

An abstract painting with a rich, textured background of warm colors like orange, red, and yellow. A central figure, possibly a woman in a white garment, is depicted with thin, flowing lines. The overall style is expressive and layered.

Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship

RACE, EDUCATION, AND CITIZENSHIP

Mobile Malaysians, British Colonial Legacies
and a Culture of Migration

Sin Yee Koh



Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship

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Sin Yee Koh

Race, Education, and Citizenship

Mobile Malaysians, British Colonial Legacies,
and a Culture of Migration

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CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
2	British Colonial Legacies and the Making of Malay(si)a	49
3	A Culture of Migration	107
4	Education-Migration Pathways and the (Re)Production of Race	159
5	Interpreting and Practising Citizenship	189
6	Returning to Malaysia?	223
7	Conclusion: Postcolonialising a Culture of Migration	255
	Appendices	277
	Index	285

ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BGM	Brain Gain Malaysia
BMA	British Military Administration
BN	<i>Barisan Nasional</i> ('United Front')
CUKC	Citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies
DOS	Singapore Department of Statistics
DOSM	Department of Statistics Malaysia
EEA	European Economic Area
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FELDA	Federal Land Development Authority
FMS	Federated Malay States
GCE	General Certificate of Education
I/C	Identity Card
IKM	<i>Institut Kemahiran MARA</i> ('MARA Skills Institute')
ILR	Indefinite Leave to Remain
ISA	Internal Security Act
ITM	<i>Institut Teknologi MARA</i> ('MARA Institute of Technology')
JB	Johor Bahru
JPA	<i>Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam</i> ('Public Service Department')
KBSM	<i>Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah</i> ('Integrated Secondary School Curriculum')
KBSR	<i>Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah</i> ('Integrated Primary School Curriculum')
KKTM	<i>Kolej Kemahiran Tinggi MARA</i> ('MARA Higher Skills College')

KL	Kuala Lumpur
KLIA	Kuala Lumpur International Airport
LTSVP	Long-Term Social Visit Pass
MARA	<i>Majlis Amanah Rakyat</i> (Council of Trust for Indigenous People)
MAS	Malay Administrative Service
MCA	Malayan Chinese Association/Malaysian Chinese Association
MCKK	Malay College Kuala Kangsar
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MCS	Malayan Civil Service
MIC	Malayan Indian Congress/Malaysian Indian Congress
MICSS	Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools
MM2H	Malaysia My Second Home
MNLA	Malayan National Liberation Army
MOE	Ministry of Education Malaysia
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia
MRSM	<i>Maktab Rendah Sains MARA</i> ('MARAs Junior Science Colleges')
MSC	Multimedia Super Corridor
MU	Malayan Union
NEM	New Economic Model
NEP	New Economic Policy
NOC	National Operations Council
NPTD	National Population and Talent Division
NSC	National Security Council
NUCC	National Unity Consultative Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAP	People's Action Party
PBS	Points Based System
PMR	<i>Penilaian Menengah Rendah</i> ('Lower Secondary Assessment')
PR	Permanent resident
PSW	Post-Study Work Visa
REP	Returning Expert Programme
ROA	Right of Abode
RSP	Returning Scientist Programme
SAM	South Australian Matriculation
SOSMA	Security Offences (Special Measures) Act
SPM	<i>Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia</i> ('Malaysian Certificate of Education')
SPR	Election Commission of Malaysia

SRP	<i>Sijil Rendah Pelajaran</i> ('Lower Certificate of Education')
SS	Straits Settlements
STPM	<i>Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia</i> ('Malaysian Higher Certification of Schooling')
TARC	Tunku Abdul Rahman College
UCSCAM	United Chinese School Committees' Association of Malaysia
UCSTA	United Chinese School Teachers' Association
UEC	United Examination Certificate
UiTM	<i>Universiti Teknologi MARA</i> ('MARA Technological University')
UK	United Kingdom
UKBA	UK Border Agency
UMNO	United Malays National Organisation
UMS	Unfederated Malay States
USA	United States of America
WPKL	Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur ('Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur')

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1.1	States of Malaysia	3
Fig. 1.2	Malaysians (country of birth) resident in Singapore, by ethnicity, 1970–2010	7
Fig. 2.1	Federation of Malaya identity card	70
Fig. 2.2	Structure of Malaysia’s education system	86
Fig. 3.1	Net inter-state migration flows (5,000 persons or more), Peninsular Malaysia, 10 years preceding 1980 census, 1975–80, 1986–1991, and 1995–2000	114
Fig. 3.2	Net inter-state migration flows (5,000 persons or more), Peninsular Malaysia, 1999–2003, and 2006–2010	118
Fig. 3.3	Malaysian-born residents in Singapore, by age group and gender, 2010	124
Fig. 3.4	Singapore population by residence status, 1970–2010	125
Fig. 3.5	Singapore’s permanent resident (PR) and citizenship trends, 1980–1994	126
Fig. 3.6	Singapore’s permanent resident (PR) and citizenship trends, 2000–2014	127
Fig. 3.7	UK visas granted to Malaysians, 2005–2014	129
Fig. 3.8	Number of British citizenships granted to Malaysian nationals, 1983–2014	130
Fig. 3.9	Types of British citizenships granted to Malaysian nationals, 2006–2011	131
Fig. 3.10	Top 12 countries with outbound mobile students, 2000–2013	134
Fig. 3.11	Outbound mobile students from Malaysia, 1998–2010	134

Fig. 3.12	Number of Malaysian students in Taiwanese Universities, 1990/91–2014/15	137
Fig. 3.13	Overseas Malaysians' reasons for residing in current place of residence, by age group	140
Fig. 3.14	Durations of stays of tertiary-educated Malaysian-born migrants in selected OECD countries, 2000	141
Fig. 3.15	Respondents' migration geographies	145

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1	Malaysia’s former political entities under British colonial rule	4
Table 1.2	Malaysian population (citizens only), 1947–2014	5
Table 1.3	Respondents’ demographic characteristics	29
Table 2.1	Key features of Malaysia’s citizenship laws, 1946–1963	61
Table 2.2	Government and opposition seats and votes in <i>Dewan Rakyat</i> (‘House of Representatives’) (%), 1959–2013	67
Table 2.3	Number of primary schools and student enrolment in post-colonial Malaysia (by education streams), 1970–2013	79
Table 2.4	Government free places and scholarships in Malayan Union, 1947	82
Table 2.5	Study destinations of students from Malaya, 1947	83
Table 3.1	Population by migrant status and state, Peninsular Malaysia (%), 1970	112
Table 3.2	Stock of Malaysian migrants in selected destination countries, 1960–2013	121
Table 3.3	Persons born in Malaysia by year of arrival in Singapore, 1931–1980	123
Table 3.4	Malaysians in London, 2004, 2008 and 2011	128
Table 3.5	Five tiers of the UK Points Based System (PBS)	129
Table 3.6	Number of Malaysian students in selected Commonwealth countries, early 1960s	135
Table 3.7	Tertiary-educated Malaysians in OECD Countries, 1990 and 2000	138

Table 3.8	Estimated proportions of Malaysian tertiary-educated migrants staying on after graduation in selected countries, 2000s and 2010s	139
Table 5.1	Respondents' participation in electoral voting	202
Table 6.1	Respondents' perceptions towards the Returning Expert Programme (REP)	242

Introduction

I am one of you. Like you, I am also trying to figure out my views about the country I was born in, about whether I will return, about the very real and contradictory considerations each of us grapple with in our citizenship and mobility decisions. This project is a quest for answers.

In September 2011, I started a research blog¹ with the explanatory blurb above. My motivation for this research on Malaysia's contemporary migration—which can be described as skilled, education-induced, middle-class, familial, and/or racialised—has been informed by three starting points that appeared unconnected to each other at the first glance. The first starting point was my awareness of Malaysia's education-induced and racialised migration, especially amongst the non-*bumiputera* ('sons of soil') Malaysian-Chinese and Malaysian-Indians.² The emigration of these non-*bumiputera* Malaysians have been attributed to the practice of *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship and pro-*bumiputera* affirmative action policies since the late 1960s. The second starting point was my personal migration experience and observations of the citizenship and migration practices of other overseas Malaysians while I was a student turned skilled migrant in Singapore and the UK. Finally, the third starting point was my confusion as to how migration-related concepts derived predominantly from Anglo-Western experiences were appropriate in application to the multi-ethnic, post-colonial³ Malaysian context. What, for example,

do race, education, citizenship/nationality, and migration mean in the Malaysian context? Given that British colonial rule was a significant factor in Malaysia's transition from a colony to an independent modern nation-state, how does the colonial factor impact upon the meanings of race, education, and citizenship in the context of migration? How do the differentiated and contextualised understandings of these concepts affect how people from Malaysia practise migration? More importantly, by adopting a postcolonial perspective on the Malaysian case, what can this tell us about existing understandings of migrants, migration, and mobility? In other words, what is the relationship between postcolonialism and a culture of migration?

This book argues that Malaysia's contemporary migration can be understood as an outcome and consequence of British colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship/nationality.⁴ More specifically, this book connects three British colonial legacies that have been inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state—firstly, race and ethnic Malay indigeneity; secondly, educational pathways and the meanings of overseas/Western education; and thirdly, the meanings of citizenship (including its relation to nationality)—to a culture of migration amongst mobile Malaysians. This book places equal emphasis on the roles of the British colonial administration *and* the post-colonial Malaysian state. While the former introduced and laid the foundation for the institutionalisation of these colonial legacies, the latter adapted and developed these legacies in accordance to the socio-political circumstances at specific temporalities in Malaysian history.⁵

This book argues that mobile Malaysians' culture of migration—which includes their migration geographies, as well as their citizenship and migration practices—must be contextualised to the British colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship in post-colonial Malaysia. Amongst these three colonial legacies, race is arguably the more important one as it also structures and circumscribes education and citizenship. Since race has been institutionalised in all aspects of social life in colonial Malaya and post-colonial Malaysia, including in everyday life as well as in scholarly debates (see Chap. 2), it is important to interrogate how and why race is constructed, imagined, enacted, operationalised, translated, internalised and perpetuated. This book's purpose is to examine how race, education, and citizenship/nationality are implicated in mobile Malaysians' culture of migration through a postcolonial lens.

Beyond the Malaysian case, and at the broader conceptual level, this book connects the idea of a culture of migration and postcolonial perspectives to inform postcolonial studies, citizenship studies, and migration studies. In particular, this book adopts a postcolonial perspective in showing how British colonial legacies initiate, facilitate, and propagate a culture of migration in a multi-ethnic, post-colonial migrant-sending country beyond the end of colonial rule. This book also draws attention to how colonial legacies shape and influence migrants' citizenship and migration practices during the post-colonial period. By showing the long-lasting effects of colonialism through the case of mobile Malaysians' culture of migration, this book responds to and contributes towards calls for the adoption of postcolonial approaches in migration studies (Ha, 2008; Koh, 2015b; Mains et al., 2013) and the discipline of geography (McEwan, 2003; Nash, 2014; Raghuram, Noxolo, & Madge, 2014; Sidaway, Woon, & Jacobs, 2014).

EMPIRICAL BACKGROUND AND THREE STARTING POINTS

Malaysia: Colonial to Post-Colonial Transition and Bumiputera-Differentiated Citizenship

Malaysia is a post-colonial, multi-ethnic federal nation-state (Fig. 1.1) that gained independence in August 1957 from British colonial rule. Under the British colonial administration, various territories were governed under different arrangements (Table 1.1). In Peninsula Malaysia, these included the Straits Settlements (Penang,⁶ Dindings, Malacca,⁷ and Singapore), the Federated



Fig. 1.1 States of Malaysia

Table 1.1 Malaysia's former political entities under British colonial rule

<i>Year</i>	<i>Governance structure</i>	<i>Political entity</i>	<i>Geographical area</i>
1824–1867	Colonial possessions, East India Company	Straits Settlements	Penang, Dindings, Malacca, Singapore
1867–1946	Crown colonies, Colonial Office in London		
1896–1946	Federated British protectorates	Federated Malay States ^a	Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, ^b Pahang
1909–1946	Separate British protectorates	Unfederated Malay States ^a	Kedah, Terengganu, ^c Kelantan, Johor ^d
1946–1948	Centralised British protectorate	Malayan Union	All Malay states except Singapore
1948–1957	Federated British protectorate	Federation of Malaya	All Malay states except Singapore
1957–1963	Independent federation		
1963–1965	Independent federation	Federation of Malaysia	All Malay states, Singapore, Sabah, ^e Sarawak
1965–present	Independent federation	Malaysia	All Malay states, Sabah, Sarawak

Source: Adapted from Tajuddin (2012, p. 20)

^aCollectively 'British Malaya'; ^bformerly spelled 'Negri Sembilan'; ^cformerly spelled 'Trengganu'; ^dformerly spelled 'Johore'; ^eformerly 'North Borneo'

Malay States (FMS) (Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan,⁸ and Pahang), and the Unfederated Malay States (UMS) (Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu, and Johor). In 1946, these various administrations were consolidated into a centralised British protectorate known as the Malayan Union (MU). The MU was dissolved in 1948 when the Federation of Malaya (including all the Malay states in Peninsula Malaysia) was formed. In September 1963, Singapore and the states of Sabah and Sarawak on the Borneo Island (known as East Malaysia today) joined the federation to form the Federation of Malaysia. In August 1965, Singapore became an independent country.

Although the MU existed for only two years (1946–1948), it is arguably Malaysia's first existence as a modern nation-state with Western liberal citizenship. However, at the time when the MU was proposed, colonial Malaya was made up of a multi-ethnic *immigrant* population, largely a result of large-scale immigration encouraged by the British in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Due to the British colonial administration's strategy of 'divide-and-rule' to manage the multi-ethnic immigrant populations, there has been a history of racial hierarchy, racial ideology, and the making

real of Malay indigeneity (Alatas, 1977; Hirschman, 1986). The attempt by the British colonial administration to introduce universal MU citizenship was fraught with opposition, especially from the Malay aristocracy who argued that the non-Malays were immigrants and hence should not be eligible to share common citizenship rights with the ‘indigenous’ Malays. This contention has been a significant and recurrent point of debate that has persisted till today. During the colonial to post-colonial transition (1940s–1960s), as well as key moments during the 1960s–1970s, Malaysia’s citizenship has developed into one that is *bumiputera*-differentiated in terms of its recognition and the accompanying citizenship rights (see Chap. 2).

Malaysia’s population consists of a Malay majority, followed by the Chinese and Indian ethnic groups (Table 1.2). The various indigenous groups, including the Malays, are enumerated as *bumiputeras*. *Bumiputera* is not an ethnic group per se, but refers to an ‘indigenous’ status with special rights protected in the constitution. Naoki (2008) notes that Malay school geography and history textbooks in the early twentieth century used the term ‘*bumiputera*’ (‘prince of the land’) in reference to the natives and local inhabitants. However, it was not until 1963, when the states of Sabah and Sarawak were incorporated into the Federation of Malaysia, that the term *bumiputera* ‘began to be used as a concept referring to all indigenous peoples given a special status in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia’ (p. 207).

The Malays and other indigenous ethnic groups in Malaysia enjoy *bumiputera* status, although in everyday life the term has been used predominantly in reference to ethnic Malaysian-Malays. According to Faruqi

Table 1.2 Malaysian population (citizens only), 1947–2014

Year	Total (thousands)	% of total			
		All <i>bumiputera</i> (Malays only)	Chinese	Indian	Others
1947 ^a	4908	49.5	38.4	10.8	1.0
1957 ^a	6279	49.8	37.2	11.7	1.3
1970 ^b	10,439	56.0	34.2	9.0	0.8
1980 ^b	13,136	59.2	31.7	8.4	0.7
1991 ^b	16,812	61.5 (50.7)	27.5	7.8	3.4
2000 ^b	21,889	65.1 (53.4)	26.0	7.7	1.2
2010 ^c	26,013	67.4 (54.6)	24.6	7.3	0.7
2015 ^{d,e}	28,030	68.3	23.6	7.1	1.0

Source: ^aDOSM (1977); ^bSaw (2007); ^cDOSM (2011b); ^dDOSM (2015)

^eEstimate

(2008, p. 698) the term *bumiputera* ‘has no legal basis and is of political coinage’ and ‘there is no authoritative definition of it anywhere’. Indeed, the term *bumiputera* does not appear in the Constitution of Malaysia. Nevertheless, the Malaysian citizenry is divided into *bumiputeras* and non-*bumiputeras* (Balasubramaniam, 2007), especially since affirmative action policies have been put in place to assist *bumiputeras* since 1971. These policies, most notably in the form of the New Economic Policy (NEP), prioritise *bumiputeras* in access to education, government scholarships, civil service jobs, property ownership, subsidised housing, and business licenses.

Starting Point 1: (Racialised) Migration and (Dis)loyalty

As a result of the practice of race-based affirmative action policies in Malaysia, non-*bumiputeras* in general, and the Malaysian-Chinese in particular, have lamented their positions as ‘second class citizens’ (Thio, 2010, p. 64). It has become common knowledge that some non-*bumiputeras*, especially the Malaysian-Chinese, have sought migration, especially for education, as an exit strategy (Brooks & Waters, 2011; Nonini, 1997; Sidhu, 2006). Indeed, growing up, I frequently heard stories of relatives, or someone else’s relatives leaving for overseas studies or emigrating. During my stay in Singapore, I came across many non-*bumiputera* Malaysians who had flocked to Singapore for education and subsequently stayed on for a career. I knew vaguely that there were Malaysians who live overseas, a perception I had also gained from recurring reports in the Malaysian media.

In 2007, it was reported that there have been 106,003 citizenship renunciations since Malaysia’s independence (*The Star*, 2007). The same report noted that between 1996 and April 2007, 28,527 Malaysians renounced their citizenship, of which 26,804 (93.9 percent) were non-Malays. Between 2000 and 2006, 16,474 Malaysians renounced their citizenships, of which 87 percent were Chinese (Palaniappan, 2007). Less than 1 percent of the Malaysian emigrant population returned to Malaysia between 2000 and 2009 (Tan, 2010). The World Bank (2011d, p. 103) estimates that there were 1 million overseas Malaysians in 2010 compared to 750,000 a decade earlier. A third of the overseas Malaysians are tertiary-educated—twice the world average (p. 12). In 2010, overseas Malaysians were resident in Singapore (57 percent), Australia (10 percent), Brunei (7 percent), the UK (6 percent), the USA (6 percent), Canada (2 percent),

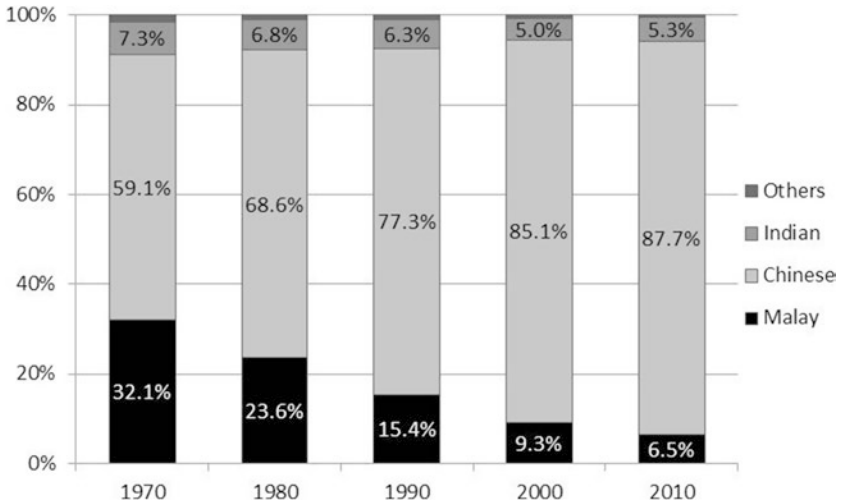


Fig. 1.2 Malaysians (country of birth) resident in Singapore, by ethnicity, 1970–2010. *Source:* DOS (1973, 1981, 1992, 2001, 2010)

and New Zealand (2 percent) (p. 15). In Singapore, the overseas Malaysians are predominantly the ethnic Chinese (Fig. 1.2). Seen in terms of migrant stock and migration flows, perhaps Cartier (2003, p. 92) was right in describing the Malaysian-Chinese migration stream from Malaysia as ‘the second-wave diaspora’.⁹

The racialised nature of emigration in Malaysia is also a popular and recurrent topic in international and domestic media. An article in *The Economist* (2013) observes that Indian-Malaysians and Chinese-Malaysians have left the country as they were ‘disgusted by the overt racism of it all’. From May to June 2011, *The Malaysian Insider*, an independent online news portal, published two complementary series showcasing letters written by two groups: overseas and re-emigrated Malaysians, and non-emigrating and returning Malaysians. The first group emphasised their inability to accept incidents of systematised racial discrimination, while the second group accepted these as part of Malaysian life and emphasised their hope for better change by staying in the country. Elsewhere, some mobile Malaysians have gone to the extent of proclaiming that they have chosen to stay away as they cannot ‘deal with racism in [their] homeland’, even as they accepted ‘the lack of democracy, the lack of press freedom, the ISA,¹⁰

[the] inefficient and bureaucratic civil service ... and even a little corruption' (*Malaysian Mirror*, 2010). Indeed, it is widely known that corruption scandals and restrictions of political rights and civil liberties occur in Malaysia (Freedom House, 2013). Incidences of money politics (Teh, 2002), political patronage, and rent-seeking practices (Gomez & Jomo, 1997) amongst some government officials further contribute towards an overall distrust of the Malaysian government.

Interestingly, a parallel narrative of migration and disloyalty often accompanies these discussions of Malaysia's racial politics and emigration. In recurrent reports in the Malaysian media, emigration would typically be equated to an act of disloyalty. Those who chose to emigrate and renounce their Malaysian citizenship are viewed as disloyal citizens who have jumped ship. Even overseas students who have chosen to remain in their host countries instead of returning to Malaysia after completing their studies have been branded as disloyal (Minister of Higher Education, quoted in *New Straits Times*, 2006). Malaysia's fifth Prime Minister, Abdullah Badawi, has commented that '[t]hose who have given up their citizenship cannot get it back if they suddenly want to become Malaysians again' (quoted in Nik Anis, 2007). As Aznam (2007) notes:

To many Malaysians, citizenship is entwined with the idea of loyalty. To give up one's citizenship is seen by both the authorities and society as akin to renouncing one's love for one's native land. In their eyes, citizenship is a privilege not to be trifled with.

Starting Point 2: Personal Migration Experiences and Observations

Like many Malaysian-Chinese families described earlier, migration has also been a common feature in my family history. My grandparents were immigrants who came to Malaya from China during the British colonial period. After settling in Malaya (and Malaysia) for decades, members of my extended family are now spread across various locations in Malaysia as well as internationally. My own migration trajectory is also likewise characterised. I left Malaysia in my teens after receiving the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Scholarship offered by the government of Singapore. Together with other ASEAN Scholarship recipients hailing predominantly from Malaysia, Indonesia and Hong Kong, I started life as a student migrant in Singapore. Little did I know at the

onset of my migration trajectory that this would turn out to be a 16-year stay, which saw me through upper secondary school, junior college, university, and postgraduate employment in Singapore. I then left Singapore to pursue further studies in the UK, where I stayed for four years.

Throughout my migration trajectory, two recurring and paradoxical observations continued to puzzle me. The first is the tendency of my own, as well as that of many mobile Malaysians I came across, to retain our Malaysian citizenship at all costs. Despite years of living in the diaspora, many mobile Malaysians refrain from renouncing their Malaysian citizenship. While some opt for permanent residence status in their host countries, others go to the extent of acquiring dual citizenship without declaring this to the Malaysian authorities. At first glance, this could be partially explained by the fact that Malaysia does not recognise dual citizenship, as well as mobile Malaysians' desire to retain access to benefits tied to their Malaysian citizenship.¹¹ However, a contradictory, second observation challenges this explanation: in their attempts to explain the retention of their Malaysian citizenship, mobile Malaysians often invoke a strong sense of primordial¹² belonging and loyalty to Malaysia, as well as the unquestioned hope for an eventual return to Malaysia sometime in the future. In other words, keeping Malaysian citizenship has been equated to mobile Malaysians' sense of identity and hopes for a possible future return. This, paradoxically, coexists with the practice of race-based affirmative action policies privileging the *bumiputeras* in Malaysia (see Chap. 2), which has arguably induced a culture of migration amongst non-*bumiputera* mobile Malaysians in the very first place.

Starting Point 3: Challenges to Migration and Citizenship Theories

From the two observations described above, it appears that the Malaysian state and the general public view the renunciation of Malaysian citizenship as a final, disloyal, and irreversible act. By extension, emigrants are seen as disloyal citizens. Indeed, many mobile Malaysians I met often assumed that leaving Malaysia is frowned upon, and that returning was a sign of one's loyalty to Malaysia. This uncritical equating of emigration to disloyalty, which seems to be an accepted norm amongst migrating and non-migrating Malaysians, greatly intrigued me. Where does this narrative of loyalty come from? How and why is loyalty made significant for and by mobile Malaysians? How does this sense of loyalty relate to

their citizenship and migration practices? How does this phenomenon challenge or disrupt existing citizenship and migration theories?

As I have alluded to earlier, many mobile Malaysians appear to nurture a paradoxical sense of national loyalty to Malaysia despite the racialised nature of their migration. Furthermore, this sense of loyalty is sometimes accompanied by an unquestioned desire/assumption of a future return migration to Malaysia—*despite* their open distrust of the Malaysian government. It is as if mobile Malaysians accept racial discrimination—in the form of their *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship, practices of race-based affirmative action policies, and an official racial discourse—as a given fact of Malaysian life which they have escaped from to a certain extent; yet at the same time vehemently guarding their Malaysian citizenship as a symbol of their identity and ticket for a future return to the homeland they continue to yearn for. This greatly confused me as these behaviours do not seem to fit existing migration literature, especially on citizenship and diaspora. For example, the sense of loyalty articulated by mobile Malaysians does not seem to translate into civic and political acts such as contributions to homeland development, a norm in the literature on diasporas and their emigration states (Lyons & Mandaville, 2012). In other words, loyalty is used to *describe* mobile Malaysians' sense of affiliation to Malaysia, yet this loyalty is rarely *translated* into 'acts of citizenship' (Isin & Nielsen, 2008).

