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EDUCATION AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION: A CASE STUDY
OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECT IN MALAYSIA

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Introduction

The primary objective of this study has been to empirically examine in depth the complex interrelationships between education and the other social institutions of Malaysia's transitional society in hopes of gaining a better understanding of those conditions which appear to facilitate, or impede, the effectiveness of the formal educational institution as an agent of directed social change; particularly, as a promoter of national integration and a shared sense of national identity. We have been particularly concerned with the relationship between the socialization and the mobility management functions assigned to the Malaysian educational system.

The study on which this paper is based is principally an examination of the "institutional effect" of Malaysian secondary schools upon the diffuse values of their students. A review of the pertinent literature reveals that it has been conventional in research on organizational socialization to focus upon the effects which educational institutions have upon the values of their clients as a result of the institutions' internal structural and normative characteristics. Alternatively, we have elected to concentrate upon the impact of those institutional features which lie largely outside of the school's own sphere of control and which constitute its relationship with the larger socio-cultural system. In this respect, the beliefs which students have regarding the school's ability to implement their attainment of desired future status gains is believed to be of crucial importance in determining the socializing power which these institutions have over their socializees. In attempting to explicate this process we have found it useful to conceptualize schools as social exchange systems.

Schools as Institutions of Social Exchange

Commonly, organizational socialization research has focused upon one major research problem: what organizational attributes of the social institutions whose primary function it is to socialize people result in diffuse changes in the attitudes and norms of the clients undergoing this socializing experience? There are a multitude of studies that have treated such attitudinal outcomes as Authoritarianism, Modernity, Political Efficacy, etc. as the dependent variables in the research equation and have conceptualized the independent variables as such internal features of the organization as its relative isolation from outside influence, its authority structure, and the interaction patterns within the institution.¹ Thus, as John Meyer has pointed out, there has been "an odd emphasis in the research literature. Interest focuses to an unusual degree on extreme and total organizational settings as loci of socialization."² Consistent with this focus of organizational socialization research upon the internal features of institutions, the research on schools as agencies of socialization has, additionally, included experimental studies which have attempted to determine the influence of such school-specific variables as curriculum, instructional method, the style of teacher/student interaction, in-school peer group composition, etc. upon student values and attitudes.³

Moreover, most of the discussion regarding the re-socialization task of the schools in the transitional nations has centered around these internal structural features of educational institutions. It is true of course that these variables that are largely internal to the school's own sphere of control are, in principle, the most accessible to administrative or government manipulation. Also, there is some experimental evidence to indicate

that under controlled conditions these school-specific features can be effectively orchestrated to produce significant attitude change among students.⁴

In reality, however, only rarely does the individual school possess sufficient social power or broad enough sanctions to allow it to enforce compliance to institutionally desired norms or to make a co-ordinated frontal attack upon student attitudes through the manipulation of the structural variables. Yet, the school does, indirectly, possess socializing power to the extent that it is able to operate, and is believed by its clients to operate, as an effective exchange system--that is, that the school institution be able to offer and implement desired future adult roles and statuses to its clients in exchange for their compliance with institutionally desired norms.

Even in those relatively rare instances when, for a variety of reasons, the school does possess the necessary social power to allow it to manipulate the internal structural variables, the attitude change produced under such conditions may be quite impermanent. For these "new" attitudinal behaviors may be quite specific to the total school environment and may not persist for long after the individual leaves that institutional context--and with it the organizational and membership group supports which such a context implies.

Consequently, even when the school is successful in restructuring the attitudes of its clients, only those newly acquired attitudes which are subsequently reinforced by post-school socialization experiences are likely to persist. Conversely, schools which are believed by their clients to offer desired status gains do not need to depend upon manipulation of the school-specific structural characteristics in order to gain the compliance of their

students to institutionally desired norms--for they are legitimated with reference to the already validated futures to which they lead. Thus, the social power of a school which is seen as virtually assuring elite recruitment of its clients is quite substantial and a powerful resource in its task of re-socialization.

It might be useful at this point, therefore, to develop our conceptual model of schools as institutions of social exchange in somewhat greater detail.⁵ The educational system, similar to other social institutions, is able to persist and function effectively only in so far as it is legitimized by the voluntary compliance of its client-members. In the case of the school this legitimation is in the form of recognition by the society as a whole, and by the socializees in particular, of that school's authority to confer status gains upon the people it processes. Educational institutions which can assure their students subsequent entry into elite status possess higher exchange value and, therefore, greater power over their students, than those schools which are not able to implement the success of their product. Moreover, within the context of education "compliance" takes the form not only of learning specified cognitive information and technical skills, but, also, in the internalization of those institutionally specified attitudes and norms which it is anticipated will be required in order for the socializee to be subsequently integrated effectively into adult roles. From the standpoint of the individual student, however, such compliance is likely to be "costly" in both social and psychological terms, since attitude change nearly always involves conflict and, at any rate, requires the learning of a new set of responses. This cost will be proportionately greater to students

in transitional societies wherein there is wide discongruence between the values and attitudes learned by the child in the family and those transmitted by the school.⁶

A central assumption of exchange theory is, therefore, that the individual socializee will be more likely to submit to the social and psychological cost of learning new, institutionally desired attitudinal behaviors if he perceives that the institution is able to offer either immediate or future rewards in exchange for his compliance. The "commodities" of exchange, therefore, are conceptualized, on the one hand, as compliance to institutionally specified norms and attitudes, and on the other, as the provision of the instrumentalities of adult control, such as the skills, the knowledge and, particularly, the "charter" required to attain power and status in adult society.

