2000, National Vision Policy 2001-2010 and National Transformation Policy 2011-2020.—BERNAMA.

## **CONCLUSION**

Nation-building has turned into a political agenda to inculcate unity and reduce conflicts between ethnics. Unity is achieved through the development of an ideology or a national policy to form an identity that could be shared and used to improve one's loyalty towards the country more than to one's ethnic. However, with the strong affinity towards their ethnic, it is quite an impossible dream to achieve. Based on the experience of nation-building in other countries like France, Russia, America, Nigeria and Indonesia, even if there was a standard national identity based upon the majority natives' culture, but there were still glitches as there were communities that find it hard to accept the ideology. The implication is, integration would face problems if the government's agenda appeared to be marginalizing the minority ethnics.

If this prejudiced feeling is still allowed to prevail in the society, then the 1 Malaysia concept will never be realized. However, if the aspiration is to develop an integrated society that is founded upon the concepts of one language, one education system and one culture; the government must outline the fundamental principles that will be channeled towards the establishment of 'One Society'. The verification must be based upon the history of Malaya, by implementing the native Malays' cultures as the backbone of the nation's culture, without any ethnic prejudice. As for the minority community, the national principles should be accepted entirely and with tolerance in order to meet the objectives of realizing the 1 Malaysia concept. The prejudiced feelings should be eradicated as history has shown that since the independence, the non-Malays have successfully maintained their traditions, which is practically unheard of in countries like France, Russia, America, Nigeria and Indonesia. Thus the spirit of tolerance and reverence towards each other is seen as the most important aspect in ensuring that the 1 Malaysia concept would thrive successful