Furthermore, mobile Malaysians seem to conflate citizenship with nationality, which probably explains why they keep their Malaysian citizenship at all costs. In existing literature, the opportunistic accumulation of dual or multiple citizenship and permanent resident statuses have been described as flexible citizenship strategies (Ong, 1998, 1999). Ho (2009) has also used the concept of emotional citizenship to explain how emigrants negotiate their emotional subjectivities as extraterritorial citizens vis-à-vis their home country. However, while both flexible citizenship and emotional citizenship can explain mobile Malaysians' citizenship strategies and behaviours, these concepts offer only a partial perspective. The notion of flexible citizenship emphasises the economic calculations of transnational migrants, and thus does not have the conceptual capability to adequately address the nuanced emotional significance mobile Malaysians ascribe to their citizenship and nationality. Furthermore, flexible citizenship fails to capture mobile Malaysians' paradoxical sense of national loyalty and distrust of the government. The notion of emotional citizenship addresses 'the emotional logics of citizenship' (Ho, 2009, p. 789) that

inform how individuals negotiate their relationship to the state and how they enact their citizenship. However, I argue that the concept places too much emphasis on emotions at the micro-scale and therefore shifts attention away from the important task of holding accountable the macro-structures that circumscribe citizenship in the first place.

Ronkainen (2011, p. 254) notes that '[e]veryone has different, mixed, and changing attitudes about their citizenships based on their backgrounds (age, class, and religion) and personality'. However, like Ho's (2009) concept of emotional citizenship, this emphasis on individual experiences and perspectives cannot fully explained in the Malaysian case: there seems to be an uncritical collective interpretation of the meanings and emotional significance of citizenship/nationality, emigration, and return—despite the fact that citizenship is racially differentiated. How can we understand and analyse this paradoxical phenomena? What are the factors that structure how migration and citizenship are understood and practised in Malaysia? How does the Malaysian case challenge and inform existing migration and citizenship theories?

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM: HOW TO UNDERSTAND MALAYSIAN MIGRATION?

Taken altogether, the three starting points described above puzzled me as a migration scholar. In particular, they raise four important and inter-related research questions.

First, why is there a strong narrative of unquestioned belonging to Malaysia, despite overseas Malaysians' (real and perceived) narratives of racial discrimination and being 'second class citizens' in Malaysia? To what extent can existing migration theories and citizenship theories offer plausible explanations? How can we go beyond the limited and isolated framings of education-led migration, skilled migration, or diasporic migration to understand mobile Malaysians' migration?

Second, how and why did this sense of primordial belonging and loyalty to Malaysia, which appears to coexist with the racialised nature of overseas Malaysians' migration, come about? Existing work on loyalty, belonging, race, and citizenship have been predominantly focused on the receiving context. What about the sending context? How do these issues arise, and what are their dynamics? What does this mean for migration studies and migration policies?

Third, if, as common knowledge suggests, ‘racial politics enforced Malaysia’s brain drain’ (*The Malay Mail*, 2013), does the race factor play out similarly for all mobile Malaysians and throughout the different stages of their migration geographies? If race ‘impair[s] our ability to see and appreciate other modalities of difference’ (Fox & Jones, 2013, p. 386), what are the other ‘modalities of difference’ that shape and circumscribe different migration paths and experiences? More importantly, what does this tell us about the persistence of colonial legacies and their implications on contemporary migration in the Malaysian case, as well as more generally in post-colonial contexts?

Finally, what do all these mean for migration studies, citizenship studies, and postcolonial studies? In order to think through these questions, I turn to two literatures: firstly, postcolonialism, race, and migration and, secondly, culture of migration.

POSTCOLONIALISM, RACE, AND MIGRATION

According to McEwan (2009, p. 17, original italics), postcolonialism refers to ‘a *temporal* aftermath’ as well as ‘a *critical* aftermath’. This means that there are two ways of using the idea of postcolonialism. The first is to use it in relation to chronological time to investigate situations and phenomena after the end of colonial rule. The second is to use it conceptually to critique the impacts and consequences of colonialism. This second approach focuses on surfacing persistent power inequalities and acts of othering, such as through the categories of race, class, culture, gender, sexuality, and nationality. In other words, this approach is concerned with ‘the contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism’ (Loomba, 1998, p. 12).

In this book, I use the second approach to examine mobile Malaysians’ culture of migration as an outcome of the three British colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship. I argue that these British colonial legacies are persistent structures of inequalities that have been inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state. These structures have in turn informed and circumscribed how migration lives have been understood, negotiated, pursued, and experienced. Before discussing current debates on the use of postcolonial theories in migration studies, I briefly review postcolonial theory.

While postcolonial studies originally flourished from the disciplines of English literature, history, and philosophy, postcolonial approaches

have also been taken up in the disciplines of geography, anthropology, and development (Kumar, 2011). A key concern in postcolonial studies is in critiquing Eurocentricism, as well as the persistent marginalisation of the subaltern (Spivak, 1988) and the Oriental ‘Other’ (Said, 1995). Postcolonial scholarship is also political and emancipatory (Young, 2001) as it accords attention to marginal voices and bottom-up contestations (e.g. Wan-Ahmad, 2010), therefore pointing to the possibilities for social justice and social change. As Ha (2008) puts it, postcolonial scholarship is

characterised by its own conception as a political project, which feels obligated to repressed subjectivities. It makes the alternating permeation and historical entanglement of differing dynamics of power to a starting point for political intervention.

Postcolonial theory has informed our understanding of how colonialism impacts upon a colonised territory, leaving behind legacies such as racial stereotypes, education, and political systems (see Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2006; Loomba, 1998; Nayar, 2010). Postcolonial and historical studies have shed light on how the racial ideology, legitimised by discourses of biological science, modernity and development, supported colonial and imperial expansions (Darwin, 2010; Fanon, 1963). Many scholars have also highlighted that the racial ideology introduced by colonialism continue to have an effect in post-colonial settings. For example, in Africa, Mamdani (2001) shows that the colonial state distinguished between race and ethnicity politically, and that this distinction was subsequently reproduced by mainstream African nationalists during the post-colonial period. In her introduction to a special issue on ethnic minorities in post-colonial Southeast Asian states, Miller (2011a) argues that the reproduction of racial distinctions privileging the dominant ethnic group was also pursued after the end of colonial rule because the racial ideology and racial hierarchy accorded legitimacy to post-colonial governments. Elsewhere, Shin (2010) connects Japan’s contemporary immigration policies and social perceptions towards specific ethnoracial migrant groups to the asymmetrical racial relations between Japanese citizens and immigrants. He shows that there is a further differentiation between migrant groups, where Korean immigrants were privileged over *Nikkeijin* (descendants of ethnic Japanese emigrants in Latin America and the Philippines).

Other than discussions on racial ideology as a legacy of colonialism, existing studies have also highlighted the effects of colonial legacies in

other realms such as the development of political systems and constitutional law (Go, 2002; Kumarasingham, 2012), the constitution of citizenship (Kobo, 2010), unequal access to land and development (Frankema, 2010; Gotlieb, 1992), the nature of civil society democratic activities (Weiss, 2005), the navy (Spence, 2014), as well as social welfare policies (Midgley & Piachaud, 2011). Centeno and Enriquez (2010), in particular, show how the mechanisms of empire may have led to the institutional foundations of post-colonial states in various spheres including administration and national bureaucracy, state finance, imperial development and state investment, identity to nationalism, and imperial inequality. In sum, these works suggest that colonial legacies have left behind long-lasting effects in some former colonies.

Having said so, postcolonial scholars have also highlighted that ‘inequality, power, and dominance ... are under permanent “negotiation”’ (Ha, 2008). Schneider (2006, p. 113) argues that colonial institutional legacies are not ‘passive inheritance[s]’ and suggests ‘an examination of fluid historical processes and practices’ without assuming that there are ‘rigid and unchanging [colonial] structures’. Baird (2011) also cautions against overemphasising European colonialism and not adequately taking into account other forms of colonialism. This means that postcolonial scholars should exercise care against ‘leapfrogging legacies’ (Cooper, 2005), that is, conveniently drawing direct links between (European or Anglo-Western) colonialism and colonial legacies without accounting for other non-colonial processes and actors, both in the past and in the present. In other words, it is not possible to blame the colonial powers entirely for the ‘evils’ of colonialism and its legacies.

In the first place, ‘the colonial’ is not a homogenous entity (see Dirks, 2004). Many historical studies in Malaya/Malaysia, for example, have highlighted the key roles played by individual colonial officials, where their ethos, educational and work experiences, as well as the broader socio-political climate shaped their understanding and policies towards the colonial populations (Goh, 2007; Lau, 1990; Loh, 1975). Others have also shown that elites in the colonies were equally complicit in institutionalising colonial legacies, such as Manickam’s (2009) study on the production of colonial knowledge on race in Malaya. Furthermore, there are different types of colonialism—‘transplative or replicative colonialism’ versus ‘intrusive and oppressive colonialism’ (Oommen, 1997a, p. 8)—each leaving behind radically different legacies and cultural baggage. For example, Lange (2004) finds that British colonial rule left positive political legacies

in some colonies but not others, depending on whether there was direct or indirect rule. While some post-colonial states were left with no choice but to resort to treating ‘manifested symptoms of the problems’ (Piang, 2012, pp. 350–351) created by colonialism and its legacies, some other post-colonial states (and their elite and non-elite subjects) are actively involved in strategically developing and exacerbating inherited colonial legacies to suit their specific purposes.

If, indeed, it is possible and useful to think about colonial legacies and their effects, the next question would be: through what processes are these legacies reinforced, appropriated, reconstructed, and enhanced in the post-colonial period? Lester (2012, p. 1) highlights that these are ‘actively brought into the present by knowing and often unknowing agents’ through ‘the active performance of routine, rhythm and repetition’. Besnier (2015, p. 857) also suggests that colonial legacies are ‘the by-products of multiple forms of agentic action’, and that they ‘continue to be reinforced through quotidian forms of action’ by various agents and through different platforms and media. In sum, this means that legacies of colonialism are repeatedly performed and (re)configured by various agents, well into the post-colonial period.

In addition to studying these processes, agents, and their performances, that is, how colonial legacies are (re)produced, postcolonial scholarship also examines the consequences of these legacies on human lives. This means paying attention to the material and immaterial effects of colonial legacies, as well as how the resulting issues have been contested and challenged. Taking reference from De L’Estoile’s (2008, p. 277) suggestion for ‘an anthropology of colonial legacies’, this means examining how ‘colonial legacies shape in contradictory ways today’s modes of relationships and self-understandings ... and how people confront them’. In this book, I explore this task by looking at the case of mobile Malaysians’ culture of migration.

Migration is a fertile ground to examine the issues of concern to postcolonial scholarship, especially power inequalities that have been promulgated using ‘categories of difference’ (Neely & Samura, 2011, p. 1940) such as race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, citizenship, and nationality. However, as McIlwaine (2008) notes, there has been a lack of an explicit postcolonial perspective in migration studies. As noted earlier, postcolonial studies developed from literature and cultural studies (see Lazarus, 2004). The resulting works that are of relevance and interest to migration studies are primarily in the realms of diaspora literature and cultural

studies, which deals with the issues of identity, belonging, and cultural hybridity (Bhabha, 1994). Hence, the ‘postcolonial’ in migration studies has been developed in studies on the diasporic experience (e.g. Dwyer, 2000; Kang, 2001); or post-colonial migration flows from former colonies to the former colonial centres, such as from Indonesia and the Indies to the Netherlands (Oostindie, 2010), and the Caribbean to and from Britain (Chamberlain, 1997; Western, 1992). More recent works on expatriate/white migrations have explored postcolonial identities and white/elite privilege in former colonies (Conway & Leonard, 2015; Fechter & Walsh, 2012; Lundstrom, 2014; Wang, Wong, & Zheng, 2014).

How can postcolonialism be productively used to advance migration studies in this ‘age of migration’ (Castles & Miller, 2009) and transnational mobility? In their commentary on postcolonial migrations, Mains et al. (2013) offer three suggestions in this regard (see Koh, 2015b for an elaborated discussion). The first is to stretch the spatial boundaries of the postcolonial. This means going beyond the usual dichotomy of ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’ (usually assumed to be at the national scale) but to also consider places *within* national boundaries where issues of power inequalities are equally relevant. Their second suggestion is to examine the spatial connections of migration locales. This means paying attention to the simultaneity of connections and interactions between places and spaces to reconceptualise what constitutes ‘here’ and ‘there’. Finally, their third suggestion is to challenge existing singular or hierarchical conceptualisations of identity and place. The idealised image of the transnational or cosmopolitan migrant, for example, obscures the everyday struggles of the migrant who embodies postcolonial ‘histories of violences [that] are edited out’ (Mains et al., 2013, p. 138).

To engage productively in postcolonialism and migration, then, requires attention and awareness on two interconnected fronts. The first is to look actively beyond existing knowledge and concepts to critically unpack them to their essence. This means interrogating and ‘dismantling’ (see Mavroudi & Christou, 2015) migration-related concepts such as citizen, diaspora, migrant, migration, and the nation-state. The second is to pay attention to the materialities and textures of everyday migration experiences. This means deconstructing the seemingly rosy appearances in order to expose the underlying ugly, messy, and paradoxical realities that structure social differences and migration. It is only by going beyond the abstract and examining the concrete forms, places, spaces, and experiences¹³—or what Ho and Hatfield (née Dobson) (2011, p. 712) call the

‘sociality and materiality of the everyday’—that postcolonialism can be a truly transformative scholarship (see Yeoh, 2003).

CULTURE OF MIGRATION

A second theoretical strand this book draws upon is the concept of ‘culture of migration’ (see Cohen & Jónsson, 2011b). Existing work done in this regard can generally be categorised into three approaches.

The first approach, drawing from sociological, anthropological, and cultural studies perspectives, views ‘culture’ as a bounded entity associated with a social group. When migration occurs, different cultures interact and collide as migrant and local communities are brought into close contact. This ongoing process of cultural exchange results in hybrid and mixed cultures that in turn shape migrants’ sense of identity and belonging, as well as their cultural practices. Existing work in this first approach include migration and material cultures (Basu & Coleman, 2008); multiculturalism, cultural exchanges between migrants and the host societies, and the politics of exclusion (Vertovec, 1996); as well as socio-cultural changes in the sending context (e.g. gender and intergenerational relations) as a result of substantial migration outflows (Brettell, 2012; Elrick, 2008; Georges, 1990). In sum, this first approach focuses on examining the *cultural collisions and consequences* that have been brought about by migration.

The second approach interprets ‘culture’ as *common behavioural characteristics and aptitudes shared by migrants*. This approach is similar to the first in that ‘culture’ is assumed to be a pre-given characteristic that is distinct to a particular social group. In this approach, people who migrate are seen to embody certain inherent dispositions that distinguish them from people who do not migrate. For Hardy (2005, p. 59), culture of migration refers to the ‘common ground’ shared by migrants. This includes their courage to undertake migration, their responses to situations at home, their insertions into old and new migration networks, and their intentions to return at the onset of their migration pathways. In other words, ‘culture of migration’ in this second approach is understood as common aptitudes, values, and characteristics shared by those who partake in migration.

Finally, the third approach sees ‘culture’ in the form of socio-cultural beliefs and mobility patterns that are distinct to migrant sending communities (Ali, 2007; Cohen & Sirkeci, 2011). This differs from the first approach in that ‘culture’ is seen specifically in relation to the act of migrating. The focus here is on migration patterns, migration corridors,

social networks, and migration-related beliefs and practices (e.g. aspirations to migrate; sending remittances back ‘home’) that have developed into a norm for certain communities in particular locales as these have been passed on from generation to generation, rather than what happens to the embodied cultural characteristics of the migrant community before and after migration. In this approach, a culture of migration is created as a result of ‘[t]he structure of migration, its history, and the continuity that characterizes movements past and present’ (Cohen & Sirkeci, 2011, p. 116). Migrants and would-be migrants receive cultural signals that motivate migration aspirations (Fielding, 1992; Timmerman, Hemmerchts, & De Clerck, 2014). Migration is thus perceived as a rite of passage for children and young people (Coe, 2012; Easthope & Gabriel, 2008; Horváth, 2008; Kandel & Massey, 2002), or ‘a [favoured] solution to social stasis’ (Cohen & Jónsson, 2011a, p. xiii; see also Connell, 2008). Over time, migration becomes ‘a habit’ because ‘everyone else is [also] migrating’ (Timmerman, 2008, p. 589).

The first and third approach are in some ways interlinked, and it may not be particularly useful to distinguish between the two. As Massey et al. (1993, pp. 452–453) put it, a culture of migration arises when ‘migration becomes deeply ingrained into the repertoire of people’s behaviours, and values associated with migration become part of the community’s values’. Using the third approach, we can understand ‘culture of migration’ as an established practice of migrating that has developed into a norm within a particular migrant sending context. However, at the same time, using the first approach, we can see how migration in turn influences and shapes the cultural meanings ascribed to migration *and* the ‘original’ cultural practices in the sending context. ‘Culture of migration’, in this instance, can be seen as a way of life where migration plays a significant role, and a set of cultural values that are associated with the act of migration. An example of a combined approach is Tsuda’s (1999) analysis of how Japanese-Brazilian ‘return’ migration to Japan shifted ‘from something to be avoided’ (p. 16) as it was seen as an indication of economic failure within the community, to ‘the logical and obvious thing to do’ (p. 16) as migration becomes routinised as ‘a critical means for economic survival, sustenance, and advancement’ (p. 17).

In this book, I adopt this interlinked approach to explain how, in the case of mobile Malaysians, migration and its related practices take on certain socialised meanings that are passed on from one generation to the next. Migration—which often begins as education-migration (as I detail

in Chap. 4)—becomes an internalised cultural practice that is not necessarily recognised as a response to structural constraints posed by Malaysia’s *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship. I also use ‘culture of migration’ to describe an established migration corridor linking specific origin and destination points. For example, the Malaysia-Singapore and Malaysia-UK migration flows (see Chap. 3) may have originally arose as a reaction to structural barriers in Malaysia, but migration flows in these migration corridors become *perpetuated through socio-cultural beliefs and practices*. Finally, my use of ‘culture of migration’ does not refer to common migrant attributes, as in Hardy’s (2005) uses of it. However, my use of ‘culture of migration’ incorporates common cultural practices of migration shared by migrants with similar circumstances (e.g. education-migration pathways).

POSTCOLONIALISM AND MALAYSIAN (MIGRATION) STUDIES

Malaysia is an excellent case for a postcolonial approach in examining British colonial legacies and their impacts on migration for a number of reasons. Firstly, the emergence of the independent Malaysian state occurred during a specific historical moment, which influenced the nature of nationalism that accompanied the birth of the Malaysian nation-state. In the context of British decolonisation during the aftermath of World War II, the Malay(si)an nation-state that was forged in 1946, 1948, 1957, and 1963 (see Table 1.1) was a result of a series of strategic compromises on the part of all parties involved. The pre-independence and constitutional discussions were mainly focused on ‘the maximization of political privileges and economic opportunities for ... the peoples of Malaya and the British’ (Watson, 1996, p. 316) rather than the cultural and political essence of a national citizenry. In studies of nations, nationalism, and national identity, nation-states are thought to follow either the civic (or ‘Western’) or ethnic (or ‘non-Western’) model: the former refers to territory-based civil belonging, while the latter refers to common (ethnic) descent (Smith, 1986, 1991).¹⁴ Seen in this way, then, the pragmatic way in which Malaysian nationhood was created suggests that this is neither a purely civic nor an ethnic nationalism. What is intriguing, however, is how racialisation has been incorporated and internalised in this ambiguous nationalism, as well as how this ambiguity continues to prevail till today, six decades after the end of British colonial rule.

Furthermore, the making of the Malaysian nation-state was much more the result of top-down rather than bottom-up processes. The relatively short duration of the colonial to post-colonial transition—especially during the crucial period when the nation-state was being forged—meant that there was a comparatively lack of effective civil society-led nationalism that characterised the birth of other post-colonial nation-states such as India, Burma, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Under such circumstances, the Malaysian nationhood and national consciousness had to be ‘created on the hoof’ (Watson, 1996, p. 316). This means that a national *cultural* identity has become prioritised over national *political* identity. In sum, the birth of Malaysia as a nation-state in the context of British decolonisation has important implications for the making of Malaysians as a citizenry, with subsequent consequences on mobile Malaysians’ culture of migration.

Secondly, Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, post-colonial country, where decolonial and post-colonial discussions of nationalism and citizenship—as identity, membership, and rights—have been deeply intertwined with the notions of race and indigeneity. Race and indigeneity have been institutionalised through the constructed *bumiputera* (‘sons of soil’) category/group. As Banton (1997, p. 19) notes, naming and claiming the *bumiputera* as a group that is associated with a territory is potent as it accords the Malays ‘a powerful advantage in the political realm’. Malaysia is also a case where multi-ethnic colonial and post-colonial elites engage knowingly and unknowingly in racial politics to legitimise their political power (see Enloe, 1970; Ahmad, 1987). Race looms large in official accounts and in everyday life and is intricately implicated in Malaysian migration. Race also informs Malaysia’s race-stratified education system. Since education is often a step towards middle-class migration in Malaysia, this means that race, education, and migration are deeply intertwined in mobile Malaysians’ culture of migration.

From the above, it may seem obvious to adopt a postcolonial reading on Malaysian migration. However, existing works on postcolonialism and colonial legacies in Malaysia have not examined migration directly. Instead, existing studies on colonial legacies in Malaya/Malaysia have focused on the creation of racial categories (Hirschman, 1986, 1987, 2004), the production and legitimisation of racial knowledge (Fernandez, 1999; Manickam, 2009, 2012; Pannu, 2009), influences on political structures and development (Mohd Yaakop, 2010), impacts on education systems (Loh, 1975; Loo, 2007; O’Brien, 1980), and racial preference in

education provision and entries into the civil service (Stevenson, 1975; Yeo, 1980). With regard to the post-colonial setting, existing studies have examined the consequences of colonial legacies within the nation-state boundary (with the exception of Stockwell, 1998). These include racial identities and politics (typically referred to as ‘communalism’) (Carnell, 1953; Cham, 1977; Enloe, 1970; Hua, 1983; Ratnam, 1965), racial/ethnic identities and multiculturalism (Goh, 2008, 2009; Lian, 2006), affirmative action policies (Lim, 1985), the persistence of Eurocentric ideas (Ooi, 2003), and the long-term impacts in the legal and economic spheres (Jomo & Wong, 2008). In regard to migration, the closest—and often implicit and never explicitly drawn—links are between affirmative action policies and emigration or brain drain (Andressen, 1993; The World Bank, 2011d). In sum, while there is a wealth of studies on colonial legacies in Malaysia, there remains a gap in examining how these legacies relate to migration.

One of the most obvious postcolonial issues in Malaysia is race, which takes the form of *bumiputera* status and ethnic Malay indigeneity. In existing literature, many have criticised the continued salience of the *bumiputera* issue in Malaysia (see especially Mason & Omar, 2003). On the one hand, some scholars have highlighted the consequences of the division between *bumiputeras* and non-*bumiputeras*, including the emigration of predominantly non-*bumiputera* ethnic groups (Lam & Yeoh, 2004); unequal access to citizenship rights (Ong, 2009) implemented through pro-*bumiputera* affirmative action policies such as higher education placements and scholarships (Selvaratnam, 1988; Takei, Bock, & Saunders, 1973); long-term implications on the employment market as a result of race-based division of labour (Tai, 1984); tertiary education, employment, and equity ownership (Lee, Gomez, & Yacob, 2013); ethnic identification and an essentialised politics of difference (Joseph, 2006); national integration (Lim, 1985); domestic politics and inter-ethnic group relationships (Holst, 2012); and how the racial discourse intersects with inequality and the state’s legitimisation for ethnic management (Mohamad, 2012). On the other hand, some have also questioned the *bumiputera* category itself, including the effectiveness of affirmative action policies in removing race-based inequalities *within* the ‘Malay’ ethnic groups in access to higher education (Tzannatos, 1991); and the exclusion of non-Malay indigenous groups from enjoying *bumiputera* privileges (Nah, 2003) despite the constitutional provisions.

While there has been a wealth of debates on race and the *bumiputera* issue in Malaysia, these have been mostly discussed in the realms of political science, history, anthropology, or sociology and not necessarily in migration studies. With reference to migration studies, there are two gaps in the existing literature. First, existing studies seem to take the *bumiputera* issue as an explanatory factor for Malaysia's contemporary migration *a priori*. Beyond explaining the *bumiputera* issue as a trigger to emigration, especially amongst non-*bumiputera* Malaysians who constitute the majority of emigrating Malaysians, there is still much more to be done in examining the long-lasting effects of race and the *bumiputera* issue throughout the migration trajectory (with the exceptions of Joseph, 2013; Koh, 2015a). For example, what can the racial politics of *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship tell us about the behaviours of mobile Malaysians vis-à-vis the Malaysian state while they live extra-territory in the diaspora? How does the *bumiputera*-differentiated nature of Malaysian citizenship impact upon mobile Malaysians' citizenship and migration practices, such as their considerations for return?¹⁵

Second, and relatedly, there is scope to examine whether there are other explanatory factors, other than pro-*bumiputera* affirmative action policies and *bumiputera*-related issues, which also contribute towards mobile Malaysians' emigration. In the context of the contemporary age of migration, where more people are able to partake in transnational migration, how does Malaysia's domestic situation—particularly with regard to how race, education, and citizenship are interrelated—figure vis-à-vis other non-Malaysia factors (e.g. the internationalisation of higher education in receiving countries, globalisation and the increasing ease of living transnational lives, etc.) in triggering mobile Malaysians' migration, as well as their subsequent migration and citizenship considerations once they have begun their migration lives?¹⁶ In other words, what is the relative significance of the colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship in the context of Malaysia's contemporary migration, when these are compared to other factors? What does this say about the longevity of colonial legacies, and how does this inform postcolonial studies generally, and postcolonial studies of migration specifically?