In his fruitful application of exchange theory to the institution of education, John Meyer conceives of schools or classes of schools as possessing "charters"--legitimated social definitions of their products--and argues that the effectiveness of a socializing agency is largely dependent upon this charter. Meyer has written that "The power of a socializing organization or class of organizations to transform students depends on the increase in social value and the type of social position which it is chartered to confer upon them."⁷ ". . . For example, a school whose graduates are generally understood to become members of an elite with broadly-defined powers will have much greater impact on the values of its students than will a school whose graduates are defined as eligible for more limited technical roles."⁸

The crucial point here is that the exchange value of the school and, hence, its socializing power is dependent upon its ability to, in fact, be able to offer its clients future status gains. More important, however, as attested to by numerous instances of schools with but weak societal charters but which are able to accomplish broad diffuse changes in their students, is that the socializees "must believe, and think others believe, that the school has this power."⁹

Societal Constraints Upon the Exchange Value of the Educational System

In many of the new nations, and this is particularly true of Malaysia, two major societal conditions have served to impair the exchange value of the educational system as a whole, thereby weakening the schools' socializing power. First, the rapid expansion of education in most of these nations since independence has reversed the pre-independence colonial policies of "restricted output"--thus, lowering the exchange value of the schools by devaluing their product. Currently, in Malaysia, completion of secondary school is no longer the virtual guarantee of recruitment into elite status that it was prior to independence.

In transitional societies, therefore, an important factor which has interfered with the ability of the schools to serve as an effective exchange system is the growing discrepancy between the capacity of the educational system to process increasing numbers of students and the availability of desirable adult occupational roles in the society at large; that is, between the social demand for education, on the one hand, and the capacity of the modern economic sector to absorb these school leavers, on the other. For, while the school may possibly be the most powerful social agency for

mobilizing previously parochial sectors of the transitional society-- creating new wants and expectations--it has been considerably less successful in promoting the assimilation of these newly emergent youths into the modern economic sector for which it has prepared them in terms of skills, attitudes and aspirations.

This is probably largely due to the fact that although the school system is widely recognized as the major, if not the only, access route to elite status, it cannot control economic development and the concomitant growth of occupational opportunities. The schools can only attempt to "match" the quality and the quantity of their product to the demands of the occupational market by providing their students with both the technical skills and the values which it is projected will be required in the future. But exchange theory makes no assumption of "complete information" on the part of either the institution or the client. The school system is rarely able to anticipate precisely how many students with what kinds of skills and attitudes will be required several years hence. While the students, on the other hand, possessing incomplete information regarding their chances for recruitment into the desired occupational roles, will tend to temper their commitment to institutionally desired attitudes to the extent that they are pessimistic about the schools ability to implement their future success--in this way anticipatorily reducing their psychological cost in the event of subsequent failure.

This leads us to the second important societal factor which may serve to diminish the exchange value of education: if ascriptive selection criteria are being applied independently of educational attainment (either within the school structure or in the post-school occupational world) in

order to sponsor the mobility of some special interest group the exchange value of education will be impaired and the socializing power of the schools weakened. For, those students who are receiving favored treatment, or anticipate receiving it in the future, will feel dependent upon some source other than the school for their anticipated success; while those students who feel discriminated against will feel that school performance and, even, compliance to the institutionally promoted attitudes and norms are not sufficient to assure their future success.

Thus, in summary, the socializing power of the schools will be weakened if, due to either rapid educational expansion or application of ascriptive selection criteria, there is widespread pessimism among students regarding the ability of the educational system to implement their future success. In this event, the school will have succeeded in mobilizing new wants and aspirations among its students, but, in their eyes, may be increasingly perceived as having failed to fulfill the terms of the exchange "contract." If these newly mobilized school leavers are in fact subsequently frustrated in their attempt to assimilate into the modern economic sector then the educational system, for reasons largely external to its sphere of control, may be serving to promote social instability rather than social integration.

The Research Setting: Malaysia

Malaysia suggests itself as a useful case study for several reasons: first, due both to the range and complexity of the political problems confronting this nation, Malaysia may be seen as a textbook example of a transitional society attempting to cope with the many centrifugal forces which threaten the emergence of a viable, unified state; and second, the political leadership of Malaysia has continuously, since before independence, articulated

sentiments which link education intimately with the desire for a new and better political future. While the problems of national identity, national integration, participation and re-distribution are present to some degree in nearly all the transitional states, nowhere else do they seem to operate with such special intensity as in the case of Malaysia. This is largely due to the size and power of Malaysia's ethnic minorities and to the serious political and economic imbalances which exist between them. In point of fact, Malaysia is a nation of ethnic minorities; the indigenous Malay group comprising slightly less than fifty per cent of the population, the Chinese nearly thirty-nine per cent and the Indians and Ceylonese about eleven per cent. As Guy Hunter has pointed out, "Malaysia concentrates every ethnic and racial problem in acute form and with urgent political relevance."¹⁰ This problem of ethnicity, though basically one of integration, intrudes into all of the other problem areas, exacerbating them and confounding their solution.