Third, without interrogating and challenging the categorisation of people by race, some existing Malaysian studies continue to perpetuate the official discourse of race.¹⁷ This contributes towards the uncritical assumption that each racial group is homogenous. Not only does this obscure any heterogeneity and diversities *within* each racial category, it also prevents

the examination of other intersectionalities¹⁸ which could be more useful in explaining the segmentation of migration flows and experiences amongst mobile Malaysians. These intersectionalities could include gender, class, sub-national geographies of origin, sub-ethnicities, language, religion, education experiences, and so on. Even if race underlies and circumscribes these intersectionalities, it would still be important and worthwhile to point out how other non-race factors matter to Malaysian social phenomena generally, and migration specifically.

POSTCOLONIALISING A CULTURE OF MIGRATION

McEwan (2003, p. 346) suggests that postcolonialising could involve a thorough reinterpretation of existing theories, a sensitive examination of the conditions governing particular subject positions, and innovative ways of approaching the analysis of social phenomena. In this book, I use postcolonialism to examine the culture of migration (i.e. the internalised disposition about migration and its related practices) amongst mobile Malaysians. In this context, I use postcolonialism as an analytical tool in order to shed light on persistent power inequalities that have been legitimised on socially and politically constructed categories of difference such as race and indigeneity. This means that I employ a series of scalar moves to analyse and understand mobile Malaysians' migration lives.

First, at the macro-level, I examine how three British colonial legacies—of race, education, and citizenship—have been constituted and institutionalised by both the British colonial administration *and* the post-colonial Malaysian state. At this macro-level, I adopt a broadly chronological time frame to highlight the connections between the colonial 'past' and the post-colonial 'present'. Second, at the meso-level, I examine how these colonial legacies initiate, shape, and perpetuate the migration mobilities of mobile Malaysians. At this meso-level, I show how a particular type and form of migration can be understood as the outcome of these colonial legacies. Third, at the micro-level, I examine how individual mobile Malaysians negotiate their citizenship and migration practices. At this micro-level, I showcase some common themes and patterns in mobile Malaysians' interpretations and understandings of themselves as citizens, migrants, and diasporas vis-à-vis the post-colonial Malaysian state and their respective receiving states. Through these common themes, I highlight how power inequalities persist and circumscribe human lives in material *and* immaterial ways. The material are manifested as migration

flows and the resultant migrant social networks; while the immaterial take the form of internalised beliefs, ideas, emotions, ways of knowing, norms, and practices that are interrelated to acts of migration.

Taken altogether, adopting a postcolonial approach on the Malaysian case draws attention to how legacies of colonialism exert their influence on migration phenomena in a post-colonial migrant sending setting context. This contributes towards gaps in the literature in four ways. First, a postcolonial approach enables the examination of the interactions between macro-structure (e.g. political economy, history) and micro-agency (e.g. individual migrant's citizenship and migration decisions). This contributes, at least in part, to challenge the persistent dichotomy between macro- and micro-foci in migration studies (see O'Reilly, 2012).

Second, this approach situates education, skilled and return migration(s) in the contemporary period under a postcolonial lens. This extends the literature on postcolonial migration—although I would call it ‘post-colonial’ migration to be more accurate—beyond the existing focus on migrants from former colonies to former empires during the decolonisation period, and they and their subsequent generations' assimilation in these contexts (e.g. Bosma, Lucassen, & Oostindie, 2012; Oostindie, 2010). In this regard, recent observations of the importance of colonial ties for international student migration (Perkins & Neumayer, 2014; Walker, 2014) suggest that there could be a similar influence in education-induced skilled migration in the Malaysian case.

Third, this enables a critical examination of key migration concepts—such as ‘citizenship’, ‘migration’, ‘diaspora’—by contextualising them to colonial legacies during the colonial and post-colonial periods. This challenges and enriches existing migration concepts that have been predominantly informed by Anglo-Western experiences. Finally, this approach offers the space for bottom-up and non-mainstream voices. This advances existing migration literature by providing a diversity of perspectives, from which nuanced insights could be drawn to refine existing migration theories.

Applying a postcolonial approach to analyse Malaysia's migration is also appropriate and productive in a few ways. First, this offers a historically contextualised background to situate and understand Malaysia's contemporary migration. This disrupts, and challenges, taken-for-granted assumptions and blinders that have thus far obscured the analysis of Malaysia's skilled, education-induced, middle-class, familial, and/or racialised migration by highlighting how remnants of colonialism continue to influence

and structure Malaysian society—and hence the migration of Malaysians in the contemporary period. Second, and relatedly, this enables the specific examination of how colonial legacies matter to Malaysia’s contemporary migration by engaging with issues of race and indigeneity, access and aspirations to education, and citizenship/nationality. This offers opportunities to draw broader insights that could be useful to understand other empirical contexts where these issues may also have relevance.

TERMINOLOGIES

‘Race’, Not ‘Ethnicity’

In this book, I chose to use ‘race’ instead of ‘ethnicity’ (see Banton, 1998; Bonilla-Silva, 1999; Brubaker, 2009; Eriksen, 2010, pp. 5–9; Jenkins, 2008) for a few reasons. First, ‘race’ is a common term used in official and everyday life in Malaysia. A Malaysian person is accustomed to think of his or her ‘race’ as a biological fact in the same manner as he or she thinks of gender. One’s ‘race’—not ‘ethnicity’—is recorded in official personal identification including the birth certificate, and especially the identity card (I/C), which is required in many daily dealings such as banking and voting. Furthermore, the Malay word *bangsa* (‘nation’ or ‘race’), as it has been discursively used by the state and its agents in relation to nation building and national identity (Gabriel, 2011; Lee, 2007; Mariappan, 2002; Ooi, 2006), shares a closer meaning to ‘race’ than ‘ethnicity’ in that it connotes a common descent and ancestry more than an acquired or socialised culture associated with a particular ethnic group.

Second, ‘race’ is a less neutral term than ‘ethnicity’ (see Kivisto & Croll, 2012). ‘Race’ captures the politicised and racialised nature of an internalised set of assumptions about the characteristics, demeanours, and ways of life across a group’s social, economic, and political life. As Hirschman (2004) notes, ‘racism is the belief that all humankind can be divided into a finite number of races with differing characteristics and capacities because of ... inherited biological features’ (p. 389), while ‘[e]thnicity is explicitly subjective, ... acknowledges multiple ancestries, and ... recognizes that ethnic groups are porous and heterogeneous’ (p. 410). In other words, ‘race’ is considered an either/or category where one ‘race’ is mutually exclusive to another ‘race’; while ‘ethnicity’ is more open and tolerant to overlapping and multiple belongings. Furthermore, it is generally understood that ‘race’ is *assigned* to a group of people, while ethnicity is *self-identified* (see Banton, 1997).

Using ‘race’ and not ‘ethnicity’ in this book thus highlights the discursive use of ‘race’ as a category and mechanism of difference (see Shanahan, 1997, p. 135) subjected upon different social groups within the Malaysian citizenry. This enables critical and political examination of how Malaysia’s *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship relates to mobile Malaysians’ culture of migration. This emphasises the continued salience of racial ideology and hierarchies in post-colonial Malaysia, which has been inherited as a legacy from British colonialism. More importantly, and as I will detail in the remaining chapters of this book, I argue that this inherited colonial legacy significantly implicates upon the culture of migration amongst mobile Malaysians. In sum, using ‘race’ and not ‘ethnicity’ on the Malaysian case enables me to draw the conceptual link between postcolonialism and a culture of migration.

Mobile Malaysians

This book focuses on two groups of tertiary-educated Malaysians with transnational migration experiences, whom I call ‘mobile Malaysians’. The first group consists of those who have emigrated permanently or temporarily from Malaysia, while the second group consists of those who have returned permanently or temporarily to Malaysia after a period of sojourn abroad. I describe them as ‘mobile’, and not merely ‘migrants’ in the strict sense, as they appear to conceptualise and undertake migration as a kind of *circulatory mobility away from an original home* rather than distinct and discontinued moves. Not labelling them explicitly as ‘citizens’, ‘migrants’, or ‘diasporas’ is also a conscious move to examine the relevance of these terms as they relate to mobile Malaysians’ perspectives. Such a move is inherently postcolonial in that it enables critical interrogation of these terms as they relate to academic debates in citizenship and migration studies.

Culture of Migration

Although it is possible to frame the phenomena I discuss in this book as (racialised) skilled migration, brain drain, education-induced migration, transnational migration, or diaspora, I chose instead to use the term ‘culture of migration’. Framing the phenomena as *culture* instead of *types of migration* is more useful conceptually for the purpose of this book. This is

because terms such as skilled migration and transnational migration would have already framed people as particular kinds of migrants undertaking particular kinds of migration pathways at certain stages of their lives.¹⁹ The problem with such frames is that they may not be able to incorporate important issues such as the accumulation and intergenerational transfers of migration capital, knowledge, and practices. Framing mobile Malaysians' migration lives as a 'culture of migration' enables an examination of migration-related beliefs, practices, and strategies that arise as a reaction to structural constraints. Moreover, these beliefs, practices, and strategies ebb and flow with their migration pathways—whether they take the form of skilled migration, marriage migration, return migration, and so on.

In this book, I use 'culture of migration' in the Malaysian context to mean, firstly, that *migration/mobility is a common, accepted way of life* for individuals and their families and, secondly, that *migrating for education has become an internalised social mobility strategy* that may not be consciously recognised as a way to negotiate structural constraints posed by Malaysia's *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship and the practice of race-based affirmative action policies. I use 'culture of migration' to explain how, in the case of mobile Malaysians, migrating for education takes on certain *socialised meanings*. In this way, migrating for education becomes an *internalised cultural practice* that is not necessarily recognised as responses to structural constraints.

The term 'culture of migration' incorporates *common cultural practices of migration* shared by migrants with similar circumstances (e.g. educational pathways to be discussed in Chap. 4). Thus, I use 'culture of migration' to describe and explain how a pattern of migration (especially for education) arises in the Malaysian context, and subsequently, how this transforms into a more permanent migration. 'Culture', as I use it, is a set of internalised beliefs, practices, norms and behaviours that offer meanings to individuals in regard to their migration motivations, decisions, and trajectories. Crucially, the socio-cultural meanings and interpretations at the micro-individual and meso-societal levels have real and material implications for citizenship and migration seen from the perspective of the Malaysian state. More importantly, this book shows how mobile Malaysians' culture of migration is intertwined with British colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship.

A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

This book is based on a dissertation project I started in 2010. Fieldwork and archival research was conducted between July 2011 and May 2013. I interviewed 67 mobile Malaysians who were resident in London (and a few major cities in the UK) and Singapore, as well as returnees who were resident in Kuala Lumpur (KL) and Johor Bahru (JB). Most of the interviews were conducted in person, with the exception of a handful conducted over Skype and email. The interviews ranged from 40 minutes to 3 hours. I also conducted participant observation at various formal and informal social events involving overseas and mobile Malaysians.

Respondents were recruited through snowball sampling through personal contacts, new contacts I met at social events for overseas Malaysians in London, as well as a research blog I set up for this project. Out of 67 respondents, 15 were recruited directly or indirectly from my research blog. Three respondents who came through my blog were based in European and North American cities. I included them in my respondent sample as their stories were equally relevant to this research. In this book, I refer to individual respondents by their location (L for London/UK; S for Singapore; M for returnees; and G for other global locations), followed by a running number (see Appendices).

While my blog was successful in terms of publicity and recruitment, I am also aware that it could have produced representative bias in my respondent sample. Firstly, my blog had a limited reach: only readers with access to my blog would be able to read it. Secondly, perhaps readers who resonated with my research project would be more willing to come forth as interview respondents. Thirdly, as my blog was written in English, this could have excluded respondents who were more comfortable with other languages such as Malay, Mandarin, and Tamil.

Table 1.3 documents the demographic profiles of the four groups of respondents. The overall average age is between 30 and 35 years, although returnees to Malaysia were on average in their late thirties and early forties. Gender representations are more or less balanced in the Singapore and Malaysia samples. However, there were significantly more female respondents for the London/UK group (81 percent) and more male respondents in the 'global' group (83 percent). In terms of marital status, the majority of respondents in Singapore, London/UK, and 'global' groups were single, while returnees to Malaysia were mostly married. Six respondents have relinquished their Malaysian citizenship. The majority of my respon-

Table 1.3 Respondents' demographic characteristics

	<i>Respondents in Singapore (n = 27)</i>		<i>Respondents in London/UK (n = 16)</i>		<i>Returnee-respondents in Malaysia (n = 18)</i>		<i>Respondents in 'global' locations (n = 6)</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Age (in year 2011)								
Mean	35.3	–	33.1	–	40.4	–	32.5	–
Median	32.0	–	30.5	–	39.0	–	31.0	–
Age (at first emigration)								
Mean	16.4	–	15.5	–	21.0	–	18.0	–
Median	18.0	–	18.0	–	21.0	–	17.0	–
Gender								
Male	11	40.7	3	18.8	10	55.6	5	83.3
Female	16	59.3	13	81.2	8	44.4	1	16.7
Marital status								
Single	13	48.1	10	62.5	6	33.3	4	66.7
Married (no children)	7	25.9	1	6.3	1	5.6	2	33.3
Married (1 child)	2	7.4	2	12.5	2	11.1	–	–
Married (2 children)	5	18.5	1	6.3	5	27.8	–	–
Married (3 children)	–	–	2	12.5	1	5.6	–	–
Married (>4 children)	–	–	–	–	3	16.7	–	–
Citizenship status								
Malaysian citizen (MC)	4	14.8	7	43.8	12	66.7	4	66.7
MC + other permanent resident status	18	66.7	5	31.3	4	22.2	2	33.3
MC + other citizenship	–	–	3	18.8	1	5.6	–	–
Other citizenship	5	18.5	1	6.3	1	5.6	–	–
<i>Bumiputera</i> status								
<i>Bumiputera</i>	–	–	4	25.0	2	11.1	1	16.7
Non- <i>bumiputera</i>	27	100.0	12	75.0	16	88.9	5	83.3
Reason for first move from Malaysia								
Education	20	74.1	12	75.0	13	72.2	5	83.3
Work and career	2	7.4	–	–	4	22.2	1	16.7
Family	5	18.5	3	18.7	1	5.6	–	–

(continued)

Table 1.3 (continued)

	<i>Respondents in Singapore (n = 27)</i>		<i>Respondents in London/UK (n = 16)</i>		<i>Returnee-respondents in Malaysia (n = 18)</i>		<i>Respondents in 'global' locations (n = 6)</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Others	–	–	1	6.3	–	–	–	–
Reason for moving to current location								
Education	16	59.3	9	56.2	–	–	–	–
Work and career	7	25.9	6	37.5	4	22.2	3	50.0
Family	3	11.1	1	6.3	13	72.2	–	–
Others	1	3.7	–	–	1	5.6	3	50.0

dents left Malaysia to pursue overseas education at tertiary and pre-tertiary stages. In general, respondents in Singapore, London/UK, and other global locations left Malaysia at late secondary and pre-university ages of 16, 15, and 18, respectively. In contrast, returnee-respondents in Malaysia left at a later average age of 21.

As a fellow mobile Malaysian, I found it relatively easy to gain access and build rapport with my respondents. Complete strangers would agree to being interviewed because I am Malaysian, or because I was referred to by a mutual contact. This explains why most of my respondents were non-*bumiputera* Chinese (92.5 percent). In contrast, I had significantly less success at recruiting *bumiputera* respondents (7.5 percent). While I had been able to meet and approach potential *bumiputera* respondents, they have either remained unresponsive, or turned unresponsive after initially agreeing to participate in my research. One reason could be that I am not *bumiputera*-Malay, and therefore seen as an outsider. Another possible explanation is that some *bumiputera*-Malays in London are government scholarship holders, a group frequently warned by their scholarship sponsor ministries to refrain from engaging in any activities that could jeopardise their scholarships (see Chap. 5). Given the linking of migration to disloyalty mentioned earlier, as well as an established history of state securitisation of race and anything ‘sensitive’ that could jeopardise ‘national security’ (see Chap. 2), it is understandable that potential respondents may be uncomfortable in participating in my research. In fact, some of my respondents said that their partners, family members, or friends cautioned them against participating in my research.²⁰ Some saw participating in my

research as a chance for them to ‘be controversial’ and vent their misgivings about ‘the government’. Perhaps, for these respondents, participating in my research was their way of ‘being political’ (Isin, 2008) in the Malaysian context where those who have openly questioned or challenged the hegemonic state has been subjected to techniques of governing (see Chap. 2).

While the skewed ethnic composition may appear to be a biased sample of mobile Malaysians, I argue that closer scrutiny is required. In fact, beyond their shared ethnicity, my Chinese respondents were a diverse group. Firstly, they differ in terms of their age and reasons for their first move from Malaysia. Secondly, they hold various compositions of other citizenships and permanent resident statuses. Both observations similarly apply to the *bumiputera* respondents. Thirdly, and most importantly, not all of the Chinese respondents came from the same education stream (see Chaps. 2 and 4). Here is the effect of the colonial legacies at work: the positive response I received from Chinese respondents, and the simultaneous lack of response from *bumiputera* respondents, is precisely an outcome of Malaysia’s race-stratified education system, which I argue is a colonial legacy inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state. In other words, the stratification of Malaysians into various education streams produced mobile Malaysians with certain affinities and social networks, which translated to how my respondents eventually came into contact with me and my research.

Being perceived as ‘one of us’ made it easier for me to understand my respondents’ narratives. Respondents felt at ease with me, and often shared their views and perspectives in an unreserved manner. However, the perception that I was ‘one of us’ could have also led some respondents to leave things unsaid by assuming that I would implicitly understand them. Surprisingly, I found this to be more so during face-to-face interviews rather than Skype interviews. During the latter, respondents would take time to explain things that they thought I was not aware of, but which in fact I knew quite well.

In order to gain a better understanding of race, education, and citizenship in colonial Malaya and post-colonial Malaysia, I conducted archival research in two stages at The National Archives in London, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Library at the National University of Singapore, the National Archives of Singapore, and the National Archives of Malaysia in KL. During the first stage, I searched for materials relating to ‘citizenship’, ‘national identity’, and ‘nation building’ in Malaya and Singapore. The second stage of archival research followed the release of the ‘migrated archives’ by the Foreign and Commonwealth

Office (FCO) in the UK. Records on Malaya were released in April 2012, while those on Singapore were released in April, September, and November 2013. This second stage in archival research was also in parallel to my awareness that I needed a more in-depth understanding of colonial history in Malaya and Singapore in order to analyse the interview data I had collected. During this period, I consulted files relating to education, the Malayan Emergency, intelligence, electoral voting, and so on.

The reflexive reading of archival materials and my interview-conversations with mobile Malaysians is methodologically significant for this postcolonial research on migration in two ways. First, encountering archival materials first-hand enabled me to acquire a closer and critical understanding of Malaysia's colonial and post-colonial history. As someone who was taught the official account of Malayan and Malaysian history through the Malaysian curriculum, I found archival research to be extremely illuminating. It was not the specific *content* of the archival documents per se that was informative for the purpose of this research. Rather, it was the collective reading of how different stakeholders saw the historical events as they unfolded that was insightful to challenge my understanding of history that I had previously learnt through the official historiography. In hindsight, my intimate encounter with the primary historical sources was also a postcolonial endeavour: I was able to critically question what I 'knew' as historical 'facts', and read contemporary migration in Malaysia through this newly gained postcolonial insight.

Second, and consequently, this enlightened understanding of history offered an expanded vision through which to interpret mobile Malaysians' personal narratives. As Fitzgerald (2006, p. 12) notes, integrating ethnographic and archival research turns 'the problem of the "ethnographic present" into historical depth'. My methodological interweaving of the historical (through archival research) and the contemporary (through ethnographic interviews and my personal reflections) enabled a nuanced and explicitly postcolonial interpretation of migration lives—one that holds colonialism accountable to the immaterial legacies of internalised ideas, beliefs, practices, and ways of knowing that continue to structure migration phenomena in former colonies.

ORGANISATION OF THE BOOK

Following this introduction, Chap. 2 discusses the three British colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship/nationality using a postcolonial perspective. The chapter traces thematically the intertwined

developments of these three colonial legacies over the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial period. The first theme focuses on the materialisation of race and Malay ‘indigeneity’. The second theme analyses the racialisation of citizenship, the institutionalisation of racial politics, and the securitisation of race. The third theme focuses on the development of a race-stratified national education system and an internalised aspiration for Western/overseas education. The chapter concludes with a postcolonial discussion of the linkages between race, education, and citizenship, with particular emphasis on what their interconnections mean for migration.

While Chap. 2 sets out the theoretical and empirical background contexts, Chaps. 3–6 shift attention to the focus of this book, which is migration. Chapter 3 sets out this book’s argument about a culture of migration amongst mobile Malaysians by providing an overview of migration phenomena in the Malaysian context. It describes the normalcy of migration in Malaya and Malaysia by examining internal and international migration flows from the early twentieth century to the present. It then discusses the typical steps of migration undertaken by emigrating Malaysians. To contextualise the individual migration pathways of my mobile Malaysian respondents (detailed in Chaps. 4–6), the chapter also provides an overview of Malaysian migration to Singapore and the UK.

Chapter 4, on race and education-migration pathways, describes eight distinct education-migration pathways found amongst the mobile Malaysians I encountered in this research. The chapter discusses the research finding that education-migration is the most popular first step of departure from Malaysia for these mobile Malaysians. The chapter argues that race, as a colonial legacy inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state, has extended its structuring influence through Malaysia’s race-stratified education system. The chapter shows how race stratifies mobile Malaysians’ education and education-migration pathways, and is in turn reinforced by mobile Malaysians’ education-migration experiences. In doing so, the chapter calls attention to the longevity of colonialism with respect to race, education, and citizenship, which in this case has been institutionalised via the education system.

Chapter 5 describes mobile Malaysians’ understandings of citizenship and analyses how their understandings inform their citizenship practices, decisions, and strategies. The chapter argues that the decolonial constitution of citizenship in Malaya/Malaysia sets the framework that structures how citizenship/nationality is understood, operationalised, and implemented in post-colonial Malaysia. This, in turn, informs and circumscribes how mobile Malaysians perceive, internalise, and conceptualise their

Malaysian citizenship as a kind of ‘primordial’ identity vis-à-vis their other citizenship and permanent resident statuses in their migration destinations. This chapter argues that this paradoxical situation, where ‘Malaysia’ holds strong emotional significance for mobile Malaysians despite the racialised nature of their migration from Malaysia, can be understood if race, education, and citizenship are read as colonial legacies inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state.

Chapter 6 explores the issue of return migration by examining the perspectives of the mobile Malaysian respondents and the policy perspective of the post-colonial Malaysian state, respectively. The chapter first compares and analyses the migration geographies of the four groups of mobile Malaysians in this study. This will highlight the importance of four interrelated factors with reference to the propensity for return migration: firstly, the age and nature of departure from Malaysia; secondly, the duration of stay in Malaysia prior to departure from Malaysia; thirdly, their marital and familial circumstances; and finally, the presence of active family and other social networks in Malaysia. The chapter then describes policies that are related to the facilitation of overseas Malaysians’ return migration. This includes reverse brain drain policies, citizenship policies, and immigration policies. This chapter argues that these policies do not address the fundamental issues that have led to mobile Malaysians’ departure from Malaysia in the first place. Furthermore, these policies are ‘short-sighted’ in their foci and therefore delimited in their reach and effectiveness.

The concluding chapter discusses the theoretical and policy implications of adopting a postcolonial lens on mobile Malaysians’ culture of migration. It first summarises the findings of this research with regard to mobile Malaysians’ education-migration pathways, their migration geographies, and their citizenship practices. The chapter then discusses the theoretical implications of this study for migration studies, citizenship studies, postcolonial studies, and Malaysian studies. It also highlights policy implications for the current Malaysian government’s return migration efforts and makes some suggestions for Malaysia’s race-stratified education system. Finally, it suggests possible future research foci.

NOTES

1. Mobile Malaysians (www.movingmalaysians.wordpress.com).
2. I use ‘Malaysian-Malays’, ‘Malaysian-Chinese’, and ‘Malaysian-Indian’ to describe Malaysian citizens belonging to the official racial groups of Malay,

Chinese, and Indian respectively. In Malaysia, one's race is reflected on all official identification documents including the passport and identity card (I/C).

3. In this book, I use 'post-colonial' to indicate the temporal period after colonial rule, and 'postcolonial' to indicate a theoretical approach.
4. As I have explained elsewhere (Koh, 2016), this of course does not preclude other factors such as globalisation and the internationalisation of higher education that may also have encouraged contemporary education-led skilled migration.
5. I am not claiming that the coloniser and the colonised are singular and/or homogenous entities in themselves. Rather, I use 'the colonial' and 'the post-colonial' to emphasise the different governmental roles played by the British colonial administration and the government of the independent (i.e. post-colonial) Malaysia respectively.
6. Now known as Pulau Pinang.
7. Now known as Melaka.
8. Now known as Negeri Sembilan.
9. The first wave being the Chinese diaspora from Mainland China.
10. Internal Security Act. See Chap. 2.
11. For example, rights to property, inheritance, subsidies, immigration, etc.
12. I use 'primordial' to describe a sense of fundamental, naturalised, and inborn sense of origin felt and nurtured by mobile Malaysians.
13. See also Knowles' (2003, 2010) call for grounded analyses with respect to race/ethnicity.
14. See also Brubaker's (1999) critique on the dichotomy and ambiguity between civic and ethnic nationalisms.
15. I explore these questions in Koh (2014, 2015c, 2015d).
16. I explore the importance of Malaysia's education system in influencing international student migration in Koh (forthcoming, 2017).
17. See Mandal's (2003) call to advance a critique of race in scholarship on Malaysia, and Gabriel's (2015) call for a critical reflection on the meaning of race in Malaysia.
18. According to Yuval-Davis (2007, p. 564), the term 'intersectionality' was first used by Kimberly Crenshaw in 1989. Intersectionality acknowledges that people are subjected to a system of oppression that is reflective of the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination (e.g. based on biological, social, and cultural categories of difference).
19. For example, skilled migrants are people who are accepted into a receiving country by virtue of their knowledge, skills, and expertise. As they are expected to be economically active contributors to their host societies, they tend to be young adults or mid-career professionals.
20. A respondent's partner said: 'When you are young you always were told that the government keeps an eye on you'.