Moreover, these problems which exist within Malaysian society as a whole are reflected, even intensified, in that nation's vastly fragmented and heterogeneous educational system. Clifford Geertz has written that "para-political warfare seems to have its own characteristic battleground. . . (parochial issues) show a persistent tendency to emerge in purer, more explicit, and more virulent form in some places where other sorts of social issues do not ordinarily appear. . . One of the most obvious of these is the school system. . . witness the fierce dispute between Malay and Chinese teachers' unions over the degree to which Malay should replace Chinese in Chinese schools in Malaysia."¹¹ And the language question is but one of many issues which have tended to become intensified through their

crystallization within the constrained environment of the schools. More than in any other nation, the debate over educational policy has tended to concentrate the issues which divide the community as a whole. Consequently, the schools themselves have become the center of ethnic controversy and competition, focusing debate upon selection and integration norms.

The Research Design

We observed earlier that most of the organizational socialization literature has been chiefly concerned with the effect which schools may have by manipulating the present experienced by the student, and by disconnecting him from the past. In our conceptualization of the educational institution as an exchange system we have, in essence, stressed the impact which the school may have upon its socializees as a result of its control over their potential futures. It is not our intention, however, to propose a unidimensional model for institutional effect. On the contrary, our analysis of the attitude data which have been collected on Malaysian secondary school students has indicated the utility of an interaction model of institutional effect. Consequently, we have throughout this study attempted to explain the impact which Malaysian schools are having upon the civic attitudes of their students by reference to the intimate interrelationship between the internal structural characteristics of the schools and their external function as systems of social exchange--between the school's manipulation of both the students' present educational experiences and their anticipated career futures.

Our initial examination of the Malaysian secondary schools revealed significant and systematic differences between these institutions: (1) they

recruited their students from among distinctly different Malaysian sub-cultures; (2) they varied widely as to their efficacy in implementing the future success of their students; and (3) while possessing many structural features in common, there were several crucial internal differences between these schools. It is on the basis of two of these latter, structural characteristics--ethnic composition and language medium of instruction--that we have organized the thirty-four secondary schools in our sample into five mutually exclusive, yet all inclusive, "school-type" categories: (1) Malay medium/Malay homogeneous; (2) English medium/Malay homogeneous; (3) English medium/heterogeneous; (4) English medium/Chinese homogeneous; and (5) Chinese medium/Chinese homogeneous. Thus, for analytical purposes, "school-type" is considered the primary independent variable in this study.

Moreover, data which were collected previous to, and independently of, our secondary school attitude survey indicated that these categories of schools varied markedly with regard to their efficacy in implementing the future career success of their graduates. The English medium, ethnically heterogeneous schools currently serve as, by far, the most effective educational channel of upward social and economic mobility for Malaysian youth.¹²

The dependent variables have been selected both for their relevance to Malaysia's continuing integrative crisis and for their more general relevance to the study of the relationship between the educational system of a society and the legitimation of its political system. Thus we have selected for analysis such diffuse attitudinal constructs as "alienation," "ethnic trust," and "national identity." These attitudinal outcomes were measured by means of a variety of scales and indices designed to elicit data pertinent to the theoretical concerns of this study and which were

constructed and pre-tested over an eight month period in Malaysia prior to the administration of the final survey.

(a) Political Alienation: This scale is an attempt to determine the respondents' degree of attachment to or, conversely, alienation from the policies and role incumbents of the present Alliance government in Malaysia.

(b) National Identity: This scale attempts to measure the extent to which the respondent identifies with the polity of Malaysia as opposed to parochial identification with ethnic community, religious group or traditional authority figures.

(c) Ethnic Trust: The range of trust which students display toward members of the other ethnic groups of Malaysia.

(d) Objective Civic Competence: This is not an attitudinal variable-- it is simply a measure of the cognitive information the respondent possesses regarding the polity of Malaysia: its laws and constitution, its leaders and institutions, and its political history.

It is a central assumption of this study that the strength with which these civic attitudes and values are held by students will be related to the students' perception of the "exchange value" of the school they are attending. In short, students will more willingly internalize institutionally desired values if they believe that the institution they are attending, and the norms it represents, provides access to desired future adult statuses.

Data and Analysis

We have utilized a cross-sectional survey design which provided for the survey of 7,120 secondary school students during their ninth, eleventh and

thirteenth years of education, from a sample of thirty-four Malaysian secondary schools. The survey questionnaire was administered in all three language media of instruction: English, Malay and Chinese. The questionnaire contained items covering the major variables described above as well as extensive background material on the students. In addition, extensive interview and observational data have been collected, and complete ethnographies have been developed for each school in the sample, as a means of both illuminating and validating the survey results.

The main feature of our analysis strategy is the use of the school-type classification system described previously. This strategy permits us to compare students exposed to different types of institutional influences on the dependent attitudinal variables while controlling for student background characteristics. For this purpose we have utilized the test-factor standardization method of analysis described by Rosenberg.¹³

The Civic Attitudes of Malaysian Secondary School Students

On the basis of our theoretical discussion, together with what we know about the actual performance of the Malaysian schools relative to their ability to implement the future success of their students, we were led to hypothesize certain differential patterns of attitude outcomes between the students of our five school-categories. These preliminary expectations were also grounded in our knowledge of the distinctly different subcultures from which these different classes of schools recruit their clients.

In general, we anticipated that the schools which, on the basis of independent criteria, we knew to be the most efficacious in implementing their students' future career success--the English heterogeneous category--would be producing students displaying the most compliant, institutionally

desired attitudinal behavior (i.e., least alienated, least distrustful, and least communal). This expectation was based upon the belief that the socializing power of these schools would be very high due to the realistic anticipation of status gains which they could offer their students.

In addition, reference group theory led us to expect that the students from these heterogeneous schools would begin to anticipate entry into the English speaking, relatively Westernized elite by taking on the civic norms and values articulated by, and, in some cases, modeled by, these high status adult role occupants. Consistent with this, we expected that Malays--since they are visibly being sponsored by the government for elite entry--would be more civically compliant than non-Malays; and, further, that students from lower socioeconomic origins, who are enrolled in schools perceived as possessing high exchange value, would be more compliant than upper SES students since they could anticipate relatively greater status gains. Also consistent with the above reasoning, we expected heterogeneous school Chinese to be significantly less alienated, less distrustful of other ethnic groups, and more likely to identify with the nation than the homogeneous school Chinese since they are, by comparison, the "chosen" (that is, unlike their homogeneous school ethnic peers, they can anticipate induction into high status occupational roles). Conversely, we hypothesized that the less efficacious ethnically homogeneous schools, but particularly the Malay and Chinese vernacular schools, would be producing students who were more communal, more likely to be alienated, and distrustful of members of other ethnic groups.

Such were our preliminary expectations prior to the analysis of the survey data. An examination of Table 10.4 (a composite table) reveals the

Table 10.4 Composite Table: Percentage Ranking High on All Dependent Variables* by School-Type and Ethnicity

School Type	Ethnicity	National Identity	Alienation	Ethnic Distrust	Evaluation of Government
(1) Malay Medium/ Homogeneous	Malay	21	17	28	23
(2) English Medium/ Homogeneous	Malay	38	22	32	30
(3) English Medium/ Heterogeneous	Malay	53	46	43	10
	Chinese	55	53	46	6
(4) English Medium/ Homogeneous	Chinese	19	26	23	16
(5) Chinese Medium/ Homogeneous	Chinese	14	19	21	20
* Per cent of Total Sample		41	37	37	15

actual observed attitude patterns among the five different categories of schools. It is clear, even from a cursory examination of these data, that our preliminary hypothesis missed the mark by a rather wide margin.

Only the attitude dimension which we have labeled communal national identification has conformed almost exactly to the initial hypotheses. Thus, in Table 10.4, it can be seen that the English heterogeneous school students of both Malay and Chinese ethnicity are consistently more national (less communal) than their homogeneous school peers of either ethnicity. The English medium homogeneous schools, both Malay and Chinese, occupy a mediating position between the heterogeneous schools and the vernacular schools. In contrast, however, the remainder of Table 10.4 reveals a pattern which is almost diametrically opposite to that indicated above. Here, quite contrary to our preliminary expectations, the English heterogeneous school students are, overall, more alienated, more distrustful of members of other ethnic groups and more negative in their evaluation of the government's performance than the students in any of the other school categories; and, further, these differences are most marked between the heterogeneous school students and those enrolled in either the Chinese or the Malay vernacular schools.

In brief, then, Table 10.4 reveals a pattern of marked attitude differences between the students of the five school categories; but only in the case of the communal/national dimension was the difference in the direction initially predicted. As a means of interpreting these original relationships, we selected an analysis strategy which proposed three alternative, or rival, explanations for these observed attitude differences: (1) that they were largely due to antecedent social background differences

between the students recruited to these different categories of schools; (2) they were a result of internal structural characteristics unique of the different school categories; and (3) that the observed attitude differences were primarily due to differences in the external relationships of these schools to the adult occupational world.

Testing for Antecedent Causation

We cannot automatically assume that the marked attitude differences which we have observed between the five school categories are due to any effect which can be attributed to the school organization itself. In fact, since we know that these different classes of schools systematically recruit their students from quite distinct Malaysian sub-cultures we must seriously entertain the rival hypothesis that these observed attitude differences may be largely, perhaps entirely, attributable to the antecedent differences in social origin of the students attending the different categories of schools.

For the sake of simplicity and comprehensibility, the data presented in this section have been illustrated by use of composite tables controlled on ethnicity and comprised of only the "high" cells of the particular dependent attitudinal variable being investigated (Tables 9.1, 9.2, and 9.7 through 9.10).*

* As mentioned previously, we have chosen to utilize the test factor standardization method of data interpretation. Consequently, the reader should note that these composite tables are the product of numerous computer runs, concentrating data which have been obtained by collapsing the results of a large number of partial tables. The percentage figures which appear in the first column of cells to the right of the vertical axis of the table represent the original (or M type) relationship between the independent variable (school-type controlled on ethnicity) and the percentage ranking

Communal/National Student Identification

Table 9.1 compares Malays from the three different school-types within which Malays are enrolled on the dependent variable "national identity."

Table 9.2 does likewise for Chinese students. Both of these tables, however, reveal a quite similar pattern: the social background variables, introduced as test factors, appear to account for a substantial proportion of the original difference between the students of the homogeneous school categories and those from the English heterogeneous schools--regardless of ethnicity.

While we have been unable to isolate any single demographic test factor which accounts for more than 25% of the original difference between

high on the dependent variable. Each of the cells to the right of these original relationships represent the change (reduction or increase) in the original association which has resulted from the introduction of the labelled test factor. It is important for the reader to note, however, that the change in percentage from left to right along the horizontal axis is not the crucial one; this is simply the new high cell percentage for that one category of school which has resulted from standardizing on that one particular test factor. Rather, it is by scanning vertically down the column that the reader will be able to determine the amount of difference in the relationship between school categories on the dependent variable which has resulted from the introduction of that specific test factor.