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British Colonial Legacies and the Making of Malay(si)a

Malaysia is a post-colonial nation-state that came into being primarily as a result of a series of top-down geopolitical manoeuvres, rather than a bottom-up forging of the nation. In particular, the birth and constitution of the post-colonial Malaysian nation-state is intimately intertwined with British colonial rule and the decolonialisation process. This chapter provides the contextual background to understand how the making of Malay(si)a—specifically the development of the three British colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship during the colonial and post-colonial periods—foregrounds mobile Malaysians’ culture of migration. In other words, this chapter postcolonialises race, education, and citizenship in Malaysia, in order to draw the connections to the normalcy of migration in the Malaysian context generally (Chap. 3), and mobile Malaysians’ culture of migration in particular (Chaps. 4–6).

By ‘postcolonialising race, education, and citizenship’, I mean critically understanding how race, education, and citizenship have been constructed, institutionalised, and internalised in both the public and private realms. My approach here is in some ways conceptually similar to the ‘racial paradigm’ thesis, which Milner and Ting (2014, p. 50) define as ‘the racial architecture within which Malaysians operate [that] has become an embedded, dialectical social dynamic’. More importantly, my focus here is to explain and highlight how race, education, and citizenship—and not *just* race alone, even if it fundamentally underlies education and citizenship—are interrelated and intertwined in complex ways, with implications for Malaysia’s contemporary migration.

Although I argue in this book that British colonialism played a significant role in institutionalising the three colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship, this does not mean that the Malaya/Malaysian context was *carte blanche* prior the arrival of the British. This also does not mean that other actors—especially the post-colonial Malaysian state—had nothing to do with how race, education, and citizenship developed after the end of British colonial rule.¹ My argument, however, is that British colonialism introduced and implemented fundamental structural changes to Malaya—especially in the realms of race, education, citizenship, and the nation-state²—that continue to underwire Malaysian social life during the post-colonial period. More importantly, this has implications for mobile Malaysians’ culture of migration.

A BRIEF HISTORY

As with other former colonies, Malaya had its own histories, political entities, and population dynamics before the arrival of the European powers including the British. In order to comprehend how and why the British colonial administration was able to do what they did, it is necessary to understand this earlier history (see Andaya & Andaya, 1982; Baker, 2008; Parkinson, 1966; Ryan, 1976).

Before British Colonial Rule: Malay Ruler-Subject Relations

Prior to the arrival of the Europeans in the early sixteenth century, the Malayan Peninsula (i.e. Peninsula Malaysia today) was first under the rule of the Sri Vijaya Empire (the seventh and eighth century), the Majapahit Empire (the fourteenth century), and thereafter various Malay Sultanates. The original population consisted of the *orang asli* (‘original peoples’) and the *orang laut* (‘sea peoples’), while the influx of the Malay immigrants came after Parameswara, a Hindu Sumatran prince, founded the Malacca Sultanate. The Malacca Sultanate established the indigenous Malay political system and the ruler-subject relationship that have persisted in some form in Malaysia today. Firstly, the ruling class (the Sultan, the aristocracy, and the chiefs) is distinct from the subject class (the *rakyat*, i.e. commoners or subjects) and enjoys authority and associated privileges. Secondly, the Sultan embodies the legitimate protector of Malay values, while the subject accords ‘unswerving loyalty’ (Bedlington, 1978, p. 28) to his ruler and those in authority. This was further reinforced

by the *derbaka* ('crime of treason') and *daulat* ('kingship', 'majesty', or 'sanctity') practices, where disloyalty to the Sultan was severely punished, including killing of entire families and destruction of homes (Andaya & Andaya, 1982). Thirdly, this ruler-subject political system was propagated to the rest of the Malay Sultanates within the Malacca Sultanate's hinterland (e.g. Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan, and Pahang). However, each Sultanate was an independent political entity.

The concepts of government, political institutions, and citizenship in the Malay world, however, greatly differed from that as understood and practised in the Western world. The Malay word *kerajaan* ('the state of having a raja/ruler') was the closest in meaning to the Western concepts of 'state', 'kingdom', or 'government'. However, Malay subjects 'considered themselves to be living not in states or under governments, but in a *kerajaan*, in the "condition of having a raja" ' (Milner, 1982, p. 114). Furthermore, the 'actual concept of "citizenship" did not exist in the *kerajaan*' (p. 128). This 'state of having a ruler' meant that the Malay subjects 'visualised no other system' (Gullick, 1958, p. 44) of ruler-subject relations other than the *kerajaan*. It is, however, important to point out that this understanding of 'government' is that of direct ruler-subject relation where the ruler is accepted as hereditary king with authority over the subjects who do not enjoy democratic rights (e.g. land ownership and political rights). This is not an 'undemocratic' political situation per se, as this must be contextualised to the local epistemologies of that historical milieu.

The significance of loyalty in the Malay Sultanate ruler-subject relations needs further explanation. According to Muzaffar (1979, p. 29), it was 'largely because the rulers were perceived as divine, that unquestioning loyalty was accorded them by their subjects'. Muzaffar also suggests that this sense of 'unquestioning loyalty' was further reinforced by the hierarchical structure of the Malay society, which 'made the weak acutely conscious of their inferiority and lowliness in relation to the strong' (p. 20). On the other hand, Milner (1982, p. 106) suggests that this sense of loyalty can be understood through the concept of *bakti* ('duty', 'service', or 'faithfulness') or devotion: in return for the devoted service to the raja, a subject receives individual advancement in the form of bestowed title or status. Thus, the automatic linking of loyalty to the ruler is both a cultural and political product. As we will see later, this strong sense of loyalty is crucial to the interconnections between race, education, and citizenship in colonial Malaya and post-colonial Malaysia.

*British Colonial Rule Before World War II: Dynamic Shifts
in Territorial Governance*

The arrival of European power in Peninsula Malaysia started with the Portuguese capture of Malacca in 1511, followed by the Dutch in 1641. In 1786, the British occupied Penang. In 1795, the Dutch surrendered Malacca to the British. In 1819, the British established settlement in Singapore. In 1824, the Anglo-Dutch Treaty saw the Dutch surrendering Malacca to the British in exchange for Sumatra and areas south of the Malay Peninsula. By 1826, the British East India Company established the Straits Settlements (SS) comprising Penang, Malacca, and Singapore. In 1867, the SS became a Crown Colony under the British Government. In 1874, the Sultan of Perak and the British signed the Treaty of Pangkor, a landmark document that became the model for British colonial intervention and control in the other Malay states. In 1896, the four Malay states of Selangor, Perak, Pahang, and Negri Sembilan were joined to form the Federated Malay States (FMS). Each state was to have a British resident, ‘whose advice was to be asked and acted upon in all questions other than those concerning Malay religion and custom’ (Colonial Office, 1943). The states of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu (formerly spelled ‘Trengganu’), and Johor (formerly spelled ‘Johore’) remained as the Unfederated Malay States (UMS), administered with a British Adviser. In 1909, the British signed the Anglo-Siamese Treaty, which saw Siam agreeing to give up its claim over the Malay states of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan, and Terengganu. The FMS and the UMS, together with the SS, were collectively known as ‘British Malaya’.

British intervention in the Borneo states began in 1841 when the Sultan of Brunei granted James Brooke the title of Raja of Sarawak. In 1846, Labuan was ceded to the British by the Brunei Sultanate and subsequently became a Crown Colony in 1848. In 1882, Sabah was governed by the British North Borneo Company and subsequently became the British North Borneo protectorate in 1888. In 1890, Labuan was annexed to North Borneo and joined the SS in 1906.

This brief history³ shows that the geographical area constituting what we know as Malaysia today has taken on various economic and political forms during different periods of British colonial rule (Table 1.1). Depending on their economic and political significance to the British Government, different territories were placed under different governance arrangements. The SS were crucial trading centres and thus were under

direct British Government rule much earlier than the various Malay states. This was also facilitated by the fact that they were not previously under any Malay Sultanate rule.

In contrast, early British intervention in the FMS and UMS had to be negotiated through their respective Malay Sultans—that is, through indirect rule. Indirect rule was essentially a strategy to pacify and subdue the Malay ruling classes, turning them into ‘an instrument of British colonial interests’ (Abraham, 1983, p. 19). Through this pretence of upholding existing Malay traditions, the British gained indirect governance of the Malay subjects to secure their ‘continued exploitation of the colonised country’ (Ishak, 2000, p. 88). The logic of indirect rule has been used to justify the role of the British colonial administration as protector of the Malays. For example, in a report of his 1932 visit to Malaya, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies wrote that indirect rule ‘will probably prove the greatest safeguard against the political submersion of the Malays ... [in a] popular government on western lines’ as the Malays ‘would be hopelessly outnumbered by other races’ (Wilson, 1933, p. 12). The effect of indirect rule—and more importantly, the ethos behind its adoption—is important to contextualise the colonial legacies to be discussed hereafter.

British Colonial Rule After World War II: Malayan Union (MU)

During World War II, Malaya and Singapore were under Japanese occupation between 1941–1945 and 1942–1945 respectively. Historical studies have noted that the World War II was a significant milestone that saw a shift in British colonial attitude towards the governance of Malaya and Singapore (Caine, 1958). Not only was there a shift in stance towards preparing former colonies towards independence, there was also a push towards shortening the transition period.

For Malaya especially, there was also a desire on the part of the British colonial government to ‘take the opportunity of reoccupation to tidy up [the] confusion of regimes’ (Research Department, 1970, p. 5) with a centralised governance structure. Additionally, the Chinese in the Malay states and the SS were recognised to be more active in resisting the Japanese than the Malays and ‘deserved an improved political situation’ (p. 5). Other accounts noted that there was an emergent Malayan nationalism, stimulated by Japanese occupation, which demanded broader citizenship rights (Groves, 1962).⁴ Allen (1967) further suggests that the

British government was primarily concerned with safeguarding its political and economic interests in Malaya and the region beyond the impending end of British colonial rule.

The solution to these overlapping motivations was the Malayan Union (MU), a ‘nation-state-like’ (Reid, 2010b, p. 48) federation consolidating the SS, the FMS, and the UMS—minus Singapore. Britain’s rationale for the MU was evident in a secret memorandum entitled ‘Future Constitutional Policy for British Colonial Territories in South-East Asia’ (Colonial Office, 1943). The memorandum outlined British pre-war interventions in the respective states before explaining the considerations for its post-war colonial strategy. Although the proposition was articulated as having noble intentions for a more efficient governance structure, as well as giving equal participation and ownership to non-Malay communities, the British were also concerned about implementing the plan without unnecessary opposition from the Malay Sultans. Furthermore, this was positioned as a ‘necessary ... first step’ that ‘should be remedied’ on the part of the British, and thus required the Malay Sultans to sacrifice their individual and collective political powers as traditional Malay rulers for ‘the interests of Malaya as a whole’.

Furthermore, of particular significance is Britain’s ‘past obligations’ to the ‘interests of the Malay race’, which was legitimised in two steps. First, by emphasising their role as protector of the Malay race, the British justified their MU proposal as it would benefit the Malays through the modernisation of a pan-Malaysian governance structure. Second, while seeking to ‘remedy’ the various regimes, the British were careful to keep the Malay Sultans as intermediaries of ‘the Malay race’. Thus, in one brilliant stroke, the Malay Sultans could be persuaded that they still kept their State Ruler status, although in reality their spheres of influence would be limited to affairs related to Malay religion and customs. This meant that the British could fulfil their ‘Malay protector’ obligations, yet at the same time offer expanded participation and ownership rights to the non-Malay communities.

The British presented the MU proposals individually to the Malay Sultans in haste before opposition could develop.⁵ The MU came into effect on 1 April 1946 and incorporated all the states of British Malaya except Singapore.⁶ Following strong opposition from the Malays spearheaded by the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) and other groups,⁷ the MU was replaced by the *Persekutuan Tanah Melayu* (‘Federation of Malaya’) on 1 February 1948. Under this framework, the Sultans retained sovereignty in their respective states, while Penang and Malacca were administered as

British territories. Singapore, with its predominantly ethnic Chinese population, was excluded from the Federation and governed as a separate British colony for two strategic reasons: firstly, to protect Singapore's strategic and economic significance and, secondly, to counter the fear of Chinese communist terrorism if the Chinese became an ethnic majority in the greater MU polity (see Ryan, 1976).

MALAYAN UNION (MU) AND BRITISH COLONIAL LEGACIES

The MU is a crucial milestone in Malaysian socio-political history. Not only did it '[establish] the framework for the future constitutional and political evolution of Malaya' (Lau, 1990, p. 282), it also set the context for similar developments in post-colonial Malaysia. The period of 1940s–1970s, which coincided with British decolonisation—specifically the formation and dissolution of the MU—and the birth of the independent Malaysian nation-state, is crucial to understand the making of Malay(s)i)a and Malay(s)i)ans. This period, when analysed in relation to the intertwined developments of race, education, and citizenship, offers important insights to contextualise mobile Malaysians' culture of migration.

In the following three sections, I will not be presenting a chronology of historical events. Instead, I focus on specific themes institutionalised and congealed by the British colonial administration. I argue that these themes—firstly, the materialisation of race and Malay 'indigeneity'; secondly, the introduction of foreign concepts of citizenship, electoral representation, and the nation-state to a territory that has been conveniently formed, followed by the institutionalisation of a racialised citizenship and racial politics; and thirdly, the structuring of a race-stratified education system and the development of an internalised aspiration for Western/British education—became inherited colonial legacies that were further exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state. More importantly, they constitute the structural framework that contextualises and circumscribes mobile Malaysians' culture of migration.

MATERIALISING RACE AND MALAY 'INDIGENEITY'

Existing literature has established that British colonial rule introduced racial ideologies, racial stereotypes, and a racial hierarchy in Malaya and Singapore (Alatas, 1977; Hirschman, 1986). These racial ideologies,

stereotypes, and hierarchies in turn informed various aspects of the nation-state, including the constitution of citizenship, the meanings of nationhood, the nature of political representation, as well as access to rights and privileges in education, economic, and political activities. In this section, I first provide an overview of how race and Malay 'indigeneity' have been introduced during the British colonial period. I then discuss how race and Malay 'indigeneity' have been exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state during key historical conjunctures. The institutionalisation of race and Malay 'indigeneity' is important as this sets the fundamental racial ideology that informs education and citizenship, the other two colonial legacies discussed in this book.

Informed by British mercantile interests, the British colonial administration introduced systemic labour immigration from China and India to fulfil labour demands in the tin mines and rubber plantations. This large scale, systematic labour immigration scheme drastically changed the population dynamics in Malaya. During 1891–1901, the Malay population increased by 34.9 percent to 312,456, while the Chinese and Indian populations increased by 83.4 percent to 299,739 and 188.8 percent to 58,211 respectively (Bedlington, 1978, Table 1). By 1921, the Malay population was only 54 percent of the total population in Malaya. This further dropped to 49.2 percent in 1931 (Mariappan, 2002, p. 203). In contrast, the proportions of the Chinese and Indian population increased dramatically, especially between 1911 and 1941 (Purcell, 1967).

The British practised the strategy of 'divide-and-rule' by creating social and political distance between groups to curb labour strikes and to ensure business continuity. This strategy confined and stereotyped ethnic groups to specific economic and political activities (Hefner, 2001). Broadly speaking, the Europeans were managers; the Chinese were initially labour in the tin-mining industry; the Indians were labourers in the rubber estates; and the Malays were engaged in subsistence agriculture. A dual system of government was created to administer policies towards the Malays and the Chinese: the Malays were employed in higher government ranks while the Chinese were employed in lower ranks as clerks, surveyors and interpreters. In 1877, a Chinese Protectorate was set up in Singapore as a formal means of dealing with the Chinese. The British further pursued 'manipulation through [racial] ideology' by 'playing off one [immigrant] group against the other' (Abraham, 1983, p. 24).

In parallel to the British-led systemised labour immigration and the 'divide-and-rule' strategy in Malaya, there was also a broader development

of colonial and anthropological knowledge. The advent of Social Darwinism saw the preoccupation with ‘scientific’ and ‘objective’ explanations of social behaviour through racial categories. Following the belief in ‘the white man’s burden’ (see Stockwell, 1982),⁸ the British perceived themselves and the Europeans to be superior over the local Malayan peoples. Furthermore, the relative positions vis-à-vis British colonial mercantile interests in Malaya and elsewhere influenced the ‘scholarly’ anthropological studies of the local peoples. Thus, the Malays were portrayed as docile, lazy, and contented; the Chinese viewed with grudging admiration for their entrepreneurialism; and the Indians seen as cheap and docile labour. These attitudes in turn influenced how each group viewed each other. Over time, they came to ‘have a life of their own’ (Hirschman, 1986, p. 357) and became legitimised by Malay and non-Malay leaders in the post-colonial period. These divisions also transcend to ‘all sorts of imagined and real attributes’ (Shamsul, 1998a, p. 137) in people’s everyday lives. These include the perceptions that the Chinese are ‘dirty,⁹ cunning and deceitful’, while the Malays are ‘lazy, naïve and incompetent’ (Wilson, 1967, p. vi).

Racial categorisation was also extended to census categorisation. The category ‘Malay’, for example, conflated sub-ethnicities of Javanese, Sumatran, Rawa, Achenese, Minangkabau, and Bugis. Neither were the Chinese dialect and clan identities (e.g. Cantonese, Hokkien, Hylam, Teo-Chiew, etc.) nor the Indians’ caste and sub-ethnicities (e.g. Bengali, Hindustani, Malayali, Tamil, Telugu, etc.) reflected in these official categories. Eventually, the simplified official racial categories of ‘Malay’, ‘Chinese’, ‘Indian’, and ‘Eurasian’ ignored sub-ethnic identities and distinctions within each group. Furthermore, the invention of ‘race’ as a way of categorising people—initially for census purposes, but subsequently affecting all formal and informal dimensions of social life in colonial Malaya—was founded uneasily on Eurocentric concepts which did not reflect local epistemologies (Hirschman, 1987). Thus, race evolved from an arbitrary category—devised completely from the British colonial perspective—to a ‘real’ feature. One’s race became associated with assumptions about one’s characteristics, behaviours, economic activity, and relative positions in the colonial social hierarchy (Abraham, 1983).

At the same time, the Malays came to be seen as the indigenous population. Ardizzone (1946, p. 17) notes that ‘[t]he Malays have given the peninsula its name and its *lingua franca*, but they are neither the original nor its most numerous inhabitants’. Indeed, the 1931 census recorded that one in six Malays was not native born (Department of Information,

1953, p. 11). However, as a result of decades of regional migration, Malay immigrants from Sumatra, Java, and other islands in the Malay Archipelago became indistinguishable from the indigenous Malays through intermarriages and assimilation. This was also facilitated by their linguistic, cultural, and religious affinities with the indigenous Malays (Groves, 1962). Winstedt (1943, p. 97) notes that a history of ‘immigration of racial kindred’ resulted in the Malays becoming ‘the only permanent population that look upon the country as their native land’. As Malay immigrants settled in the various Malay states, they saw themselves as ‘natives’.

While this can be seen as a natural process of ‘indigenisation’ of the Malay immigrants, I argue that the British colonial period facilitated, encouraged, and institutionalised the myth of Malay indigeneity. In other words, British colonialism legitimised, and made real, Malay indigeneity as a ‘fact’. This homogenised the Malays by giving them ‘historical and racial ownership’ (Manickam, 2009, p. 604). Furthermore, the myth of the native Malay needing protection against the intruding immigrants legitimised British intervention in the Malay states.

The myth of Malay ‘indigeneity’ has been materialised in three inter-related ways during the British colonial period. First, colonial historiographers used the term *Tanah Melayu* (‘the Malay Land’) synonymously with the peninsula. This turned the term *Melayu* into a ‘national and territorial concept’ (Holst, 2012, p. 34). Second, Malay—or *Melayu*—was formalised as an indigenous ethnic identity in the colonial census. For example, while Malays, Achinese, Boyanese, Bugis, and other ethnic groups were distinguished as separate ethnic categories in the 1871 and 1881 SS census, they were grouped together with Aborigines and Dyaks under ‘Malays and other natives of the Archipelago’ in the 1891 census (Hirschman, 1987). Thus, the ethnic category ‘Malay’ was expanded to include peoples of various ethnic and indigenous origins from the region. Third, the British assisted in the constitution of Malay Reservations Enactments to protect Malay land rights in the Malay states in the 1930s (Mobarak Ali & Mohamad, 2007). This was in part due to problems of land possession brought about by British encouraged labour immigration, particularly of the enterprising Chinese immigrants. It was perceived that ‘[t]he most serious danger to the Malay is ... from Chinese penetration’, and that the ‘hardworking and energetic’ Malay ‘is unable to stand the competition of the more industrious and thrifty Chinese’ (Haynes, 1931). The land reservation enactments thus legalised and legitimised the Malays’ ‘native’ land rights.

As the following sections show, the materialisation of race and Malay ‘indigeneity’ during the British colonial period were further exacerbated and institutionalised during the colonial to post-colonial transition, as well as during the post-colonial period. This includes the racialisation of citizenship, politics, and education, as well as the securitisation of race.

RACIALISING CITIZENSHIP AND POLITICS

Malayan Union (MU) and Citizenship Legislations

The racial ideology and stereotype became exacerbated in political terms in post-war Malaya as the British started preparing the colony towards independence. The racial strategy—initially introduced and practised to advance British colonial interests—planted the seeds of economic and political disparity between different ethnic groups and racial hierarchies that would eventually influence Malaysia’s subsequent nation-building and nation development policies. One of the areas of influence is in the racialisation of citizenship, in the form of the *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship.

To understand how citizenship was racialised, it is necessary to start with the making of Malaysia’s citizenship and nation-state. In this regard, the Malayan Union (MU) was a significant milestone. First, it introduced the concept of a federal nation-state, amalgamating disparate territories that were diverse in their ethnic composition and governance structure. Second, the MU introduced a common citizenship to an arbitrary collection of citizenry who were unfamiliar with the concept of Western liberal citizenship, let alone democratic representation and electoral voting. Indeed, Sir William George Maxwell, the Colonial Secretary of the Straits Settlements noted that ‘[t]he subject of Citizenship and all that implies is so new to everyone in Malaya’ (Maxwell, 1946).

The idea of a common citizenship thus elicited differential reactions from Malaya’s multi-ethnic stakeholders. In general, the Malays were anxious about the loss of their exclusive rights as indigenous natives; the local-born Chinese wanted to claim equal entitlement to birthright citizenship; and the British subjects such as the Ceylonese were concerned that their rights in Ceylon were not jeopardised (Colonial Office, 1946d). As a result of competing interests between different groups—and in which Malay interests were prioritised—negotiations surrounding the birth of an independent, post-colonial nation-state and the constitution of its citizenship were

extremely complex. In fact, the constitution of citizenship was a drawn-out process, going through three constitutional stages before Malaya attained independence from the British: firstly, the MU (1946–1948); secondly, Malaya (1948–1956); and thirdly, independence and the early post-colonial period (1957–1963) (Table 2.1).

The MU offered two modes of citizenship acquisition: automatic or by application. The former was available to anyone born in any British Malaya or Singapore states if they were living there before 15 February 1942,¹⁰ born outside British Malaya or the SS only if their fathers were citizens of the MU, and who reached 18 years old and who had lived in British Malaya or Singapore 10 out of 15 years before 15 February 1942. The latter was eligible to any interested applicant with good character, fluent in English or Malay, and agreeable to take an oath of allegiance to the MU. The Malays, who saw themselves as ‘indigenous natives’, considered the Chinese and Indians as ‘immigrants’, despite the fact that many of them were locally born. A related contention was that the ‘immigrants’ were not as loyal to Malaya as the Malays. However, Silcock (1961, pp. 11–12) observed that the Chinese held ‘[varying] degrees of loyalty to Malaya, at one extreme outdoing Malays in public spirit and local patriotism, and at the other coming [to Malaya] merely to trade and learning no English or Malay’. This suggests that the Malays’ perception of questionable loyalty amongst the Chinese were perhaps not entirely accurate. Nevertheless, the belief that only the Malays were the true indigenous community—which I argue is a British colonial legacy—prevailed and influenced the constitution of citizenship.

Following strong Malay opposition, an Anglo-Malay Working Committee was established in July 1946 to ‘work out in detail ... a provisional scheme which would be acceptable to Malay opinion’ (Malayan Union. Working Committee on the Constitutional Proposals, 1946, p. 1). The Committee consisted of five British officers representing the British colonial government, four Malays representing the Malay Sultans, and two Malays representing UMNO. Notably absent were members representing non-Anglo-Malay interests. On 26 December 1946, the Committee published the *Constitutional Proposal for Malaya*, which saw a tightening of liberal citizenship provisions in the MU that was restrictive and discriminatory to the non-Malays. For example, while the MU enabled automatic citizenship acquisition through residence, this was only possible via application under the Federation of Malaya constitution. Indeed, by February 1952, less than a third of the Chinese community had become federal citizens (Carnell, 1952, p. 512).

Table 2.1 Key features of Malaysian citizenship laws, 1946–1963

<i>Political entity (date of existence)</i>	<i>Legislation or Constitution</i>	<i>Key feature or issue of contention</i>	<i>Socio-political circumstance(s)</i>
Malayan Union (1 Apr 1946–31 Jan 1948)	Malayan Union Order in Council, 1946 ^a	Common citizenship to all	Post-World War II British colonial strategy
Federation of Malaya (1 Feb 1948–30 Aug 1957)	Federation of Malaya Agreement, 1948 ^b	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Federal citizenship that is not a nationality 2) Did not resolve existing state nationality laws 3) Defined ‘Malay’ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Malayan Emergency (1948–1960) 2) Enactment of British Nationality Act, 1948 3) Reid Commission
	Federation of Malaya Agreement (Amendment) Ordinance, 1952 ^c	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) ‘Delayed <i>jus soli</i>’ (‘citizenship by birth right’) 2) Includes citizens of the UK and Colonies (CUKC) (after enactment of British Nationality Act, 1948) 3) To be read with separate state nationality Enactments in the nine Malay states 4) Provision for women married to federal citizens 	
Federation of Malaysia (31 Aug 1957–16 Sept 1963)	1957 Constitution ^d Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1962 ^e	Unqualified <i>jus soli</i> principle* <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provisions for citizenship acquisition by persons in North Borneo, Sarawak, and Singapore 2) ‘Malay’ to include ‘Natives’ of the Borneo states 3) Qualified <i>jus soli</i> principle: only for those born in territory on or after Malaysia Day 	Independence from British colonial rule Inclusion of Sabah (i.e. North Borneo), Sarawak, and Singapore into the Federation of Malaysia

Source: Simandjuntak (1969, pp. 176–191); Sinnadurai (1978); ^aColonial Office (1946a, 1946b); ^bFederation of Malaya (1952); ^cMalaya (1958); ^dHickling (1985, pp. 24–25); ^eFederation of Malaya (1963); Malaysia (1978)

*Previously the principle was closer to *jus sanguinis* (‘citizenship by descent’)

Furthermore, the Committee emphasised that the Federal citizenship was ‘not a nationality, neither could it develop into a nationality’, and clarified that it ‘is in addition to, and not a subtraction from nationality’ (Malayan Union. Working Committee on the Constitutional Proposals, 1946, p. 23). This explicit distinguishing between ‘citizenship’ and ‘nationality’ may seem odd. However, this was an important issue at that time because of various nationality statuses held by potential Federal citizens. First, there were British subjects in the SS who were British-protected persons under the British Protected Persons Order 1934. Second, there were subjects of the rulers in the Malay states under their respective state nationality laws. As such, the term ‘nationality’ was to be understood as a *pre-existing ruler-subject status* (including that with the British Empire) that a person may not be willing to relinquish, while ‘citizenship’ was understood as a *new state-citizen status* that a person acquires by virtue of the territorial and political change.

The Committee’s recommendations were subsequently incorporated into the Federation of Malaya Agreement, 1948. As Comber (1983, p. 33) notes, the agreement was ‘an Anglo-Malay compromise’ and one where ‘[t]he Malays had won their case’. Indeed, this agreement became the basis for post-colonial Malaysia’s subsequent constitutions. Firstly, this was the historical juncture when ‘Malay’ became constitutionally defined as a person who ‘habitually speaks the Malay language’, ‘professes the Muslim religion’, and ‘conforms to Malay customs’. These definitions were subsequently written into Article 160(2) of the Constitution of Malaysia 1957, with additional qualifications on birth, descent, and domicile in the Federation of Malaysia and Singapore.

Secondly, this was also the juncture which set the foundational ideas about what federal citizenship entails in relation to loyalty and rights. Given the complexities of finding an acceptable compromise to protect Malay ‘indigeneity’ and special rights on the one hand, and incorporating non-Malay residents’ demands for equal citizenship on the other hand, loyalty became a significant criteria for citizenship. This is captured in a statement by the Communities Liaison Committee (1950):

It should be enacted that every Federal Citizen shall owe loyalty to the Federation in addition to the allegiance which he owes to His Majesty or to one of Their Highnesses [i.e. the Malay Rulers] or otherwise ... Federal Citizenship should in effect accord as nearly as possible to nationality ...

Any Federal Citizen who is proved to have been disloyal to the Federation or to have broken any Oath of Allegiance or Oath of Loyalty should forfeit his Federal Citizenship.

In other words, in addition to the 'objective' criteria of birth and settlement, a citizen-to-be is required to also prove his/her 'subjective' loyalty and allegiance to the Federation. More importantly, this loyalty is expected to be in addition to any existing loyalties he/she has for the state, the Sultan, or the British Empire.

The constitution of citizenship was again a subject of debate prior to Malaysia's independence in 1957. In January 1956, Tunku Abdul Rahman, the UMNO leader who subsequently became Malaya's first prime minister, led a delegation to the Constitutional Conference in London. The conference proposed the appointment of an independent constitutional commission ('the Reid Commission') to review and take recommendations for a constitution for the Federation of Malaysia. The terms of reference include, firstly, 'the safeguarding of the position and prestige' of the Malay Sultans; secondly, 'a common nationality' for the Federation; and thirdly, 'the safeguarding of the special position of the Malays and the legitimate interests of other communities' (Federation of Malaya Constitutional Commission, 1957, p. 2). In regard to citizenship, an explanatory note was included in the agreement of the Conference of Rulers to the Reid Commission's terms of reference:

Their Highnesses [the Malay Sultans] wish it to be understood that they do not wish the word 'nationality' ... to be interpreted by the Commission in a strict legal sense but to be used widely enough to include both nationality and citizenship so that ... the Commission ... can preserve the combination of nationality and citizenship which is expressed in the Federation of Malaya Agreement, 1948, but naturally without any restriction on the expansion of citizenship so as to produce what in effect would be 'a common nationality'.

This, again, shows the ambiguity and interchangeability of the terms 'nationality' and 'citizenship' in the context of Malay(si)a's colonial to post-colonial transition.

The Reid Commission's recommendations concurred with UMNO's pro-Malay agenda, as is reflected in its recommendations to the following:

- Paragraph 38: Against the proposal for retrospective *jus soli* citizenship;
- Paragraph 40–41: Malay language test for citizenship applicants;
- Paragraph 164: Special position of the Malays with regard to Malay reservations, quotas for admission to public services [*sic*], quotas in the issuance of permits or licenses, scholarships, bursaries, and other aids for educational purposes; and
- Paragraph 170: Malay as the national language.

Following submission of the Commission's report, the Federal Legislative Council passed the new constitution that took effect on the Federation's independence on 31 August 1957.

Another round of amendments came in 1962 prior to the inclusion of North Borneo (i.e. Sabah), Sarawak and Singapore into the Federation of Malaysia in 1963. The amendments pertained to citizenship acquisition by persons in these territories, as well as expansion of the term 'Malay' to include 'Natives of the Borneo States'. The formation of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963 was also a result of careful geopolitical considerations on the part of the outgoing British colonial administration.¹¹ Together with the UMNO-led Alliance, the British colonial government took care to achieve a delicate balancing of ethnic proportions and the maintenance of Malay dominance amongst the electorate. The Federation was initially to consist of Malaya, Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak, and Brunei. The inclusion of Sabah, Sarawak, and Brunei, with their indigenous populations, was seen as strategic in maintaining a Malay majority to counterbalance Singapore's Chinese majority.

There are three points of note in these citizenship negotiations and constitutional amendments. Firstly, it was difficult to arrive at a citizenship proposal that was appropriate and acceptable to the multi-ethnic Malay(s) an society at particular historical junctures. Secondly, however, Malay interests have been prioritised over other interests because their 'legitimate' interests were also supported by the British colonial administration. Thirdly, and following from the first two points, 'loyalty' has been made an important criteria for citizenship conferment because it could be used as a legitimate criteria *and* excuse to regulate and limit access to Malay(s) an citizenship. As I will show in Chap. 5, these points are important to contextualise mobile Malaysians' citizenship practices.

Although the MU proposal did not materialise into constitutional law due to strong opposition from the Malays, it was a significant milestone

in setting the parameters for subsequent citizenship negotiations. These include, firstly, the importance of distinguishing between citizenship and nationality; secondly, the incorporation of ‘Malay’ special rights into the constitution of citizenship; and thirdly, the importance of associating (and proving) loyalty to the nation-state (Table 2.1). These three points pertaining to the meanings and constitution of citizenship in Malay(si)a can be understood in the context of a predominantly top-down formation of the Malay(si)an nation-state during the British decolonisation period. In fact, Malay(si)a was ‘an artificial political entity’, the result of ‘a concatenation of interests and motives of a number of political actors in London and Southeast Asia in the early 1960s’ (Tan, 2008, p. 3).

The nature of the birth of this post-colonial nation-state has implications for its constitution of a racialised citizenship. The prioritisation of ‘Malay’ interests and special rights in this process needs to be understood in relation to the institutionalisation of race-based politics, the Malayan Emergency (1948–1960), and the May 1969 riots.

Race-Based Politics

In the lead up towards Malaysia’s independence, the British colonial administration expressed that this would only be possible if the various ethnic groups proved that they were able to work together in harmony. An Alliance party was formed between the race-based political parties of United Malay National Organisation (UMNO), the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA), and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) with the common goals of achieving independence from the British. This proved to be a winning strategy: the Alliance won 81 percent of the vote and 51 of the contested seats in the 1955 Federal Elections.

It is important to understand the historical circumstances that gave rise to these political parties. UMNO was formed in May 1946 amidst Malay protests against the MU proposal for a common citizenship, and hence advocated a strong pro-Malay stance. MIC was formed in August 1946 to represent the interests of the Indian community, the majority of whom were indentured labour immigrants from India. MCA was formed in February 1949 amidst grievances over the Federation of Malaya citizenship terms for the Chinese who were under threat of repatriation to China during the Malayan Emergency.¹² In a nutshell, UMNO

represented the Malay ‘natives’, while MIC and MCA represented the Indian and Chinese ‘immigrants’, respectively. In reality, however, the Alliance was *inter*-ethnic instead of *multi*-ethnic, as membership was only possible through each race-based party (see Anuar, 1990). This also meant that inherent conflicts existed within the Alliance as each party tried to respond to the demands of the ethnic groups they represented.

Although the UMNO-MCA-MIC coalition was formed as an Alliance, UMNO was the dominant party and pushed for retention of certain aspects of Malay tradition, such as the positions of the Malay Sultans, Islam as the official religion, Malay as the official language, and special positions of the Malays, including Malay land reservation rights. A ‘political bargain’ was eventually reached between member parties of the Alliance. In exchange for UMNO’s agreement for *jus soli* Malayan citizenship, the MCA and MIC agreed to accept, firstly, the existing four-to-one ratio of Malays to non-Malays in the Malayan civil service;¹³ secondly, the adoption of Malay as the national language;¹⁴ and thirdly, a ‘Malayan’ educational policy. In addition, UMNO assured that non-Malays would be able to engage in economic activities without fear of discriminatory taxation (Andaya & Andaya, 1982, p. 269).

This political bargain between the three race-based political parties—later known as the ‘social contract’¹⁵—continues to underwrite domestic politics in Malaysia. In 1974, the Alliance was expanded to include other non-Malay and opposition parties. The resulting coalition, the *Barisan Nasional* (BN) (‘National Front’), exists till today. The coalition model has delivered electoral success to the government throughout Malaysia’s electoral history (Table 2.2). However, UMNO remains the head of the coalition and continues to dominate over the other member parties. As Kassim (1979, p. 3) explains:

The linchpin of this political arrangement is UMNO whose dominance is accepted unquestionably by the other ... component parties. In practice, this means that the UMNO president automatically becomes the head of the *Barisan*. As leader of UMNO and of the multiparty coalition, his role is that of a balancer of community interests or, in short, the final arbiter on the shape and direction of national policies. To lead the coalition, he has to satisfy Malay aspirations without alienating the non-Malay component parties ... at the crunch, there is no doubt as to which side he will lean if he is to retain his position as undisputed leader of UMNO and hence of the multiracial *Barisan*.

Table 2.2 Government and opposition seats and votes in *Dewan Rakyat* ('House of Representatives') (%), 1959–2013

<i>Election year</i>	<i>Government*</i>		<i>Opposition</i>	
	<i>Seats (%)</i>	<i>Votes (%)</i>	<i>Seats (%)</i>	<i>Votes (%)</i>
1959**a	71.15	51.7	28.85	48.3
1964**a	85.58	58.5	14.42	41.5
1969a	66.00	49.3	34.00	50.7
1974a	87.66	60.7	12.34	39.3
1978a	84.42	57.2	15.58	42.8
1982a	85.71	60.5	14.29	39.5
1986a	83.62	55.8	16.38	41.5
1990a	70.55	53.4	29.45	46.6
1995a	84.38	65.2	15.62	34.8
1999a	76.68	56.5	23.32	43.5
2004b	89.63	63.84	10.36	36.16
2008b	63.06	51.39	36.93	48.61
2013c	59.90	48.22	40.09	51.77

Source: *Funston (2000, p. 49); ^bChin and Wong (2009); ^cPoliTweet (2013)

* *Government means the Alliance for 1959 and 1964; the Alliance and coalition partner the Sarawak United People's Party for 1969; and the Barisan Nasional from 1974*

** 1959 figures are for Malaya. 1964 figures are for Peninsula Malaysia as parliamentary elections were not held in Sabah and Sarawak

As I will show later in this chapter, the dominance of Malay interests in Malaysian domestic politics has important implications for national policies such as affirmative action and national education. The continued reign of the UMNO-led coalition government also has implications for how mobile Malaysians understand their citizenship as a relationship between the citizen and the state, which I will detail in Chap. 5.

The Malayan Emergency (1948–1960) and the Aftermaths

The Malayan Emergency, which lasted from 16 June 1948 to 12 July 1960, was a crucial milestone as it led to the materialisation of race, the racialisation of citizenship, as well as the securitisation of race in post-colonial Malay(s)i.a. Indeed, Harper (2001, p. 8) notes that 'the Emergency was the making of modern Malaya' as '[t]he state became a presence in the lives of many Asians for the first time'. During the Emergency, the British armed forces fought a guerrilla war with the Malayan National Liberation Army

(MNLA), the military arm of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP).¹⁶ In parallel to this was a ‘squatter’ problem that developed following the depression of the 1930s. Forced to seek alternative livelihoods, many non-repatriating Chinese contract immigrant labourers moved to the jungle fringes and became illegal land occupiers (Colonial Office, 1952c). Under the Briggs Plan, the British implemented large-scale ‘squatter’ resettlement in Malaya. A total of 573,000 persons, of which the majority were rural Chinese ‘squatters’, were relocated to more than 600 gated and guarded New Villages during the Emergency (Sandhu, 1973).

However, ‘squatter’ resettlement was only a guise for British counter-insurgency. Kua (2011, p. 81) describes these New Villages as ‘no more than concentration camps with high barb-wired fences, heavily-armed police guards, curfews, and other prohibitive regulations’. Following the enactment of the Emergency Regulations 17FA in August 1950, any area could be declared a ‘controlled area’ where ‘in effect, any person who when called upon fails to stop to search may be shot’ (Gurney, British High Commissioner, quoted in French, 2011, p. 85). Furthermore, surprise operations were conducted where all persons in the areas were arrested and detained. They were only released and resettled where there were ‘insufficient grounds to justify individual operations under Emergency Regulations 17(1)’ (Colonial Office, 1952b, p. 5).

The Malayan Emergency resulted in three outcomes pertaining to the materialisation of race in Malaya. First, because 95 percent of the communists were Chinese (Carnell, 1952, p. 511), the Chinese became equated with, and thus criminalised as ‘terrorists’. Furthermore, while the British administration internally acknowledged Malay and Indian involvement in the MNLA, this was not publicly acknowledged for communalist considerations (Kua, 2011). Instead, communalist politics were deliberately used as a strategy to counter ‘communist terrorists’. This also strained Malay-Chinese communal relations, which impacted on the Federation of Malaya citizenship negotiations as detailed earlier.

Second, because of the need to organise the logistics of resettlement—especially with regard to liaison with the Chinese ‘squatters’—the MCA became the default political party representing the interests of the Chinese community in Malaya. As explained in the preceding sub-section, this contributed to race-based political representation and coalition in Malaysian politics.

Third, because the British solution to counter-insurgency was large-scale relocation and consolidation of rural settlements, this resulted in

further race-based geographical segregation. In effect, this deepened the existing Malay-Chinese divide by creating New Villages as isolated *Chinese* settlements.¹⁷ Furthermore, because communication and commercial exchange was cut off, this resulted in the creation of three race-based agrarian economies (Tilman, 1964, p. 34). The Malayan Emergency thus reinforced racial segregation in Malaya socially, economically, and geographically.

Besides this, the Malayan Emergency also contributed to the racialisation of citizenship, and in making citizenship an exclusive right. In 1948, registration of residents was introduced as an emergency measure (see T.-P. Tan, 2009). Following the Federation of Malaya Agreement of 1948 (see Table 2.1), citizenship acquisition became more restrictive. This resulted in differentiated eligibility and access to citizenship. By 1950, it was estimated that about 150,000 Chinese and 5000 Indians (including Pakistanis and Ceylonese) became citizens by application (Chai, 1977, p. 8). The total number of citizens was 3,275,000 (62.6 percent) out of an estimated population of 5,226,549 (Ratnam, 1965, p. 92). The breakdown of citizenship status by ethnic groups, however, shows that there is great disparity across ethnic groups in terms of those who held citizenship status. This was particularly so for the Chinese: while the Chinese made up 38.5 percent of the total population, they only contributed to 15.3 percent of Malayan citizens (Chai, 1977).

The Parliament subsequently passed the National Registration Act of 1959 to formalise the registration of citizens through the issuance of identity cards (I/C). The I/C contains a photograph and thumbprints on the front and personal information at the back, including one's race (Fig. 2.1). Although the idea of registering citizens and residents seemed logical and simple, in reality this was difficult to implement. Firstly, the registration process required applicants to provide evidence of their birth, marriage, and/or citizenship status. In some cases, this was almost impossible for applicants who had no such official records. As the *Malayan Mirror* reported in February 1955, 'records 40 or 50 years old [were] not readily available quite apart from the fact that 40 or 50 years ago, few bothered to register a birth' (quoted in Yeoh, 1989, p. 50). Secondly, applicants were required to be interviewed during their application appointments. However, there were problems of illiteracy, language barriers, and lack of communication in remote areas. This meant that some eligible applicants may not have been aware of the need to register. All in all, this contributed to the fact that citizenship in Malaya was difficult to come by: citizenship had to

FRONT VIEW

Oval spaces are for left and right thumb prints and the rectangle is for the photograph.



1. NAMA DAN LAIN ² NAMA. (JIKA ADA)	6. NOMBOR KAD PENGENALAN DAHULU
2. BANGSA	7. LAIN ² ATAU PEREMPUAN
3. TEMPAT BERANAK	8. TARIKH BERANAK
4. ALAMAT	9. TANDA ² DI-TUBUH BADAN
5. TARIKH KELUAR KAD	10. TANDA TANGAN PESAWAI PENDAFTAR DAN CHAP-INYA

A 164244

REAR VIEW

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1 Name and alias (if any) | 6 Former I/C number |
| 2 Race | 7 Sex |
| 3 Place of birth | 8 Date of birth |
| 4 Address | 9 Physical Abnormalities |
| 5 Date of Issue | 10 Signature _____
Registration Officer |
- (Place) _____

Fig. 2.1 Federation of Malaya identity card.

Source: Adkins (1961)

be proven with official evidence and was not an automatically recognised birthright—even if one was truly native born.

Finally, the Malayan Emergency also contributed towards the securitisation of race, particularly in the form of the International Security Act (ISA). The ISA, a preventive detention law, was originally enacted under Article 149 of the Federation Constitution to curb MCP activities after the end of the Emergency. Thus, it specified acts threatening national security such as communism and militancy. As the then deputy prime minister, Tun Abdul Razak, explained in the Parliament (Federation of Malaya, 1961, p. 1185):

... because the Emergency is to be declared at the end, the Government does not intend to relax its vigilance against the evil enemy who still remains ... a threat on our border and who is now attempting by subversion to succeed where he has failed by force or by arms ... this Bill ... has two aims: firstly to counter subversion throughout the country and, secondly, to enable the necessary measures to be taken on the border area to counter terrorism.

He went on to explain that the purpose of the ISA was to safeguard national security and not to ‘hinder healthy democratic opposition’ (Federation of Malaya, 1961, p. 1188). Thus, a person would be detained ‘for what is considered he may reasonably be expected to do’ that ‘represents a risk to the security of the country’ (ibid.). While the nebulous definition of ‘risk to national security’ and the ‘reasonably expected intention’ of a suspect are understandable given the context of the Emergency, the continued usage of these broadly defined terms during the post-Emergency period meant that the ISA became a tool for the securitisation of race by the post-colonial Malaysian state.

The ISA came into effect on 1 August 1960, immediately upon the abolishment of the 1948 Emergency Ordinance on 31 July 1960.¹⁸ The ISA empowers the police to arrest anyone who ‘has acted or is about to act or is likely to act in a manner prejudicial to the security of Malaysia or any part thereof or to the maintenance of essential services therein or to the economic life thereof’ (Malaysia, 1972, p. 61). Suspects may be detained for up to 60 days initially. The period of detention is extendable to two years without trial, after which detention may be extended indefinitely at two-year increments on grounds that may differ from that cited in the original order. Persons detained under the ISA have no recourse to ordinary judicial remedies. While they can make representations to an Advisory

Board which reports to the Cabinet, the review process is highly contentious. For example, the Board is often ‘denied access to detailed evidence by the Special Branch [i.e. intelligence agency attached to the Royal Malaysian Police] on the grounds of “national security” ’ (Amnesty International, 1979, p. 3).

Since the enactment of the ISA, over 10,000 arrests were made (Koh, 2004). The most notable mass arrest occurred on 27 October 1987, known as *Operasi Lalang* (‘Weeding Operation’), which involved the arrests of 106 persons and the revocation of publishing licenses of two dailies and two weeklies. This political crackdown is ‘widely regarded ... as the most egregious and self-serving use’ of the ISA (Lee, 2008, p. 605). Fritz and Flaherty (2003, p. 1346) note that the ISA has been used ‘to delegitimise generations of political opposition and silence those considered “deviant” or “subversive” by the government’. Lee (2002, p. 71) observes that the ISA is an ‘all-encompassing piece of legislation’ that is wide in scope, yet narrow in recourse from its imposition.

The ISA echoed the British colonial government’s handling of ‘communist insurgency’ during the Malayan Emergency. Hence, I argue that the ISA embodies the British colonial government’s authoritative crackdown on anti-government struggles, executed in the name of curbing racial tensions in order to protect national security. In other words, the securitisation of race—in the form of the ISA which came about as a consequence of the Malayan Emergency—is a British colonial legacy inherited and subsequently expanded by the post-colonial Malaysian government. The ISA has evolved from a preventive detention legislation appropriate for an emergency period to a powerful political tool that has been arguably abused during non-emergency situations.

May 1969 Riots and the New Economic Policy (NEP)

The May 1969 riot was another milestone that contributed towards the constitution of Malaysia’s *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship and *bumiputera* affirmative action policies.

One of the reasons for the exit of Singapore from the Federation of Malaya in 1965 has been attributed to Singaporean politicians’ questioning of Malay-Chinese racial issues (see Fletcher, 1969). Furthermore, two Malay-Chinese riots occurred in Singapore in July and September 1964.¹⁹ The exit of Singapore, however, did not remove the growing racial tensions completely. This became evident in the 1969 Federal Elections, where each ethnic group

saw it as a means of preserving ethnic self-interests especially on vernacular education and language policies. The Alliance Party lost a large number of seats to the opposition parties. On 13 May 1969, a day after the elections, violent riots broke out in Kuala Lumpur as celebrating opposition party supporters clashed with UMNO supporters.

While the cause of the May 1969 incident has been officially attributed to racial tensions (NOC, 1969), some scholars have highlighted that it was politically motivated. Alatas (1971, p. 801) suggests that ethnic tensions and sentiments ‘had been whipped up by unscrupulous politicians’. Drawing from declassified public records, Kua (2008, pp. 34–35) shows that it was ‘a *coup d’état* by the then emergent Malay state-capitalist class’ to depose of the ‘outdated Malay aristocracy’. Nevertheless, the official account remains and has been repeatedly invoked from time to time as reminders of the importance of keeping ‘racial harmony’. During the lead up towards the 13th General Election, for example, ‘the tragedy of May 13’ caused by ‘racial tension’ was raised during the UMNO General Assembly in November 2012 (Chia, 2012). In December 2012, a Malay right-wing group leader said that the Chinese community will ‘threaten national security’ with their increasing political and economic power, and warned that ‘the May 13 incident will return’ (Chooi, 2012).

The incident has also been emphasised in the education curriculum. A volume on Malaysian studies targeted at college and university students describes the event as ‘a black mark in the history of racial relations in Malaysia’ and ‘the worst racial conflict in the country’ (Hj. Mohd Jali, Redzuan, Abu Samah, & Hj. Mohd Rashid, 2003, p. 168). The volume further furnished a sketch of the history of racial relations in Malaysia, marking the ‘May 13th Tragedy’ as one of the three lowest points in Malaysian history since 1500.²⁰ This points to the fact that fear of ‘racial riots’—exemplified by the May 1969 incident—is deeply embedded in the public and private realms of Malaysian society. This is a point I will return to in Chap. 5.

Immediately following the May 1969 incident, a national emergency was declared and the Parliament suspended until it reconvened in February 1971. During this period, the National Operations Council (NOC) became the supreme decision-making body. The NOC immediately sought to return the constitutional contract to protect Malay political dominance and to appease rising Malay nationalism. The NOC institutionalised provisions in the Constitution (Amendment) Act 1971, giving the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* (‘Head of State’) the responsibility

to ‘safeguard the special position of the Malays and natives of any States of Sabah and Sarawak’, as well as the Conference of Rulers the veto power for any constitutional amendments to articles on citizenship and Malay special rights.

The NOC also amended the Sedition Act (1948), prohibiting the questioning of ‘any matter, right, status, position, privilege, sovereignty or prerogative established or protected by’ specific provisions of the Federal Constitution (The Commissioner of Law, 2006, p. 6). This includes any questioning of Malay identity and special rights. The fear of political sensitivity also led to the omission of an important verbal agreement between the Alliance parties from the Alliance memorandum: the review of Article 153 on Malay privileges, originally drafted as a temporary measure of 15–20 years unless the Parliament provided otherwise, 15 years after independence (see Thio, 2010, p. 63). In sum, the Sedition Act and the ISA have set the legal-political foundations that have enabled the post-colonial Malaysian government to exercise authoritarian governance, whenever it deems fit.²¹

To resolve ‘racial tensions’, which was deemed a consequent of socio-economic disparity between ethnic groups—specifically between the Malays and the Chinese—the NOC formulated the New Economic Policy (NEP). The NEP is an affirmative action policy with a two-pronged strategy: firstly, ‘to eradicate poverty ... irrespective of race’ and, secondly, to ‘eliminate the identification of race with economic function’ by restructuring the Malaysian society (Malaysia, 1971, p. 1).²² Specifically, the NEP sought to increase *bumiputera* share of corporate equity from 1.9 percent in 1970 to 30 percent in 1990. State corporations and investment arms were set up to acquire assets and investments for *bumiputeras*. Malays were prioritised in ‘job allocation, scholarships abroad, university seats’ and ‘larger ownership stakes in Malaysian companies’ (Freedman, 2001, p. 418). As I will explain in the next section, this has implications for differential access to education and social mobility between *bumiputera* and non-*bumiputera* Malaysians.