These percentage scores appearing in the test factor columns are simply a shorthand method for illustrating what has happened to the original relationship as a result of holding, say, socioeconomic status constant. The amount of the reduction of the original differences between school categories when a background factor such as SES is held constant may be said to be the amount that was "contributed" to the original relationship. For example, we are in essence asking, "If one Malay in the heterogeneous schools and the Malays in the Malay medium homogeneous schools were equalized (standardized) on socioeconomic status, would they differ as much on the attitudinal variable as they appear to in the original relationship?"

One final point: the reader will note that the standardized tables include a different combination of test factors. This is because in the case of any particular table, only those test factors were included which contributed 5% or more to the original relationship. Overall we tested for the possible effect of more than twenty background factors, but we included only those contributing a +5% difference.

Table 9.1

Composite Table -- Percentage Ranking High on Nationalism*
by School-Type and Malay Ethnicity --
Standardized on Selected Social Background Test Factors

School Type	Original Relationship	SES	Family Residence	Father's Birthplace	Other Language Spoken	Sibling Position	Father's Level of Education	Father's Language of Education	Father's Employer
Malay Medium/ Homogeneous	(123) 21	23	26	23	23	23	27	27	21
English Medium/ Homogeneous	(179) 38	36	39	40	40	40	40	40	36
English Medium/ Heterogeneous	(341) 53	52	52	51	51	51	51	51	51
Percentage of Difference Contributed by Test Factor		9	19		12			25	6

* Thirty-seven per cent of the Malay students rank high on nationalism.

Table 9.2

Composite Table -- Percentage Ranking High on Nationalism*
by School-Type and Chinese Ethnicity --
Standardized on Selected Social Background Test Factors

School Type	Original Relationship	SES	Family Residence	Father's Occupation	Other Language Spoken	Sibling Position	Father's Level of Education	Father's Language of Education	Father's Employer
Chinese Medium/ Homogeneous	(40) 14	N o	17	15	19	N o	14	20	15
English Medium/ Homogeneous	(46) 19	D i f f e r e n c e	20	19	22	D i f f e r e n c e	10	24	19
English Medium/ Heterogeneous	(684) 55	D i f f e r e n c e	53	54	54	D i f f e r e n c e	52	53	52
Percentage of Difference Contributed by Test Factor			12	5	15		7	20	10

* Twenty-nine per cent of the Chinese students rank high on nationalism.

the vernacular school students and the English heterogeneous students (father's language of education in Table 9.1), it can be seen in both Table 9.1 and 9.2 that a quite similar cluster of social background characteristics have, in combination, acted to reduce the original relationship between these school categories on the communal/national variable by approximately 70%. In short, somewhat over two-thirds of the difference in the nationalist orientation between students of the same ethnicity but attending different types of schools appears to be attributable to their subcultural origins. At the risk of oversimplifying, perhaps a clearer way of stating this is to observe that both the Malay and the Chinese students attending the English medium heterogeneous schools are significantly more national, less communal, than their vernacular school peers,* but that to an important degree (roughly 70%), their nationalist orientation appears to be due to the fact that they are recruited from a subculture which is already much more attuned to the nation and to the national government than are the more communal vernacular school students. Social class, it should be noted, has not contributed nearly as much to the original relationship as family's "place of residence," "father's language of education," and "other language spoken within the family"--precisely those characteristics which tend to determine a subculture's accessibility to the nationalizing message of the predominantly English speaking governing elite of Malaysia.

* The reader should note that the percentage figure at the foot of each test factor column represents the percent of the original difference between the heterogeneous school category and the vernacular school category contributed by the introduction of that test factor. We have concentrated on these two categories both for the sake of simplifying that which would otherwise be a quite complex task of illustration and because, as is clearly apparent, it is between these two categories that the order of difference is most significant.

Alienation and Ethnic Distrust

For the various reasons discussed previously, it was not surprising to find that the English heterogeneous school students were significantly more nationalist oriented than their heterogeneous school peers, nor was it entirely unexpected that antecedent factors should account for such a substantial portion of that difference. However, as we have noted earlier it was indeed quite unanticipated that these same English heterogeneous students who have been seen to be the most nationalist oriented* would also be significantly more alienated and more distrustful of members of other ethnic groups than students of any other school category.

Thus, despite the fact that this would appear to be contrary to what we know about Malaysian society, we must seriously entertain the possibility that, for some reason that has evaded us, those very subcultural characteristics which tend to be concentrated in the English heterogeneous schools are causally related to the alienation and ethnic distrust of these students. Here again, the rival hypothesis would be that the observed difference in alienation and distrust scores between the different school categories is attributable largely to the fact that these schools tend to concentrate students from very different social backgrounds.

However, when we control for these antecedent factors, it can be seen in Tables 9.7 through 9.10 that in no case do they, in total, reduce the

* And, also, on the basis of measures not reported in this paper, these English heterogeneous students of both Chinese and Malay ethnicity were seen to be more aware of the influence of the federal government and more knowledgeable about its operation.