More importantly, the significance of the NEP goes above and beyond its officially articulated affirmative action objective. Despite achieving certain success in poverty reduction and ethnoeconomic equity redistribution (Jomo, 2004), the NEP is, in fact, a tool for political legitimisation. In fact, the NEP had effectively UMNO into a *de facto* ‘corporate capitalist organisation’ (Khuo, 1999, p. 135). At the organisational level, the

NEP became an ‘opportunity structure for UMNO to build its power bases through the dispensation of political patronage’ (Mohamad, 2012, p. 173) and the strategic interplay of money politics (see Teh, 2002). At the individual level, the NEP has been capitalised for political gains in the name of the protection of Malays’ special rights.

Thus, the NEP served two important roles in relation to the institutionalisation and perpetuation of the British colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship in post-colonial Malaysia. Firstly, it assisted in deepening social stratification along racial lines within the post-colonial Malaysian society. Secondly, it assisted in strengthening race-based political representation in Malaysian domestic politics. More importantly, it accorded political legitimisation to UMNO. Through this process, UMNO came to be perceived as *the* government of Malaysia. As we will see in the following chapters, the conflation of UMNO with the Malaysian government has implications for mobile Malaysians’ citizenship and migration practices.

STRUCTURING EDUCATION

British colonial intervention in the education system has also left significant legacies for post-colonial Malaysia. First, the British colonial government established and institutionalised a race-stratified education system that has largely remained in form and function till today. The focus on racial stratification in the education system as a resultant development of British colonial rule here is important and echoes many other observations on colonial legacies in the realm of education elsewhere (Joseph & Matthews, 2014; Law & Lee, 2012; Megahed & Lack, 2011; Sai, 2013). Second, the British colonial government introduced an elite Anglo-Malay education route that directly channels graduates into civil service careers. Third, the British colonial government introduced the practice of offering government scholarships for overseas education, which is also linked to postgraduate careers in the civil service. Taken altogether, these three legacies have also produced the effect of nurturing aspirations and desires for overseas/Western education.

These colonial legacies have in turn been inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state. While the specifics of policies and their implementations may differ, the structures and systems have remained largely the same. These practices have the effect of (re)producing race and

Malay ‘indigeneity’ during the post-colonial period. More importantly, they exert significant effects on mobile Malaysians’ culture of migration.

Race-Stratified Education System and the Prioritisation of Anglo-Malay Education

Malaysia’s education system can be described as one that is stratified by race and language. Indeed, several scholars have highlighted that the roots of Malaysia’s education system consisting of four race-based parallel school streams can be traced to the British colonial period (Agadjanian & Liew, 2005; Loh, 1975; Watson, 1993). Prior to the British colonial period, education in Malaya mainly took the form of informal passing down of traditional life skills from parents or through apprenticeships. The British colonial government introduced secular Malay schools in the Straits Settlements (SS) in the 1860s, followed by the Federated Malay States (FMS) in the 1970s. English-medium schools were sparingly introduced into the Malay states during the 1880s. Increasing commercial activities in Malaya resulted in a demand for English education for employment in business and government.

Before the World War I, Anglo-Malay schools and vernacular schools (i.e. Chinese and Tamil) coexisted but received different treatments from the British colonial administration. While Anglo-Malay education received government funding and support, the development of vernacular schools was very much left to the respective communities. The British colonial administration’s *laissez-faire* attitude towards vernacular schools changed in the 1920s, when Chinese vernacular schools were placed under government surveillance to curb the rise of communism following the 1911 Kuomintang Revolution in China (see Lee, 2011). During the Malayan Emergency, government-aided Chinese primary schools were established in New Villages as the government was concerned about ‘maintain[ing] some degree of subsequent control until social cohesion had been attained’ (Colonial Office, 1952a). As we shall see later, the government’s suspicious stance towards Chinese vernacular education schools is a colonial legacy that has continued to prevail today.

In pre-war Malaya, there were four separate education systems: first, English schools preparing ‘commoner’ students for jobs as English-educated clerks and ‘elite’ students for further education in England; second, Malay schools providing basic education; third, Chinese vernacular schools; and fourth, Indian vernacular schools. The prioritisation of Anglo-Malay

education is clearly seen in the education system in the Federated Malay States in the 1930s. For instance, while it was possible for students in Malay primary schools to transition into English primary schools through a two-year Special Malay Course, this was not an opportunity open to students from Indian and Chinese primary schools. Furthermore, students from Malay and English primary schools were able to go on to various specialised courses beyond secondary school (e.g. teacher-training and medical school). However, this was not possible for students from Indian and Chinese primary schools.

By the early 1900s, English education became ‘a new criterion of, and passport to, social distinction’ (Johan, 1984, pp. 4–5). The Malay Residential School at Kuala Kangsar (MCKK), known as ‘Eton of the East’, was established in 1905 for the Malay aristocracy class. Modelled after the English public school, emphasis was placed on the building of character, the understanding of important ideals of the English middle-class, as well as ways and habits of the Englishmen to prepare students for future careers with their British counterparts. In 1910, the British introduced the Higher Subordinate Class Scheme, later known as the Malay Administrative Service (MAS) in the FMS. The MAS was a scheme for junior subordinates to the more prestigious Malayan Civil Service (MCS). Recruitment into the MAS came almost exclusively from the MCKK graduates. Over time, this created a new Malay elite class—an English-educated Malay aristocracy with positions in the prestigious civil service.²³

In fact, the Malay civil service elite class went on to play significant roles in Malaysia’s pre- and post-independence negotiations and policy-making. Puthuchery (1978) notes that: firstly, all six Malays representing the Malay rulers and UMNO in the Anglo-Malay Working Committee were civil servants; secondly, 51 out of the 103 Malay candidates who contested in the 1955 Federal Elections were ex-civil servants, with 80 per cent of UMNO candidates being ex-civil servants; and thirdly, Malaya’s first and second prime ministers retired from public service to enter politics. Indeed, through active interventions in the education system and civil service, the British colonial government had actively assisted in the creation and nurturing of the Malay political elite, with long-lasting effects on post-colonial Malay(s)i.a.

After independence from the British colonial government in August 1957, the post-colonial Malaysian government made several attempts to consolidate the stratified school system. The Report of the Education Committee, 1956 (‘Razak Report’) and the Report of the Education Review

Committee, 1960 ('Rahman Talib Report') established the principles for a unified national education system. In particular, the Razak Report emphasised four points: first, formation of a single national education system; second, Malay as the key medium of instruction; third, a Malayan-oriented curriculum; and fourth, a common system of examination. The Rahman Talib Report reiterated a similar emphasis on a Malayan-oriented curriculum. The recommendations of these reports were subsequently translated into the Education Act of 1961. Following this, Malay-medium primary schools were renamed *Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan* ('national primary schools'), while English, Chinese, and Tamil primary schools were renamed *Sekolah Rendah Jenis Kebangsaan* ('national-type schools'). The medium of instruction was Malay in national schools and English, Chinese, or Tamil in the respective national-type schools. In 1967, the National Language Act stipulated Malay as the only national and official language of Malaysia. Thus, Malay was made a compulsory subject in schools.

In 1968, English national-type schools were converted to national schools in phases. These efforts resulted in the consolidation of the education streams, especially towards integrating the separate vernacular primary school graduates into a unified secondary school system. In 1983, a common national curriculum known as the *Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah* (KBSR) ('Integrated Primary School Curriculum') was introduced across all national and national-type schools. Muslim students were taught Islamic Religious Knowledge, while non-Muslim students were taught Moral Education. The common curriculum was extended to secondary schools in 1988 with the introduction of *Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah* (KBSM) ('Integrated Secondary School Curriculum'). Students take the *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) ('Malaysian Certificate of Education'), equivalent to the 'O' Levels, after completing secondary education. This is followed by the *Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia* (STPM) ('Malaysian Higher Certification of Schooling'), equivalent to the 'A' Levels, after completing pre-university in the Malaysian public school system. Both the SPM and STPM are examined in the Malay language, except for English, Mandarin, and Tamil language papers.

Despite these consolidation and standardisation efforts, the current education system continues to be one that is ethnic stratified. A recent report notes that national and national-type primary schools have become increasingly racially homogenous: the student enrolment numbers in 2011 were 94 percent *bumiputeras* in national schools, 88 percent Chinese in national-type Chinese schools, and 100 percent Indians in national-type

Tamil schools (Malaysia, 2012, Exhibit 3-29). Furthermore, the post-colonial Malaysian government appears to have continued to adopt the same stance as the colonial government in prioritising Anglo-Malay schools over vernacular schools. From 1970 to 2013, the number of national schools increased by 1588, while the numbers of Chinese and Indian national-type schools decreased by 53 and 134 respectively (Table 2.3).

Education for National Unity

Although the education system remains ethnic stratified, the post-colonial Malaysian government has been implementing strategies to promote a strong sense of national unity amongst the citizenry. On the one hand, we have seen earlier that legislation and warnings were used as governing strategies to curb political dissent, which were viewed as causes for racial tensions. The NOC's constitutional amendments reinforced and protected the Malays' privileged status over non-Malay citizens. It also removed the possibility of public discussion of matters pertaining to racial politics, the *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship and Malay special rights. On the other hand, educational strategies were adopted to cultivate a *de*-racialised Malaysian national consciousness with shared values for the multi-ethnic population.

Following the May 1969 incident, the Department of National Unity was created and tasked to formulate a national ideology. On 31 August 1970, the *Rukunegara* ('Articles of Faith of the State') was proclaimed. It states that (Malaysia. Department of Information, 1971):

Table 2.3 Number of primary schools and student enrolment in post-colonial Malaysia (by education streams), 1970–2013

Year	National		National-type (Chinese)		National-type (Indian)	
	Schools	Enrolment	Schools	Enrolment	Schools	Enrolment
1970	4277	1,046,513	1346	439,681	657	79,278
1980	4519	1,353,319	1312	581,696	583	73,958
1990	4994	1,770,004	1290	581,082	544	96,120
2000	5379	2,216,641	1284	622,820	526	90,280
2010	5826	2,180,564	1291	604,604	523	104,962
2013	5865	2,069,109	1293	564,510	523	92,934
1970–1990	+717	+723,491	–56	+141,401	–113	+16,842
1990–2010	+832	+410,560	+1	+23,522	–21	+8842
1970–2013	+1588	+1,022,596	–53	+124,829	–134	+13,656

Source: UCSCAM (2014)

Our nation, Malaysia, being dedicated to achieving a greater unity of all her peoples; to maintaining a democratic way of life; to creating a just society in which the wealth of the nation shall be equally shared; to ensuring a liberal approach to her rich and diverse cultural traditions; to building a progressive society which shall be oriented to modern science and technology;

We, her people, pledge our united efforts to attain those ends guided by these principles:

- Belief in God
- Loyalty to King and Country
- Upholding the Constitution
- Rule of Law
- Good Behaviour and Morality

Although the *Rukunegara* was not constituted, it became ‘an implicit rule to be practised and upheld by all Malaysians loyal to the country’ (Bakar, 2007, p. 153). Indeed, during field trip to KL in March 2013, I saw a big lit-up sign of ‘Loyalty to King and Country’ in Malay displayed prominently across the expressway. This shows the continual and implicit reminding of the importance of national loyalty.

The *Rukunegara* was also integrated into the national education curriculum. The Textbook Bureau, established in 1967, ensured that textbooks are written to ‘fulfil the needs and aspirations of the *Rukunegara*’ (Anuar, 1990, p. 100). As Chai (1971, p. 37) notes, the underlying rationale for Malaysia’s national education policy is that a common syllabus and medium of instruction would firstly promote a nationally homogenous outlook; secondly, lead to a common culture; and thirdly, provide the basis for social cohesion and national unity. Indeed, this is evident in key policy areas implemented through the various education acts mentioned earlier. This has also been subsequently articulated in Malaysia’s National Education Philosophy (MOE, 2012b), proclaimed in 1988:

Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the family, the society and the nation at large.

While the national curriculum may express a focus on developing responsible individuals, this was done to meet the ultimate aim of national unity and encouraging contributions towards nation building. Indeed, the importance of patriotism and loyalty to the country are continually emphasised, as can be seen in the 1994 professional circular to all State Education Directors (MOE, 1994, my translation):

The spirit of Patriotism is the essence of a country's integrity and the well-being of its people. Inculcating the spirit of Patriotism is part of an integrated and comprehensive education. As the people/citizens of Malaysia, each school administrator, teacher and student must adopt a serious attitude towards the issue of loyalty and undivided love for the country.

Furthermore, under the National Education Policy (first published in 1999), there is an explicit strategic goal to 'instil national unity through education' (MOE, 2012a, p. 63, my translation). This has been expressed in relation to four sub-aims: firstly, to produce students who are 'united, tolerant, empathetic, possess positive traits, patriotic and proud of the country in accordance to the *Rukun Negara*'; secondly, to 'ensure that national schools are parents' priority choice' for their children; thirdly, to 'build a Malaysian nation by reinforcing national unity, instilling a sense of national identity, and to produce human resources in accordance to the nation's needs; and finally, to 'ensure the use of the national language as a medium of education which acts as the core strength of culture and national identity, and the ideal medium for the flourishing of national knowledge and civilisation' (ibid.). Here again, there are explicit links drawn between education, national unity, patriotism, national language, and national culture. As we shall see in Chap. 5, the emphasis on national unity, loyalty, and patriotism to the country has implications on mobile Malaysians' understandings of their citizenship generally and their Malaysian citizenship in particular.

Aspirations for Western/Overseas Education

It may seem natural to explain contemporary Malaysian students' desire for Western/overseas education as the outcome of the internationalisation of higher education. However, the aspiration for Western/overseas education has a longer, colonial history. This has to do with the ethnic- and language-stratified education system described in the preceding section,

as well as an established practice of linking government scholarships for Western/overseas education to secure and prestigious public sector jobs. This can also be seen as a continuation of the colonial government's practice of linking Anglo-English education for Malay elites to the civil service. Significantly, these practices are legacies of the British colonial government that has remained largely unchanged—and in fact, further exacerbated—during the post-colonial period.

As early as in the 1890s, scholarship schemes were introduced by the British colonial government for students to study in government English schools. These scholarships were only offered to selected Malay students who had completed four years of primary Malay education in vernacular schools to enter the two-year Special Classes before they transition into the English education stream. By 1947, a clear Malay-Chinese distinction had emerged: government scholarships were offered to Malay students, while non-Malay students relied on a smaller number of non-government scholarships (Table 2.4).

Government scholarships were also awarded to encourage overseas higher education. In 1886, the prestigious Queen's Scholarship was initiated and supported selected students to pursue university degrees in Britain. Each year, two Queen's Scholarships and one Queen's Fellowship was awarded. In keeping with British pro-Malay policy, one of the Queen's Scholarships was reserved for Malays annually, while the Queen's Fellowship was reserved for Malays every alternate year. The prestigious and competitive nature of the scholarships is evident in the selection

Table 2.4 Government free places and scholarships in Malayan Union, 1947

	<i>Government free places</i>		<i>Government scholarships</i>		<i>Non-government scholarships</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Malay	3581	35.5	609	98.5	31	8.4
Chinese	4000	39.6	6	1.0	198	54.0
Indian	1911	18.9	2	0.3	88	24.0
Eurasian	420	4.2	1	0.2	47	12.8
Others	182	1.8	0	0.0	3	0.8
Total	10,094		618		367	

Source: Cheeseman (1948)

Note: Free places and scholarships constitute 28.6 % of the total enrolment of 38,731

procedures. First, candidates were selected based on academic results in the Senior Cambridge examination, as well as recommendations from their schoolmasters. Second, candidates must be qualified to study for an Honours degree at the University of Oxford or Cambridge.²⁴ Because selection was based on academic performance in the English education stream, this meant that students without access to English education were more likely to be excluded from the scholarships.

By the 1940s, other overseas scholarships were made available. These include the Johore Sultan Ibrahim Scholarships (only open to subjects of the Sultan of Johore), the Kedah Government Scholarships, the £1,000,000 Colonial Development and Welfare Scholarships, the Nuffield Foundation Scholarships, the Colonial Social Welfare Scholarships, the Malayan Union Government (Overseas) Scholarships, and the British Council Scholarships (Cheeseman, 1948; Malayan Union, 1947). It is noteworthy that scholars from Malaya took up 10.4 percent of funds for the Colonial Development and Welfare Scholarships offered to all British colonies in 1946–1948, second only to Nigeria (14.6 percent) and significantly more than Sierra Leone in the third place (6 percent) (see Jones, 1949). Although overseas students from Malaya were limited in numbers then, the UK had emerged as a popular destination for government scholars and privately funded students (Table 2.5).

The numbers of Malayan students furthering their studies overseas may seem small compared to today's standards. However, what is important

Table 2.5 Study destinations of students from Malaya, 1947

	<i>Scholars</i>		<i>Private</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	
UK	39	62.9	52	29.1	91
India & Ceylon	9	14.5	23	12.8	32
China	2	3.2	20	11.2	22
Hong Kong	4	6.5	53	29.6	57
Australia	4	6.5	14	7.8	18
USA	3	4.8	16	8.9	19
Canada	0	0.0	1	0.6	1
Trinidad	1	1.6	0	0.0	1
Total	62		179		241

Source: Cheeseman (1948)

here is the introduction and subsequent expansion of overseas education, especially during the post-colonial period. The British colonial government planted the seed of race-stratified government sponsorship for overseas education—not necessarily needs-based or merit-based—which was linked to civil service jobs. As the next sub-section shows, the post-colonial Malaysian government exacerbated this through a series of interventions under the affirmative action objectives of the NEP.

Education Under Affirmative Action

Following the introduction of the NEP, the post-colonial government implemented a series of educational interventions. First, *bumiputera* quotas for public university places were introduced. This was initially set at 75:25 *bumiputera* to non-*bumiputera* students and was theoretically adjusted to 55:45 by the early 1980s, although the actual proportions by 1985 were 80:20 (Tzannatos, 1991, pp. 183–184). As a result, non-*bumiputera* students had to resort to alternative higher education strategies, including accessing private tertiary education and/or overseas education. In 1985, for example, the majority of Malaysian public university students were *bumiputeras* (63.0 percent), while the majority of Malaysian students in overseas institutions were Chinese (59.1 percent) (Malaysia, 1986).

Second, to assist *bumiputera* students' educational and social mobility, the post-colonial Malaysian government established *bumiputera*-only residential schools and technical institutes. *Majlis Amanah Rakyat* (MARA), the Council of Trust for Indigenous People, was established on 1 March 1966 with the objective to aid, train, and guide *bumiputeras* in areas of entrepreneurship, education, and investment. From 1972 onwards, MARA established a series of residential colleges known as *Maktab Rendah Sains MARA* (MRSM) ('MARA Junior Science Colleges'). Previously, only *bumiputera* students were admitted. Following the 2004 election pledge, a quota of 10 percent non-*bumiputera* placements have been made available.

To provide skills training for *bumiputera* students, the *Institut Teknologi MARA* (ITM) ('MARA Institute of Technology') was set up in 1967. The ITM was conferred university status in 1999 and became *Universiti Teknologi MARA* (UiTM) ('MARA Technological University'). The ITM enrolled 6900 students in 1975, which rose to nearly 45,000 by 1996 (Lee, 2005, p. 217). Technical and vocational skills training were provided

through *Institut Kemahiran MARA* (IKM) ('MARA Skills Institute') and *Kolej Kemahiran Tinggi MARA* (KKTm) ('MARA Higher Skills College'). MARA also offers full scholarships and education loans for university preparatory programmes, and university and postgraduate degrees in local and overseas institutes. These facilities, however, were only open to *bumiputeras*.

The prioritisation of *bumiputera* students' educational mobility can also be seen in the education system, which can be said to be a replica of that institutionalised during the British colonial period (Fig. 2.2). The sorting and prioritisation of *bumiputera* students began as early as the primary school stage. For example, based on their results in the primary school leaving examination, students from national-type primary schools (the majority of whom are non-*bumiputeras*) may have to take an additional preparatory year of 'Remove Class' before they enter Secondary One. Also, after taking the SPM, *bumiputera* students have the option of going to matriculation colleges, MARA colleges, or Malaysian public universities. The colleges offer the Malaysian Matriculation Programme, which is a one- or two-year pre-university preparatory programme offered by the Ministry of Education since 1999. This means that *bumiputera* students would typically graduate one to three years ahead of non-*bumiputera* students who went to national-type primary schools. Furthermore, although the STPM and the Malaysian Matriculation Programme are both pre-university routes, there are distinct differences in 'their resources, length of programmes, degrees of difficulty, and the allocation of arbitrary quotas at the point of tertiary entrance' (Joseph, 2006, p. 60). In sum, the education system has been structured in a way that privileges and prioritises *bumiputera* students, while disadvantaging non-*bumiputera* students.

Third, government scholarships for overseas higher education, notably the *Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam* (JPA) ('Public Service Department') scholarships linked to postgraduate civil service jobs, were subjected to *bumiputera* quotas. The JPA scholarship can be seen as a continuation of the British colonial practice of government-scholarship-to-civil-service. Students on JPA scholarships are either sent to overseas or local Malaysian universities (from July 2009 onwards) and are required to serve in the civil service for a period of 6–10 years after graduation. Although non-*bumiputera* share of scholarship holders have increased from 20 to 45 percent during 2000–2008 (Malaysia, 2009, p. 4), there are inherent problems with the scholarship scheme. Wan (2011) points out that the scheme suffers from 'fuzzy and overlapping objectives' as it

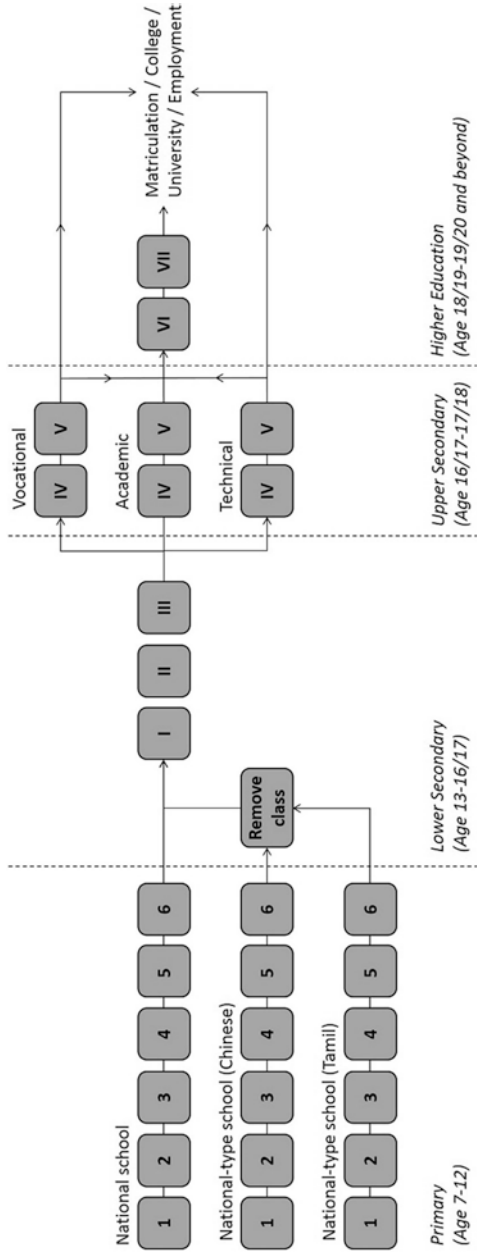


Fig 2.2 Structure of Malaysia's education system. *Source:* Adapted from Jamil (2007, p. 187) and MOE (2013, pp. 2-3)

amalgamates merit-based, career-based (i.e. training towards a specific profession), student-specific (i.e. targeting a particular ethnic group), and needs-based considerations.

Here was a repeat of the British colonial practice: the prioritisation of *bumiputeras* in government scholarships that transition them into civil service jobs. In 1956, Malays constituted 57 percent of government department employees, followed by Indians (27.3 percent) and Chinese (12.3 percent) (Federation of Malaya. Information Services, 1958a, 1958b).²⁵ By 1999, there was a Malay majority in various professions within the public service: Malays constituted 85 percent of the diplomatic service, 83 percent of the legal service, 73.5 percent of the accounting service, 68 percent of the engineering service, and 51 percent of the medical service (Tjijtoherijanto, 2012, p. 7). In an analysis of ethnic representation in the civil service as at June 2005, the Centre for Public Policy Studies (CPPS) (2006, p. 5) found that the respective ethnic groups' representation compared to their population share was: Malays 1.44 times, Chinese 0.36 times, other *bumiputeras* 0.66 times, and Others 0.57 times.²⁶ Writing about the MAS in the FMS during the earlier half of the twentieth century, Yeo (1980, p. 319) noted that British colonial policy had 'inculcated a market bias among Malays for employment in the public service'. It seems that this inculcated market bias has remained largely unchanged till today.

Finally, and in contrast, higher education opportunities for non-*bumiputera* students were comparatively limited or suppressed. Of particular note is the non-recognition of the United Examination Certificate (UEC) qualification for graduates from Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools (MICSS) for entry into Malaysian public universities. MICSS are not government funded and adopt a curriculum developed by the United Chinese School Committees' Association of Malaysia (UCSCAM) and the United Chinese School Teachers' Association (UCSTA). In the late-1960s, the Chinese community proposed to set up Merdeka University to cater for MICSS graduates. The proposal was objected on the grounds that, firstly, since the medium of instruction would be in Mandarin, this was contrary to the national education policy; secondly, it would be set up by a private organisation; and thirdly, it would only be admitting MICSS students. Following the failure of the proposal, the UCSCAM submitted a proposal for the establishment of New Era College in 1994. The proposal was approved three years later, and the College started operations in 1998.