Table 9.7

Composite Table -- Percentage Ranking High on Alienation* Scale
by School-Type and Malay Ethnicity --
Standardized on Selected Social Background Test Factors

School Type	Original Relationship	SES	Family Residence
Malay Medium/ Homogeneous	(132) 17	20	21
English Medium/ Homogeneous	(137) 22	23	24
English Medium/ Heterogeneous	(395) 46	46	45
Percentage of Difference Contributed By Test Factor		10	17

* Twenty-eight per cent of the Malay students ranked high on alienation.

Table 9.8

Composite Table -- Percentage Ranking High on Alienation* Scale
by School-Type and Chinese Ethnicity --
Standardized on Selected Social Background Test Factors

School Type	Original Relationship	SES	Family Residence	Father's Employer
Chinese Medium/ Homogeneous	(7.) 1)	22	22	20
English Medium/ Homogeneous	(8.) 2)	27	26	27
English Medium/ Heterogeneous	(8.8) 5)	52	53	50
Percentage of Difference Contributed by Test Factor		12	9	12

* Thirty-three percent of the Chinese students ranked high on Alienation.

Table 9.9

Composite Table -- Percentage Ranking High on Ethnic Distrust*
by School-Type and Malay Ethnicity --
Standardized on Selected Social Background Test Factors

School Type	Original Relationship	SES	Family Residence
Malay Medium/ Homogeneous	(217) 28	30	30
English Medium/ Homogeneous	(195) 12	33	32
English Medium/ Heterogeneous	(318) 43	43	42
Percentage of Difference Contributed by Test Factor		13	20

* Thirty-four per cent of the Malay students ranked high on ethnic distrust.

Table 9.10

Composite Table -- Percentage Ranking High on Ethnic Distrust*
by School-Type and Chinese Ethnicity --
Standardized on Selected Social Background Test Factors

School Type	Original Relationship	Family Residence	Father's Level of Education	Father's Employer
Chinese Medium/ Homogeneous	(79) 21	23	23	22
English Medium/ Homogeneous	(75) 23	24	24	24
English Medium/ Heterogeneous	(720) 46	45	46	43
Percentage of Difference Contributed by Test Factor		12	8	16

* Thirty per cent of the Chinese students ranked high on ethnic distrust.

relationship between the dependent variable and school-type by more than 36% of the original difference. The fact that the test factors can be seen to account for such a comparatively small amount of the difference between schools leads us to suspect that the high levels of both alienation and ethnic distrust are due to something other than the subcultural differences between students. In fact, unlike that case of the communal/national variable, the data presented in Table 9.7 through 9.10 tend to indicate that social background characteristics alone are poor predictors of either alienation or distrust.

The Influence of Institutional Characteristics

We have seen from the analysis in the preceding section that there are strong and consistent differences in the dependent attitude variables between students attending different types of Malaysian secondary schools which (with the exception of the communal/national variable) are not adequately accounted for by the antecedence, or intervention, of social background characteristics. In this section, therefore, we will examine an alternative explanation: that these observed differences are, to an important degree, attributable to the differential effect that the various types of educational institutions are having upon the values of their socializees. Specifically what institutional characteristics may be seen to account for the observed pattern of attitude differences? For example, what is it about the English medium heterogeneous schools that is producing students who are significantly more alienated and distrustful than the students of any of the other categories of schools?

In our previous theoretical discussion we observed that the effect which an institution may have upon the diffuse values of its socializees may be attributable to either the internal structural characteristics of

the organization or to the features of the institution which are external to its own structure and which constitute its relationship with the adult occupational world.

Fortunately, our analysis task was somewhat simplified by the fact that while we have observed a strong and consistent pattern of attitude differences between the five categories of Malaysian schools, there are only a relatively few internal organizational characteristics which are found to be distributed through the secondary school sample in such a way that they might conceivably be considered causally related to this actual pattern of differences. A concrete example may help to clarify this point. Within the organizational socialization literature, an institution's arrangements for socially isolating its clients from rival outside influences has been viewed as, potentially, a powerful aid to socialization. One indicator of social isolation is the day school/boarding school structure of an institution. However, given the actual pattern of distribution of this day/boarding structural feature throughout the five school categories, it would not be reasonable to expect that this institutional feature will be causally related to the observed differences in our dependent variables. For example, what possible effect could this variable have upon the fact that English heterogeneous school Chinese are more alienated than homogeneous school Chinese, since there are no Chinese boarding schools and there is only one English heterogeneous boarding school?

Space does not permit us to report the results of the introduction of each school structural test factor in detail. However, we may summarize the results of this analysis as follows: controlling for institutional prestige, school isolation; school size; school location; numerous

characteristics of the institutional "culture" (such as teacher training and experience, opportunities for student participation, and administrative style); and language medium of instruction resulted in no significant reduction of the original differences on the dependent variable between the students of the different school categories. In fact, this analysis led us to conclude that the pronounced attitude differences revealed by the survey, between the students attending different types of Malaysian secondary schools, are far more strongly related to the ethnic composition of the school than to any of the other alternative explanations which we have tested. If the reader will refer back to Table 10.4 it shows quite clearly, for example, that the students attending the ethnically heterogeneous schools are, attitudinally, quite deviant from those attending the ethnically homogeneous schools. Moreover, controlling for ethnicity and language medium* did not significantly alter this association; both the Malay and the Chinese students attending the heterogeneous schools are more alienated than their respective ethnic peers in both the vernacular medium homogeneous schools and the English medium homogeneous schools.