In 1969, the MCA established Tunku Abdul Rahman College (TARC), a government-aided college for non-Malays to pursue certificate and

diploma education. However, its enrolment growth paled in comparison to the government-funded UiTM mentioned earlier. Its enrolment increased from 4036 students in 1975 to 6000 in 1980, to about 9000 in 1996 (Lee, 2005, p. 218). Furthermore, for the first 20 years of its existence, its certificate and diploma courses were not accorded government recognition (Freedman, 2001, p. 434). After the introduction of the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996, which enabled private organisations to provide higher education services, TARC and New Era College attained university status in 2001 and 2013 respectively.

In sum, through the implementation of affirmative action policies, the post-colonial Malaysian state has effectively exacerbated the differential access to higher education and civil service jobs across ethnic groups. While this was also present during the British colonial period, I argue that the post-colonial Malaysian government has taken this to another level by institutionalising race and a race-stratified citizenship into the constitution. Nowhere is this more prominent and visible than in the realms of education and civil service. As we shall see in Chaps. 3–6, this has very real implications on migration and citizenship, as exemplified in mobile Malaysians' culture of migration.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I described the making of Malay(si)a in relation to the development of three British colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship. I focused especially on the colonial to post-colonial transition, while also acknowledging pre-existing societal conditions prior to British intervention in Malaya, as well as developments put in place by the post-colonial Malaysian government. My purpose of portraying race, education, and citizenship as British colonial legacies inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state is not to put the blame entirely on British colonialism and its legacies for contemporary migration phenomena in Malaysia. Rather, my purpose is to highlight the significance of British colonial intervention at a crucial milestone in the making of Malay(si)a, which set the framework for subsequent developments and trajectories pertaining to mobile Malaysians' culture of migration.

Wiener (2013, p. 32) warns that 'the idea of a powerful and constraining colonial legacy is seriously flawed'. With regard to race, Kahn (2005, p. 171) argues that '[t]he racialized and pluralized landscape of contemporary Malaysia and Singapore' cannot be simplistically seen as

a ‘colonial construction’, but must be read as ‘an outcome of political modernization’. Lian (2006, p. 225) also cautions against ‘any simplistic reading of how racialisation occurs and what its consequences are’, as it is ‘a far more complex and contextual process than we can imagine’. Specifically, while he agrees that the roots of racialisation could be traced to British colonial intervention in the late nineteenth century, he warns against the uncritical conflation of racialisation in the colonial period with that in the post-colonial period.

Indeed, the issue here is not about whether the British colonial government or the post-colonial Malaysian government were responsible for how race, education, and citizenship panned out in colonial Malaya and post-colonial Malaysia. Instead, it is about the ways in which race, education, and citizenship have been interpreted, understood, implemented, and structured into Malaysian social life as a result of co-constitutive actions by parties involved in the processes. As Reid (2010b, p. 49) notes, ‘Malaya/Malaysia emerged as a typically British muddle of inconsistencies and compromises’. Furthermore, these ‘British-inspired’ compromises were carried into the post-colonial period as they were ‘deemed necessary to bring different groups into the state (if not altogether the nation)’ (pp. 49–50). Seen sequentially, British colonial interventions in Malaya—many of which must be understood as reactions to particular historical milestones—did in fact put in place various institutions that continue to have long-lasting effects in contemporary Malaysia.

Here, I am not saying that colonialism and its legacies are monolithic, homogenous, and internally undifferentiated. I am also not saying that all blame is to be put on ‘the colonial’ without also accounting for ‘the post-colonial’ or the ‘pre-colonial’.²⁷ What I am saying, though, is a twofold claim: firstly, British colonialism was *a transformative force in the making of Malay(s)i*a (especially as it pertains to race, education, citizenship, and the nation-state),²⁸ and, secondly, British colonial policies, with their underlying ethos and assumptions, have set in place certain structures, beliefs, and practices that have *continued to circumscribe, legitimise, and enable policymaking by the post-colonial Malaysian state*.

With reference to race, education, and citizenship, British colonialism introduced transformative changes to the meanings and constitution of these concepts. For example, race and Malay ‘indigeneity’ came to be understood as real primordial features, and this understanding was subsequently translated into the legal constitution of Malaysia’s *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship and race-based affirmative action policies. The

birth of race-based political parties, the success of their coalition model, and the dominance of UMNO have also set the foundations of Malaysia's domestic politics and the nature of the state in the post-colonial period. Indeed, there is an established Malaysian studies scholarship, especially in political economy, examining the enduring patterns of political mobilisation and authoritative governance by the dominant race-based parties (e.g. Case, 2001; Gomez, 2007; Gomez & Jomo, 1997). British colonial rule also introduced and institutionalised an unfamiliar form of citizenship to an ad-hoc amalgamation of territories—with the MU setting the precedence for subsequent developments of fundamental elements of the nation-state, especially the constitution of citizenship. Thus, British colonialism was transformative in the sense that structural changes were introduced and put in place in the making of a new nation-state with a convenient hotchpotch collection of citizenry.

The British colonial period informed understandings of race, education, and citizenship are subsequently carried into the post-colonial period, both in official discourse and policymaking, as well as in people's everyday lives. During the post-colonial period, the Malaysian government introduced or tweaked a range of policies including the NEP, the Sedition Act, the ISA, various amendments to the constitution, and the National Language Act. These interventions have in effect produced a much more intensified and aggravated outcome than their original predecessors had during the colonial period. Indeed, while Malaysia's affirmative action policies have been typically attributed to the post-colonial Malaysian government, Jomo and Tan (2008, p. 27) note that earlier manifestations of affirmative action have been in place since the early 1950s, and that these were intensified and enhanced after the May 1969 incident and greater Malay political hegemony during the post-colonial period. Thus, the post-colonial Malaysian state has '[made] colonial era racialisation a postcolonial success' (Mandal, 2003, p. 55). Malay indigeneity and the associated special rights have been further institutionalised; citizenship became differentiated constitutionally and socio-culturally along *bumiputera* lines; and education and social mobility pathways became racially stratified. At the same time, democracy became increasingly limited, curtailed, and policed (see Abbott & Franks, 2007).

Perhaps, as Simandjuntak (1969) observed earlier, the key issue is that the British colonial administration implemented federalism in a context where there are racial—instead of territorial—conflicts of interests.²⁹ As a result, the post-colonial Malaysian state has been able to exercise 'mini-

malist federalism' (Case, 2007), thereby perpetuating semi-democratic politics and securing political dominance of the ruling coalition led by UMNO. This has implications for mobile Malaysian's culture of migration, since the issues at heart revolve around state-citizen relationship, *bumiputera*-differentiated rights, differential access to education and social mobility in Malaysia, and citizenship as political rights.

What is important, though, is that the colonial legacies that have been inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state have not been critically challenged and contested to the extent that real social changes have been made possible. Under such a context, Malaysians came to embody the underlying beliefs concerning race, differentiated citizenship, and the significance of education. In the remaining chapters of this book, I examine how the combination of race, education, and citizenship policies in post-colonial Malaysia has had an effect on mobile Malaysians' culture of migration.

NOTES

1. In fact, it is often pointed out that it has been almost 60 years since Malaysia's independence. Clearly, there are developments during the post-colonial period which British colonialism had no part of—at least directly. Furthermore, it is inaccurate to view the post-colonial Malaysian government as a homogenous actor with a clear and unchanging governance policy throughout these 60 years. There are also other actors including opposition parties, radicals, civil society organisations, and individuals who have collectively contributed towards the post-colonial developments of race, education, and citizenship.
2. In fact, one could argue that the post-colonial Malaysian state is a legacy of colonialism. I thank Sumit Mandal for suggesting this provocation.
3. See Kaur (1993, p. 1–22) for a brief but comprehensive history of West and East Malaysia.
4. The Japanese occupation was also a significant period in the colonial to post-colonial transitory making of Malay(si)a. However, it is beyond the scope of this book to analyse this in detail.
5. This must also be contextualised to the British colonial administration's interrogation and assessment of the Malay Sultans' activities and allegiances during the Japanese occupation, which was tied to the Sultans' allowances subsequently given by the British (BMA, 1945). Some of the Sultans' agreements were also given on compromise. The Sultan of

- Johore's request for sea passage to the UK for health reasons, for example, was only approved *after* he signed the treaty (War Office, 1945).
6. Singapore was excluded in consideration of its Chinese majority 'which would make it difficult of assimilation into any Pan-Malayan Union' (Colonial Office, 1943), as well as its strategic position for imperial defence (Stockwell, 1984).
 7. Including Pusat Tenaga Ra'ayat (PUTERA) and All-Malaya Council of Joint Action (AMCJA), which collectively submitted a 'People's Constitutional Proposals' for Malaya in 1947 (see PUTERA & AMCJA, 2005).
 8. See also Motte (1840). Although the document argues for reciprocal justice to the colonies to counterbalance British mercantilist colonialism, it was written in a tone that encapsulates the spirit of the time—that the colonialists were superior and should bring civilisation to the colonies.
 9. Referring to ritual impurity (i.e. eating pork) and not physical cleanliness (Wilson, 1967, p. 25).
 10. In 1946, it was estimated that the number of MU residents who were born in territory were 2,216,650 Malays (75.2 percent), 570,204 Chinese (19.3 percent), and 158,840 Indians (5.4 percent) (Colonial Office, 1946c).
 11. Building upon Stockwell's (1998) work, Mohd Yaakop (2010) explains the considerations: firstly, countering communism in Singapore and the region; secondly, addressing political unrest in Singapore; thirdly, facilitating independence of the Borneo States which was deemed impossible without merger with Malaysia; and finally, improving British international relations with the USA and the United Nations.
 12. In fact, it was Sir Henry Gurney, the British High Commissioner, who initiated the idea of MCA as a counterpart of UMNO (Kua, 2011).
 13. Before 1953, non-Malays were not entitled to enter the Malayan Civil Service (Huang, 1970, p. 32). The four-to-one quota was calculated from actual employment data and was intended to be evaluated after the expected unifying effect following the 1952 Barnes' Report on Education (Unknown Author, 1956, Appendix B).
 14. This perhaps led to the change in the language criteria for citizenship naturalisation: while previously knowledge of English *or* Malay would be sufficient, this was changed to only Malay in the 1957 Constitution.
 15. Puthuchery (2008) notes that the term started appearing in UMNO discourse in 2008. Gabriel (2014, p. 1213) explains the 'Social Contract' as 'a series of compromises ... that granted Chinese and Indians legal citizenship in return for the recognition of the Malays' "special position" as the "indigenous" people of the land'.
 16. Although the MNLA refers to this as the Anti-British National Liberation War (Caldwell, 1977), from the British colonial administration's perspec-

tive this was a communist *terrorist* problem. Furthermore, the British used the term ‘emergency’ instead of ‘war’, as losses sustained by British-owned rubber plantations and tin-mining industries would not have been covered by London insurers otherwise. This shows the prioritisation of British capitalist interests over and above everything else.

17. Others have highlighted the socio-economic, cultural, political, demographic, development, and ecological consequences of the Chinese New Villages (e.g. Loh, 1988; Strauch, 1981; Tan, 2012; Voon, 2009; Wang, 1988; Zhou, 2008). As Teng-Phee Tan (2009, p. 228) highlights, more needs to be done to examine the socio-psychological impacts of the Emergency on the New Villagers, ‘a special category of Chinese’ who ‘were shaped into a “silent people”—a populace that “heard nothing, saw nothing and said nothing”’. This, I believe, contributes in some ways towards how some Malaysian-Chinese adopt an apolitical stance (see Chap. 5).
18. The ISA was extended to Singapore when she joined the Federation of Malaya in 1963. Singapore’s ISA is still in force today.
19. The causes of the riots vary depending on individual and collective perspectives (Low, 2001). Nevertheless, the official account is twofold: first, rising political tensions between the Malayan government led by UMNO and the Singapore government led by the People’s Action Party (PAP); and second, Singapore’s minority Malays’ resentment that their expectation to benefit from Malay special rights in the 1957 Federation of Malaya Constitution was not part of the agreement in Singapore’s merger with Malaysia (Clutterbuck, 1984; L. Y. Tan, 2009).
20. The other two incidents are the 1950 British Economic Policy [*sic*] and Post-World War II in 1945.
21. Indeed, recent events suggest that the current Malaysian government is doing so. From 2008 to 2014, there have been 274 investigation cases under the Sedition Act (*ABC News*, 2014). From 2014, a series of Sedition Act arrests were made on opposition politicians, academics, lawyers, journalists, and activists. The Malaysian media has called this the ‘Sedition drag-net’ (*The Malaysia Insider*, 2014). On 25 November 2013, the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) was set up to make recommendations to the Malaysian government on new measures to further foster national unity. The NUCC recommended replacing the Sedition Act 1948 with the National Harmony Act. In November 2014, however, the current Prime Minister Najib Razak announced during the UMNO General Assembly that the Sedition Act will be retained and strengthened. In December 2015, the Malaysian Parliament passed the National Security Council (NSC) Bill. Unlike the ISA which is subjected to the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong’s* discretion, the NSC is under direct authority of the prime minister. Meanwhile,

- the ISA has been replaced by the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act (SOSMA) 2012, which came into force on 31 July 2012. SOSMA was enacted ‘to provide for special measures relating to security offences for the purpose of maintaining public order and security and for connected matters’ (Malaysia, 2015, p. 7).
22. These objectives were also carried forward into the subsequent national development policies, including the National Development Policy (1991–2000), the National Vision Policy (2001–2010), the National Mission (2006–2020), and the New Economic Model (2011–2020).
 23. See Yeo (1980) for a detailed historical account of the development of the MAS and the grooming of a Malay elite administrative class in the FMS.
 24. Only 10 percent of British university places were open to overseas students at that time (Cheeseman, 1948, p. 80).
 25. Excluding the police and the military.
 26. Based on the 2000 population census.
 27. See for example Bunnell’s (2004, p. 34) cautionary note on the need to position British colonialism ‘in relation to other constitutive geo-histories’.
 28. As Steinmetz (2014, p. 59, original emphasis) puts it, ‘colonizers smash extant native polities or refunction them to create their own *colonial states*’.
 29. See also Rudner’s (1976) discussion of Malaysia’s ‘consociational parliamentary democracy’.

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A Culture of Migration

In Chap. 2, we have seen how British colonial rule institutionalised race, education, and citizenship in Malaya. We have also seen how the post-colonial Malaysian state inherited the structural frameworks concerning race, education, and citizenship, and further exacerbated these during the colonial to post-colonial transition and thereafter, especially under the affirmative action objectives of the New Economic Policy (NEP). As we shall see in the remaining chapters, the interlacing of race, education, and citizenship significantly circumscribes mobile Malaysians' culture of migration, including their migration experiences and how they make sense of their migration trajectories. Before we proceed, however, it is necessary to understand the broader Malaysians migration trends.

Having set up the conceptual framework that postcolonialises race, education, and citizenship in Chap. 2, this chapter shifts the focus squarely back onto migration. This chapter outlines the historical and current states of migration in the Malay(si)an context. The key argument is for the normalcy of migration, including internal and international migration. This chapter first provides an overview of Malaysia's internal migration and emigration (especially education-migration and post-study settlement in destination countries). The chapter then discusses the trends of Malaysian migration to Singapore and the UK in relation to relevant migration and citizenship policies in these destination countries. Next, the chapter focuses on two migration pathways

that are popular amongst mobile Malaysians: education-migration, and education followed by work and settlement. The chapter concludes with a description of mobile Malaysians' culture of migration.

MIGRATION AND THE MAKING OF MALAYSIA

Historians have established that migratory movements have been a common way of life for the early populations in the Malay Archipelago. Wang (1985, p. 53), for example, observed that 'migration was normal' and that this extends to 'the normalcy of eventual settlement' and acceptance of immigrants by the natives and earlier settlers. Indeed, the territory known as Malaysia today has been home to a multi-ethnic and immigrant population who arrived in waves of immigration since the fifteenth century (Reid, 2008, 2010a). Harper (2001, p. 15) also observes that migration was 'deeply rooted in the culture of the region as a resource from pre-colonial times'. As we have seen in Chap. 2, the arrival of British colonial rule was an important milestone in terms of the onset of large-scale systemised (and racialised) labour immigration to Malaya. In other words, colonial Malaya came into being as a result of mass labour immigration encouraged by British mercantilist and imperialist interests. This mass ethnic-labour immigration and the British colonial government's 'divide-and-rule' policy while prioritising Malay indigeneity have led to a 'plural society' (Furnivall, 1948) where race is implicitly and explicitly embedded.

Migration was also a key point of contention in the negotiations leading to the forging of the Malaysian nation-state. In fact, Lian (1995) notes that migration is closely related to the nation-building phases in Malaysia and Singapore. Indeed, debates during the colonial to post-colonial transition in Malaysia revolved around migration related issues such as Malay 'indigeneity', immigrant 'others', citizenship, nationality, national loyalty, as well as special and differentiated rights and privileges. Ethnicity became racialised, and race became entrenched in all spheres of life. This has been most visible in race-based politics, the race-stratified education system, and clear racial segregations in certain economic activities.

It is now almost 60 years after Malaysia's independence. However, the unresolved migration-related issues described above continue to plague Malaysian socio-political discourse and everyday life. In other words, migration-related issues have been—and perhaps will always be if there is no real social change in the future—key points of debate, negotiation, and compromise about nationhood and who is eligible to constitute the nation

in Malaysia. Key to this are two interrelated elements. The first is the deliberate ambiguity surrounding the terms ‘citizenship’ and ‘nationality’. The second is the constitutional protection of race-based differentiations amongst the citizenry. As we shall see in Chaps. 4–6, this has implications for mobile Malaysians’ culture of migration.

There is, however, an additional important element in the relationship between colonial legacies and mobile Malaysians’ culture of migration—how migration and migratory movements have been normalised and internalised as a natural part of individual and familial life. This is what I call the normalcy of migration. What I mean here is that Malaysians in general, and mobile Malaysians in particular, have a high propensity for migration. This is not just because they have family histories of migration, of which most have been catalysed in one way or another by British colonial intervention in Malaya. Instead, this is also because they and their parents’ generations live in an era of post-colonial Malaysia where it is normal—and oftentimes necessary—to move. These migratory movements could be between rural and urban locales, within and between states, or internationally. More importantly, some of these movements have been direct outcomes and/or reactions to the NEP and other related national development policies. In what follows, I expand upon this argument.

THE NORMALCY OF MIGRATION

Migration has been a part of family life for many Malaysians. In fact, many Malaysians today are descendants of immigrants from the Malay Archipelago, China, and India (Kaur, 2006). As the majority of my respondents are within the 25–50 age range, this means that they were born between 1960 and 1985.¹ This also means that their parents would have been young adults during this same period, which corresponds to the crucial early years of post-colonial Malaysia’s nation building and development. In order to understand how mobile Malaysians’ early migration years (up to 20 years of age)² correspond to general migration trends in Malaysia, I examine census and migration survey data collected by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), especially between 1960 and 2005. I briefly discuss existing research on internal migration in Malaysia, the accuracy and limitations of available data, as well as the data implications for migration research in the Malaysian context.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, mobility has been prevalent amongst the population residing in the region that is now known as Malaysia.

Frequent changes to political administrative boundaries—national, states, and districts—meant that internal migration is often not as clearly distinguishable from mobility in general. Furthermore, decades of shared colonial history with Singapore means that there has been relatively free mobility between the two politically distinct countries. This includes the early years after Malaysia’s independence in 1957, as Singapore was part of the Federation of Malaysia from 1963 to 1965.

After Singapore became an independent country in 1965, it was still possible for movements across the mile long causeway for economic and social reasons (Hirschman, 1976, p. 453). This has also resulted in a situation where people living in Singapore and Malaysia arbitrarily became Malaysian or Singaporean citizens. For example, M10 (late sixties, male, single) held Singapore citizenship and a Malaysian red I/C (i.e. Malaysian permanent resident), and lived in Malaysia for about two decades before leaving to work in East Asia. Although M10 was officially a Singapore citizen, he thinks of himself as Malaysian and has ‘returned’ to Malaysia for retirement.

As a result of the ease and commonality of migratory movements in the Malay(si)a-Singapore corridor during the late colonial to post-colonial transition, many of my mobile Malaysian respondents have relatives who are Singaporeans or who reside in Singapore. This meant that they grew up with an inherent sense of ‘transnational consciousness’ (Conway, 2007; Ghosh & Wang, 2003; Vertovec, 2009)—a kind of habitus (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990), mentality or disposition that migration is a very normal part of their lives. This was not just because they had family networks across national borders. It was also because internal migratory movements within Malaysia (and in some cases international migration) were a substantive part of their own growing up years. Before examining this in further detail, the following sections provide overviews of internal migration and emigration in the Malaysian context.

(Internal) Migration: Data and Scholarship

Existing studies on migration in Malaysian context can generally be categorized into two areas.³ The first is on internal migration, while the second is on international migration. Studies on internal migration started to emerge in the 1970s as the Malaysian state focused on economic and urban development. Hence, the concerns of these studies have been on the demographic and development implications of internal migration

(Jones & Sidhu, 1979; Pryor, 1974, 1979a, 1979b; Saw, 1980, 2005, pp. 98–103). As scholars working on these areas were predominantly population demographers and development geographers, these works were concerned with macro-migration, population growth, and urban development trends. Furthermore, these works have relied primarily on macro and quantitative data. For example, some works have used the Malaysian Family Life Survey to explore the relationships between internal migration and gender (Chattopadhyay, 1997, 2000), marriage (Smith & Thomas, 1998), job transfers (Menon, 1987), and the effects of the NEP on gender and ethnicity in the context of internal migration (Chitose, 2001, 2003). A very recent exception is a mixed-method sociological study on urbanisation, internal migration, and social change in Klang (Appudurai & Lian, 2015).

Studies on international migration of Malaysians started to emerge in the late 1990s. Pillai (1992) provided one of the first works in this regard, followed by a coauthored contribution in the OECD's workshop proceedings entitled 'Migration and Regional Economic Integration in Asia' (Pillai & Yusof, 1998). By the mid-2000s, qualitative and ethnographic works on international migration of Malaysians began to emerge. These works have covered issues such as transnationalism (Lam & Yeoh, 2004; Lam, Yeoh, & Law, 2002), ethnicity and diasporic identity (Cartier, 2003; Chee, 2008), student migrants (Sin, 2006, 2009, 2013), gender and work identities (Joseph, 2013), and citizenship and diaspora strategies (Koh, 2015c). However, there is not an obvious Malaysian migration studies literature per se. Rather, these works can be seen as emergent empirical investigations into the phenomena of migration and the experiences of migrants from Malaysia. The relatively dearth of a dynamic and complex Malaysian migration studies scholarship can be attributed to two factors: firstly, the lack of official and macro-data (to be elaborated below) and, secondly, the lack of scholars working on migration studies in the Malaysian context. It is my hope that this book contributes towards initiating and energising emerging scholarship in this area.

Macro-data on migration in Malaysia is projected from the population census. While census data has been collected since 1891, the first migration question was only asked in the 1957 census (Fernandez, Hawley, & Predaza, 1974, p. 37). The focus then was on inter-state lifetime migrants, that is, migrants who shifted residence across a state boundary. Inter-state lifetime migrants in Peninsular Malaysia have increased from 4.7 percent in 1947 to 8.2 percent in 1957 and to 10.9 percent in 1970 (Jones & Sidhu, 1979). However, if migrants are defined as anyone

residing outside his/her locality of birth, this increases to 38.6 percent in the 1970 population (Table 3.1). In other words, by 1970, about two out of every five persons in Peninsular Malaysia have engaged in some form of migratory movement.

Between 1957 and 1970, there was significant net emigration from Peninsular Malaysia: approximately 5.6 percent of the 1970 population have emigrated.⁴ While some could have migrated permanently to Singapore, the number does not capture the ‘unhindered mobility ... with a heavy to and fro traffic ... across the causeway joining Singapore to the peninsula’ (Hirschman, 1975, p. 42). In the 1990s, it was estimated that about 24,000 Malaysians cross the causeway on a daily basis (*The Star*, quoted in Pillai, 1992, p. 25).

The 1970 census introduced questions on place of birth, place of previous residence, and duration of residence (Fernandez et al., 1974, pp. 37–38). These enabled the calculations of intercensal residential change, which in turn enabled an estimation of internal migration. To date, the international migration census data published by the DOSM excludes Malaysian emigrants. Thus, for the purpose of statistical data collection, migration means internal migration. More specifically, it means inter- and intra-state migration.

Table 3.1 Population by migrant status and state, Peninsular Malaysia (%), 1970

<i>State</i>	<i>Non-migrants</i>	<i>Migrants</i>	<i>Inter-locality migrants</i>	<i>Inter-locality, intra-state migrants</i>	<i>Inter-state migrants</i>	<i>Foreign migrants</i>
Johor	61.8	38.2	3.4	17.2	6.4	11.2
Kedah	64.3	35.7	3.3	19.0	8.2	5.2
Kelantan	76.8	23.2	0.5	17.6	2.9	2.2
Malacca	69.8	30.2	1.8	8.2	11.8	8.5
Negeri Sembilan	56.1	43.9	6.5	10.5	15.6	11.3
Pahang	52.8	47.2	5.8	12.2	21.1	8.1
Penang	64.6	35.4	2.1	10.7	11.8	10.8
Perak	63.4	36.6	3.0	17.9	6.8	9.0
Perlis	62.9	37.1	2.2	17.2	13.5	4.2
Selangor	49.0	51.0	8.2	12.5	18.1	12.2
Terengganu	70.7	29.3	1.5	16.4	9.1	2.3
TOTAL	61.4	38.6	4.0	14.9	10.9	8.8

Source: Adapted from Fernandez et al. (1974, p. 44)

DOSM publishes annual internal migration survey reports from 1992/1993 onwards, as well as annual special release migration surveys from 2007. However, there are limitations to the data. Firstly, migration is defined as ‘change in the district or state of residence between the two reference dates’ (DOSM, 1996, p. 3). Thus, any migration without change in official residence status would not be recorded. Secondly, data is only collected for lifetime migration, five-year inter-state migration, and five-year intra-state migration. Thus, any change in residence lasting for less than five years would not have been captured. Thirdly, estimations are projected from census data collected every ten years. Thus, these are subjected to sampling and non-sampling errors.