Consequently, of all the structural and demographic characteristics which we have examined, the heterogeneous ethnic structure of the school is consistently the most powerful predictor of student alienation. But why? What is it about the heterogeneous ethnic structure of a school that accounts for this high level of student alienation? After all, it is these English heterogeneous schools that have historically been the

* The reader should note that Table 10.4 is, in fact, controlled on both of these variables.

most highly efficacious in implementing the future success of their students. Why should the very students who, so far as we can ascertain, have the best chance of achieving elite status be the most highly alienated?

Mobility Inconsistency and the Structure of Internal Competition: An Interaction Effect Between Institutional and Societal Influences

Our search for a solution to the apparent paradox of the high alienation of the English heterogeneous school students necessitated that we consider the possibility that despite the fact that we know, on the basis of objective criteria, that these heterogeneous schools possess high exchange value, their students do not know, or do not believe, that these schools are so highly chartered.

In order to examine this supposition empirically we turned to the survey findings. These data revealed, quite unexpectedly, that the English heterogeneous students were among the most pessimistic sub-groups in the total student sample regarding their belief in the likelihood of obtaining desired occupational roles following graduation. Paradoxically, however, the survey findings also showed that these English heterogeneous school students, along with the students from the Malay vernacular schools, possessed the highest occupational aspirations.

Thus, we are confronted with a situation whereby the heterogeneous school students, who are among the most pessimistic about their chances for future success, have the highest occupational aspirations. On the assumption that an individual who is low aspiring is a quite different political actor than one who aspires high but has, as a result of intervening experiences, readjusted his career expectations downward, we constructed an index of "mobility inconsistency," which would permit us to

empirically explore the possible relationship between perceived mobility blockage, the ethnically heterogeneous school structure and the dependent variable--alienation.

This index makes it possible for us to stratify the student sample as follows: (1) respondents who have both high occupational aspirations and high expectations; (2) respondents who have both low aspirations and low expectations; (3) respondents who have high aspirations but low expectations. The first two categories of responses have been labeled mobility consistent. The third category has been labeled mobility inconsistent.

Table 11.3 illustrates the relationship between mobility consistency and category of school attended. The mobility inconsistent students can be seen to be heavily concentrated in the English heterogeneous schools. This is true of students of both Malay and Chinese ethnicity. Equally as interesting, however, is the fact that the table also reveals that those students with both high aspirations and high expectations tend to be concentrated in the Malay vernacular schools, while those respondents with both low aspirations and low expectations are over-represented in the Chinese homogeneous schools.

Mobility Inconsistency and Alienation

In Table 11.3 we established that a strong relationship exists between the heterogeneous ethnic structure of the school and student anticipation of career blockage. (And we already know from the data presented previously that there is a significant association between heterogeneous structure and alienation). However, it is now necessary to determine whether or not there is any significant relationship between mobility inconsistency and alienation.

Table 11.3 Three Variable Table: Mobility Consistency* by School-Type and Ethnicity

School Type	Ethnicity	Consistent	Inconsistent	Consistent
		High Aspirations/ High Expectations	High Aspirations/ Low Expectations	Low Aspirations/ Low Expectations
(1) Malay Medium/ Homogeneous	Malay	49	19	32
(2) English Medium/ Homogeneous	Malay	45	28	29
(3) English Medium/ Heterogeneous	Malay	34	53	13
	Chinese	27	51	12
(4) English Medium/ Homogeneous	Chinese	21	34	45
(5) Chinese Medium/ Homogeneous	Chinese	18	25	57

Total number of students = 4596

* Thirty-six per cent of the students ranked high on mobility inconsistency.

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In Table 11.4, therefore, we have cross-tabulated school-type by alienation while specifying mobility consistency as the explanatory test factor. Table 11.4 reveals that mobility inconsistency is significantly associated with alienation throughout the sample, regardless of school-type. But, more important, this relationship is most concentrated in the English heterogeneous schools. That is, a disproportionate number of respondents who are both high alienates and mobility inconsistent are attending the English heterogeneous school category. It should be apparent, therefore, that the heterogeneous structural characteristic alone is not producing the observed high levels of alienation, for if this were the case we would logically expect all heterogeneous school students, regardless of their mobility consistency/inconsistency ranking to exhibit significantly higher levels of alienation than the homogeneous school students. Table 11.4, however, provides rather convincing evidence that this is not the case: it is primarily only the mobility inconsistent respondents in both the heterogeneous and homogeneous schools who rank high on alienation. In fact, it can be seen that the original relationship between these school categories on the alienation variable is reduced markedly by the introduction of mobility consistency as a test factor.

Furthermore, although those respondents who are mobility inconsistent are significantly more likely to be alienated regardless of the type of school they are attending, they are far more likely to be attending the heterogeneous schools. Illustrative of this point is the fact that of all those respondents ranking high on alienation who are also mobility inconsistent, 77% are attending heterogeneous schools. This is simply to say

Table 11.4 Four Variable Table: Percentage Ranking High on Alienation* by Mobility Inconsistency,** School-Type and Ethnicity

School Type	Ethnicity	Consistent High Aspirations/ High Expectations	Inconsistent High Aspirations/ Low Expectations	Consistent Low Aspirations/ Low Expectations
(1) Malay Medium/ Homogeneous	Malay	16	61	23
(2) English Medium/ Homogeneous	Malay	13	58	29
(3) English Medium/ Heterogeneous	Malay	18	70	12
	Chinese	20	67	13
(4) English Medium/ Homogeneous	Chinese	16	63	21
(5) Chinese Medium/ Homogeneous	Chinese	14	56	30

Total number of cases = 1656

*Thirty-seven per cent of the students ranked high on alienation.

**Twenty-four per cent of the sample is both mobility inconsistent and high on alienation.

that mobility inconsistency alone is not producing as high a level of alienation as it is in interaction with the heterogeneous ethnic structure of the school.

Thus it does not appear to be the heterogeneous structure per se that is producing alienation, as it initially appeared, but rather some feature that is unique of the ethnically heterogeneous institutional environment is causing students to feel blocked in their career aspirations--and it is this frustration due to anticipated failure that is producing the high alienation.

We are suggesting, therefore, that student alienation (and ethnic distrust) are largely a result of a complex interaction effect between a student's present experience within the heterogeneous school environment and his generalization of that school-specific experience to his future adult occupational expectations.

The crucial question which remains to be answered is: what is happening within the English heterogeneous schools that is producing this anticipation of career frustration and the high levels of alienation which we have seen to be associated with it?

We could not answer this key question by recourse to the survey data alone. Consequently, we returned to the schools to conduct follow-up interviews with teachers and students and to observe classrooms. This interview data, together with the survey findings indicated that within the institutional environment of the ethnically heterogeneous schools, it appears that the intensely competitive examination system serves to introduce students quite early to the conflict and uncertainty over selection

norms which characterizes Malaysian adult society as a whole. This situation tends to generate fear and uncertainty among the students regarding the selection criteria by which their future chances will be determined. The government's policy of utilizing the educational system as the chief instrument for sponsoring the social and economic mobility of the Malay is most clearly visible in the heterogeneous schools. Consequently, the Chinese pupils fear that their academic performance will not be sufficient to assure their selection--that Malays will be selected over them on the basis of ascriptive criteria. The Malays, on the other hand, commonly express fear that they will not be able to compete successfully with the high level of Chinese performance norms. They also anticipate the application of ascriptive selection criteria for jobs within the Chinese-dominated private sector of the economy. Hence, both the Chinese and the Malays in the heterogeneous schools tend to feel that the examination system, as the most visible and the most immediately pertinent extension of the formal adult status selection system, is serving to sponsor the mobility of the rival group. Moreover, our interviews with the heterogeneous school students, as well as additional survey data, strongly indicate that the anxieties and resentments engendered by the in-school competitive structure are not constrained to the students' educational aspirations alone, but tend to be generalized influencing their perceptions of the adult occupational world as well.

On the basis of both interview and survey data, we have suggested that the high levels of career pessimism among the heterogeneous school students may be largely a consequence of the anxiety and uncertainty over selection

norms, engendered by the intense inter-ethnic competition which characterizes these institutions being generalized by the students to their anticipated career futures--causing them to readjust their expectations downward. For not only are these high aspiring students of rival ethnic groups competing for scarce status "resources" and a decreasing number of upper form and university places, but, unlike their homogeneous school peers, they are competing directly with each other for them within the same institutional environment.

Thus, we would contend that neither the ethnic heterogeneous structure or the mobility inconsistency (a reflection of the school's external relationship with the occupational world) variables are in themselves productive of high student alienation. But, rather, it is the internal structure of inter-ethnic competition together with the students' perception of the nature of the adult occupational world that are creating intense ethnic rivalry and anxiety over selection norms which are being generalized to their anticipated futures, devaluing the schools as institutions of social exchange and weakening their socializing power.

Conclusions

The dual thrust of Malaysian educational policy since independence has been, first, to view the schools as the primary socializing agencies for transmitting those values and attitudes deemed crucial to the creation of an allegiant, integrated young citizenry, and, second, to manipulate the school system as an instrument for sponsoring the mobility of the indigenous Malay population. The latter has led to the problem of differential perceptions by the various Malaysian ethnic groups as to the

appropriate role of the school system as a manager of mobility and, thus, to a serious disagreement over selection norms. The non-Malay tends to see education as an agency which provides the opportunity to obtain the skills and cognitions necessary for social mobility and, equally important, as a means of certifying such attainment on the basis of universalistic achievement criteria. On the other hand, the Malays tend to view the system as an instrument for re-distributing adult statuses on the basis of ascriptive criteria. Serious conflict has resulted from attempting to house a system of contest mobility and a system of sponsored mobility under the same institutional roof.

Our analysis indicates a significant relationship between the students' perception of education as serving the interests of a special ethnic group and their dissatisfaction with the school as an effective exchange system. More significant, however, is the strong interaction effect observed between the two above variables and the dependent attitudinal variables. This relationship is consistent throughout the sample: those respondents who are dissatisfied with the exchange value of their educational experience are consistently more likely to score high on alienation and ethnic distrust. In brief, those respondents who do not view education as an effective exchange system are least likely to take on institutionally desired values and most likely to exhibit those characteristics which the government considers to be most detrimental to its goals of national integration.

It would appear, therefore, that the Malaysian government's attempt to utilize the educational system as an instrument for social re-distribution

has resulted in a general loss of legitimacy of schools as effective exchange systems in the eyes of a significant proportion of students of all ethnic groups. Since it is these very students who are most likely to withhold legitimacy from the regime and, also, to exhibit high distrust of members of other ethnic groups, we would contend that the "sponsored mobility" role of the educational system of Malaysia is seriously interfering with the manifest socialization function assigned to the schools.