Until 1970, Selangor and Pahang were the largest internal migration-receiving states, while Perak, Kelantan, Melaka, and Kedah were the largest sending states (Table 3.1). Similar trends continued from 1975 to 1980 (Fig. 3.1). Inter-state lifetime migration ratio increased from 96 in 1970 to 143 in 1980, a sign of increased internal mobility (DOSM, 1983, p. 63). From 1986 to 1991, major internal migration flows shifted to Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur (WPKL), with Perak, Kelantan, Pahang, and Negeri Sembilan being the largest sending states. From 1995 to 2000, Johor and Pulau Pinang emerged as destination states. From 2006 to 2010, internal migration flows appear to be predominantly movements from Selangor to the other states (Fig. 3.2).

These inter-state migration flows can be seen as outcomes of government strategic plans and policies. The high proportion of migrants to Selangor during the 1970s could be attributed to rapid urbanisation in the Kuala Lumpur area as a result of governmental policies promoting Malay rural-urban migration to Chinese-dominated urban centres (Nagata, 1974). In the 1970s and 1980s, internal migration flows more or less corresponded to structural changes introduced under the NEP’s poverty reduction mandate. During this period, intra-rural migration was predominant amongst the Malay and Indian ethnic groups, while intra-urban migration was prevalent amongst the Chinese (Chitose, 2003). The former is in part a result of Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) rural land development projects (see MacAndrews & Yamamoto, 1975) which prioritised poor landless Malays as settlers while Indians were recruited as labourers. The latter reflects the geographical distribution of the Chinese in urban areas since their immigrant ancestors first settled in Malaya.

In the 1990s, urban infrastructure projects such as the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) (including the new government administrative

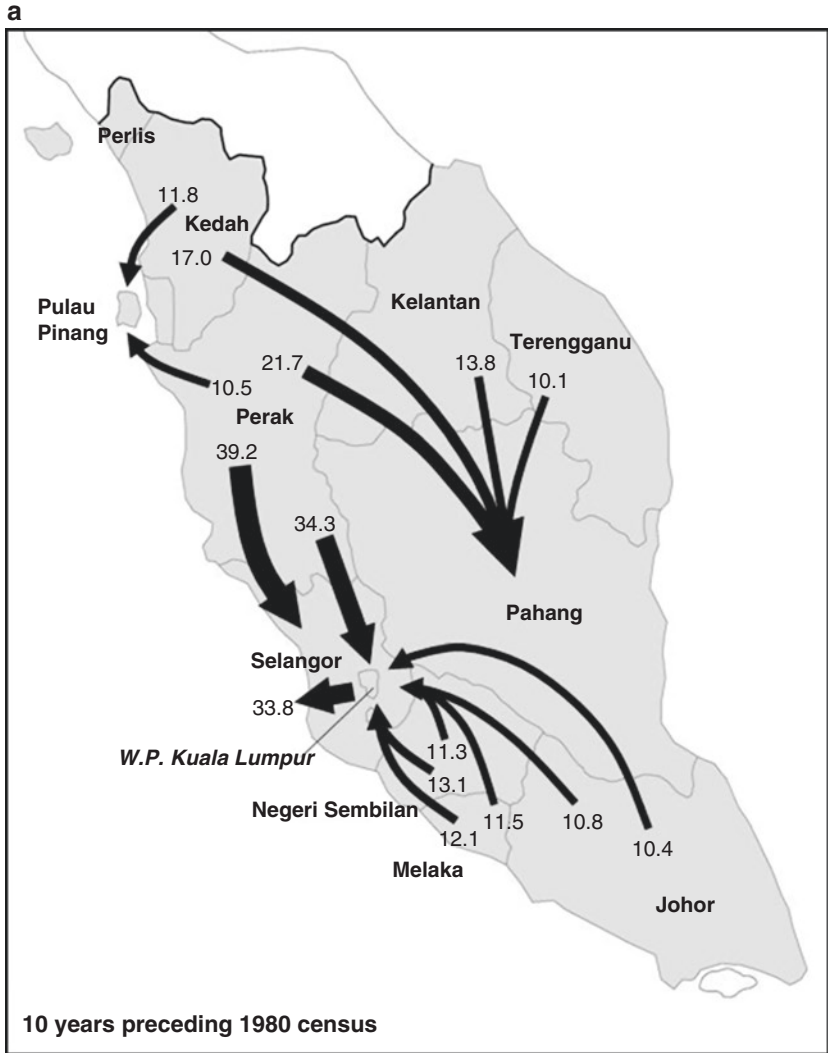


Fig. 3.1 Net inter-state migration flows (5000 persons or more), Peninsular Malaysia, 10 years preceding 1980 census, 1975–1980, 1986–1991, and 1995–2000. *Source:* Adapted from DOSM (1983, 1995, 2005). Note: Numbers in thousands

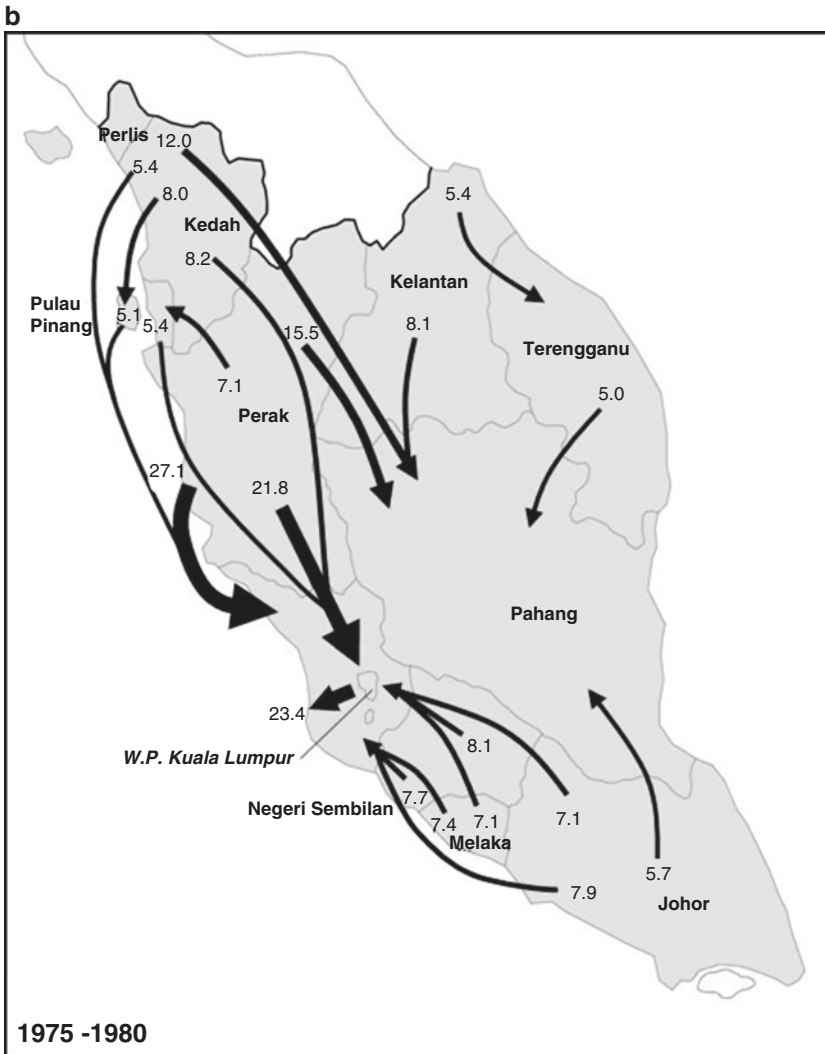


Fig. 3.1 (continued)

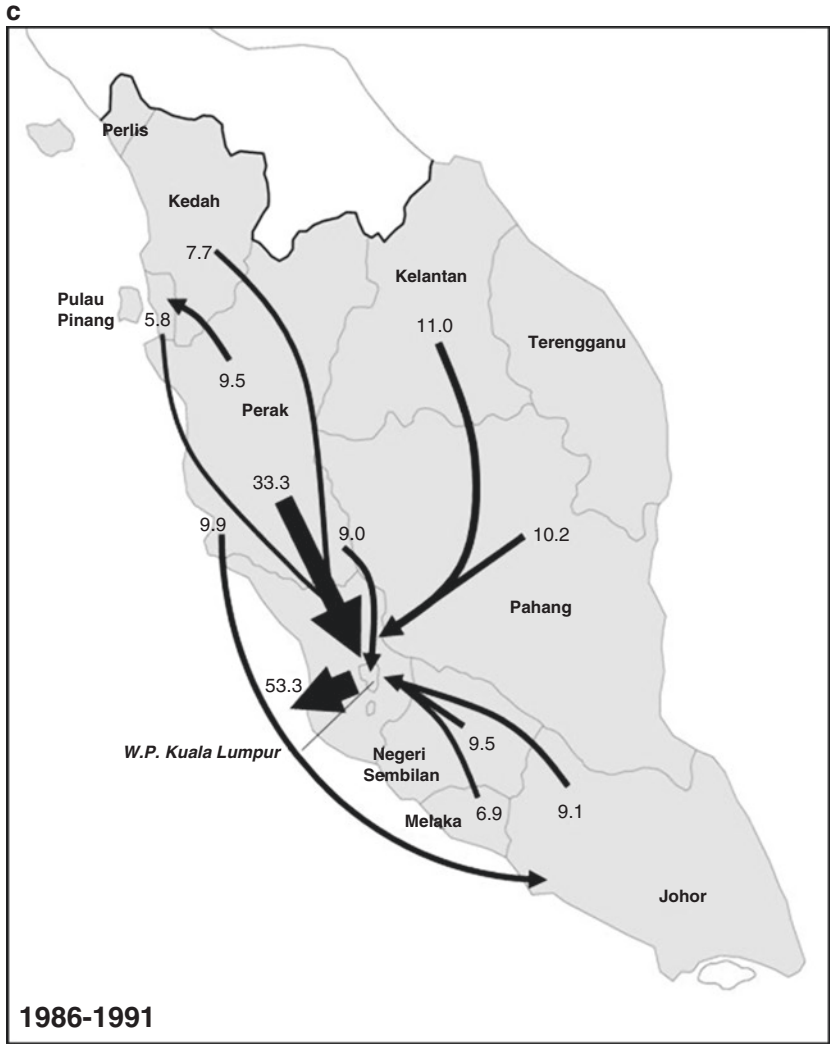


Fig. 3.1 (continued)

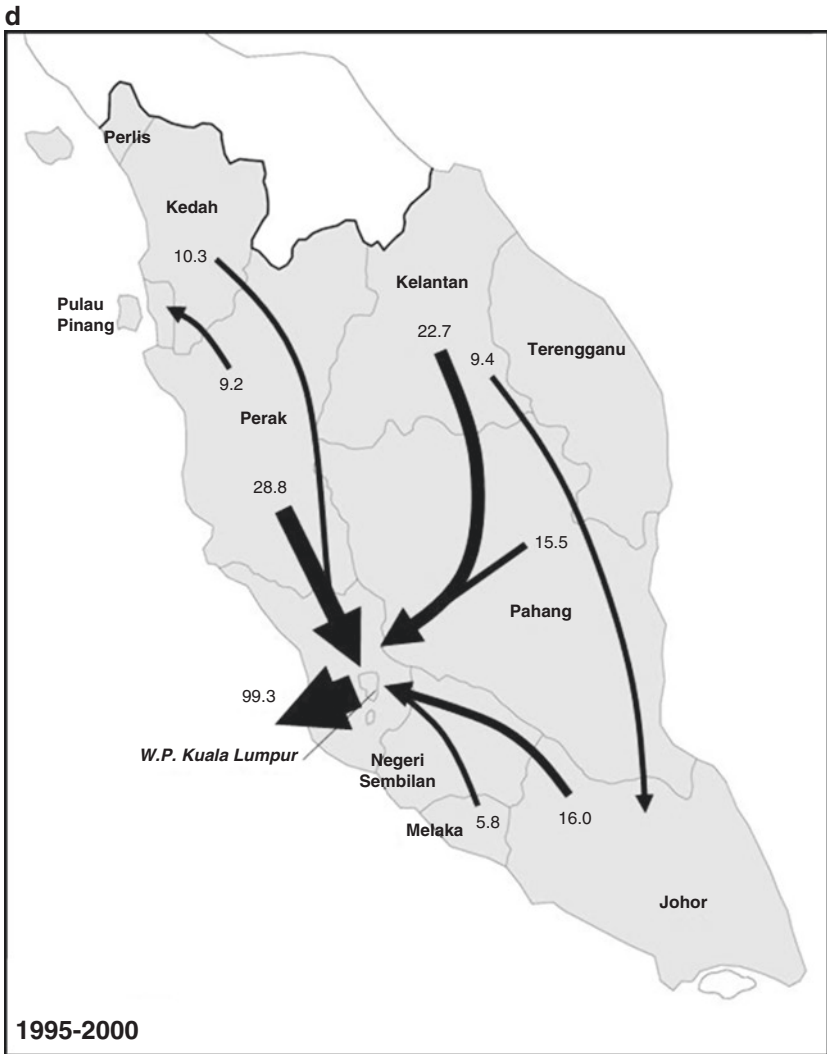


Fig. 3.1 (continued)

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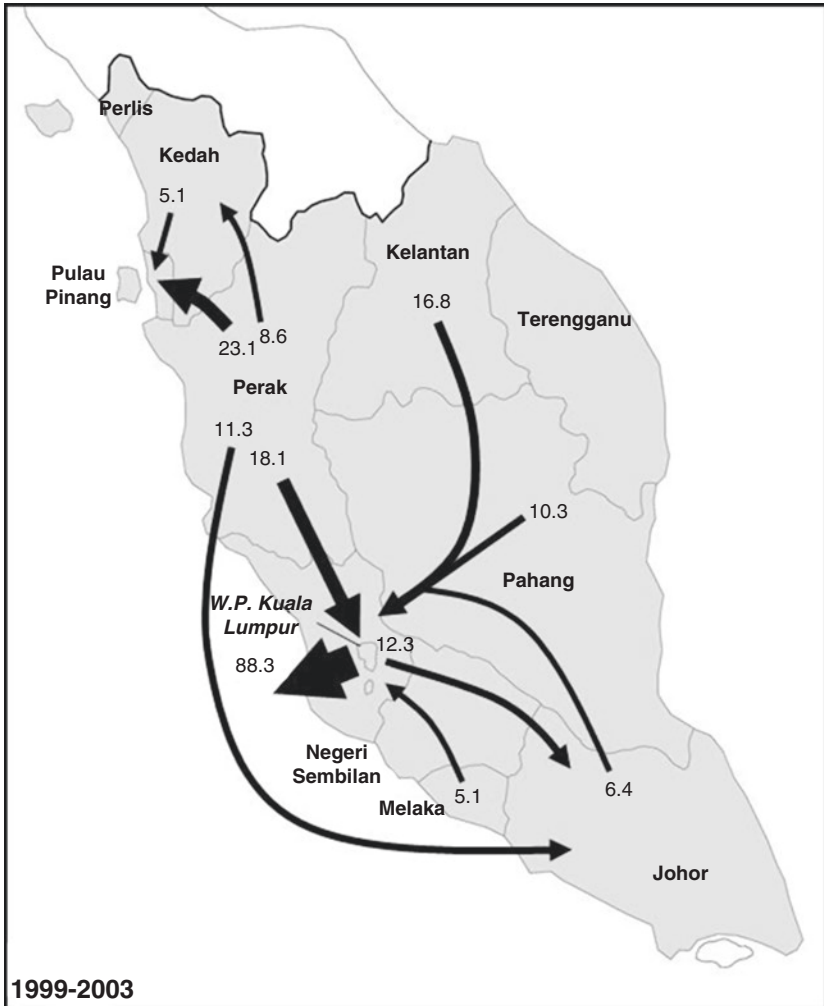


Fig. 3.2 Net inter-state migration flows (5000 persons or more), Peninsular Malaysia, 1999–2003, and 2006–2010. *Source:* Author, calculated from DOSM (2012b). *Note:* Numbers in thousands

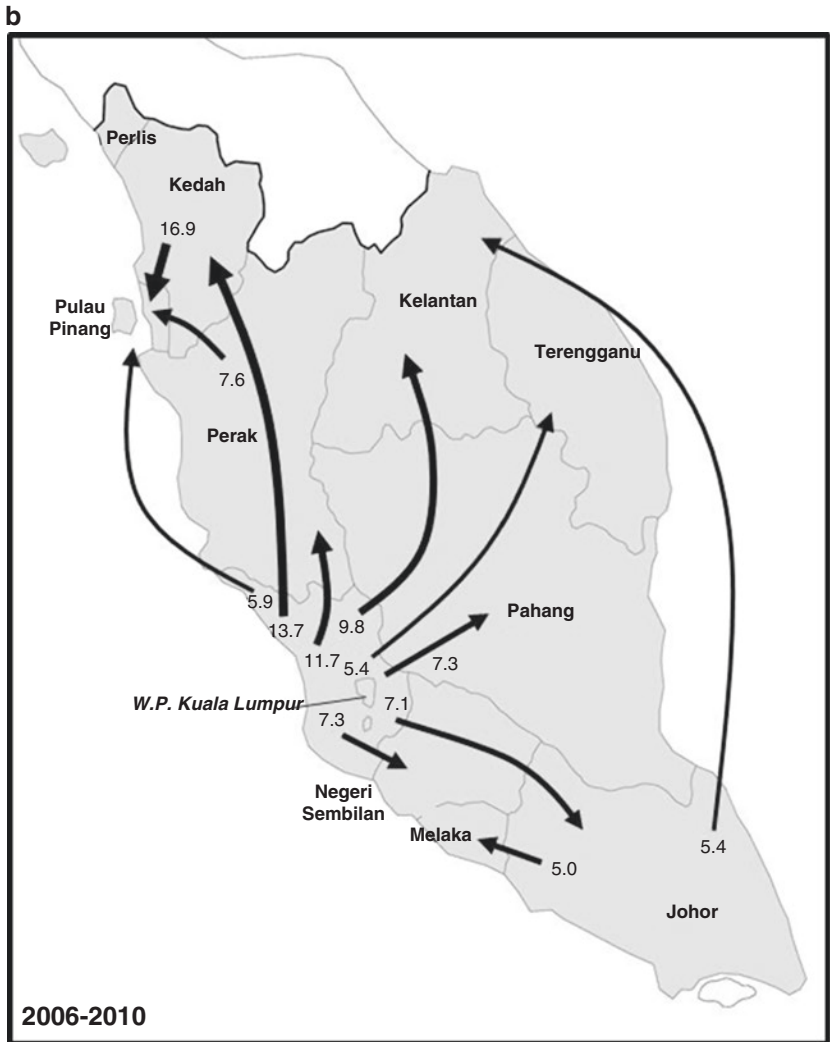


Fig. 3.2 (continued)

centre, Putrajaya and Cyberjaya), the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), and the North-South Expressway facilitated the development of KL and its surrounding areas as migration destinations. Johor and Pulau Pinang are major migration destinations with the rapid development of their capital cities, Johor Bahru (JB) and Georgetown respectively. JB benefits from its proximity to Singapore, as well as the Malaysian government's plans for its development as the southern corridor.

How does Malaysia's internal migration propensity compare to that in other contexts? In the late twentieth century, migration propensity within the Malaysian population is significantly higher than its Asian counterparts. Comparing census data (late 1990s to early 2000s) across 28 countries (of which 22 are developing countries), Bell and Muhidin (2009) find that while there was moderate five-year internal migration propensity in Malaysia, this was double that of other Asian countries (post-1990 China, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines). Across these Asian countries, five-year internal migration intensity peaks in the early twenties age range and falls sharply to low mobility beyond age 40. Here, again, Malaysia demonstrates the highest migration propensity amongst the Asian countries.

Emigration

The previous section has set the stage to explain the normalcy of migration in the Malaysian context, particularly in reference to internal migration. The normalcy of migration is similarly seen in emigration flows. Table 3.2 shows the stock of Malaysian migrants in selected countries from 1960 to 2013. The estimated number of Malaysian migrants has increased by about 41 percent from 223,052 in 1960 to 409,630 in 1980. The growth rate increased to 45 percent during 1980–1990. Indeed, it was noted that from 1983 to 1990, at least 40,000 Malaysians emigrated to Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the USA (Pillai, 1992; Pillai & Yusof, 1998).

The next decade saw a doubling of Malaysian migrants from 593,744 in 1990 to 1,155,210 in 2000 (Table 3.2). By 2000, the five largest destination countries hosting 83 percent of the total number of overseas Malaysians were Singapore (46 percent, counting only Malaysians registered as Singapore residents), Australia (12 percent), the USA (8 percent), and the UK (8 percent) (The World Bank, 2011d, p. 91). Between 2007 and 2008/2009, emigration from Malaysia more than doubled: 304,358 Malaysians emigrated between March 2008 to August 2009, compared

Table 3.2 Stock of Malaysian migrants in selected destination countries, 1960–2013

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2013
Singapore	129,858	187,189	213,364	343,171	725,607	1,060,628	1,044,994
Australia	5532	10,584	30,470	69,734	77,737	119,197	124,227
USA	662	507	11,824	34,825	52,623	55,007	64,619
UK	11,992	26,661	46,512	45,502	50,446	65,571	56,318
Canada	219	2889	5673	10,625	21,105	25,447	26,127
New Zealand	464	2866	3443	3776	11,320	15,912	16,353
India	38,166	35,763	26,325	11,944	14,903	12,945	12,672
World Total	223,052	314,621	409,630	593,744	1,155,210	1,481,202	1,683,132

Source: The World Bank (2011a, 2011b, 2013)

to 139,696 in 2007 (Bedi & Azizan, 2010). By 2010, it was estimated that there was a total of 1.48 million Malaysian emigrants (Table 3.2). This means that about 5.7 percent of the Malaysian population are international migrants⁵—more than double the average of 2.7 percent for middle-income countries in 2010 (The World Bank, 2011e, p. 38).

MIGRATION DESTINATIONS

In 2010, the top destination countries for Malaysian migrants were Singapore, Australia, Brunei Darussalam, the UK, the USA, Canada, New Zealand, India, Japan, and Germany. In this section, I focus on two destination countries for my non-returning mobile Malaysian respondents: Singapore and the UK. In addition to providing an overview of migration trends, this section also discusses the impact of recent citizenship and migration policy changes in Singapore and the UK on Malaysian migration trends to these countries.

Malaysians in Singapore

Singapore is one of the world's top immigrant receiving countries: in 2010, its immigrant stock was equivalent to 40.7 percent of the population (The World Bank, 2011e, p. 221). Singapore also hosts the largest Malaysian emigrant population (Table 3.2). As we have seen in Chap. 1, the Malaysian-Chinese constitute a growing majority of this population (Fig. 1.2). Indeed, Cartier (2003, p. 73) notes that the Malaysian-Chinese emigrant has typically been 'a skilled, highly educated migrant' seeking better life opportunities. In this regard, family migration has been practised to convert 'family economic capital' into other 'deployable capital' (Nonini, 1997, p. 209) such as overseas education for the next generation. This has been further facilitated by 'Singapore's close geographical proximity, historical and economic ties, and relatively high wages' (Pillai, 1992, p. 25). Table 3.3 shows the growing numbers and proportions of first time arrivals in Singapore for persons born in Malaysia.

In addition, Singapore's active recruitment of students, skilled and semi-skilled labour from Malaysia presents a strong pull factor for Malaysian emigrants. This has also resulted in the sustaining of transnational families across the Malaysia-Singapore border (e.g. husband works in Singapore while other family members reside in Malaysia) (Lam et al., 2002). In 2010, Malaysians constituted 47 percent of Singapore's tertiary-educated foreign population (The World Bank, 2011c, p. 96). In 2010, the majority

Table 3.3 Persons born in Malaysia by year of arrival in Singapore, 1931–1980

<i>Year of first arrival</i>	<i>Numbers</i>			<i>%</i>		<i>As % of total arrivals</i>
	<i>Peninsular Malaysia</i>	<i>Sabah-Sarawak</i>	<i>Total Malaysia</i>	<i>Peninsular Malaysia</i>	<i>Sabah-Sarawak</i>	
Before 1931	3475	280	3755	92.5	7.5	6.4
1931–1940	8506	485	8991	94.6	5.4	10.8
1941–1945	9929	214	10,143	97.9	2.1	37.7
1946–1950	24,141	530	24,671	97.9	2.1	41.7
1951–1955	27,707	252	27,959	99.1	0.9	52.8
1956–1960	30,432	234	30,666	99.2	0.8	58.4
1961–1965	22,928	217	23,145	99.1	0.9	77.1
1966–1970	23,025	449	23,474	98.1	1.9	60.4
1971–1975	29,887	541	30,428	98.2	1.8	69.6
1976–1980	48,319	1611	49,930	96.8	3.2	56.1
Total	228,349	4813	233,162			

Source: DOS (1981)

of Malaysian-born residents in Singapore were in the economically active age group of 30–39 years old (Fig. 3.3). Women outnumber men across all age groups, particularly in the 25–44 and 60–74 age groups. This could be attributable to Malaysian women marrying Singaporean men and settling down in Singapore. Indeed, based on statistics on international marriages with Singaporean citizens during 2000–2010, there has been a larger proportion of Asian non-Singaporean brides (97.0 percent on average) compared to Asian non-Singaporean grooms (67.2 percent on average) (calculated from NPTD et al., 2011, p. 11).

It is commonly believed that many Malaysians in Singapore have taken up Singapore permanent resident (PR) status and/or Singapore citizenship. Lam and Yeoh's (2004) study of professional Malaysian-Chinese in Singapore, for example, demonstrates that most proceeded to obtain PR status after initially holding employment passes. Some would take up Singapore citizenship, either on their own accord or having been encouraged to consider it, especially for those working in the public sector. One of my respondents related how his public sector manager would individually interview Malaysians in the department on an annual basis, asking if they would consider taking up Singapore citizenship. There is also a common perception that Malaysians in Singapore's public service would hit glass ceilings unless they took up Singapore citizenship.

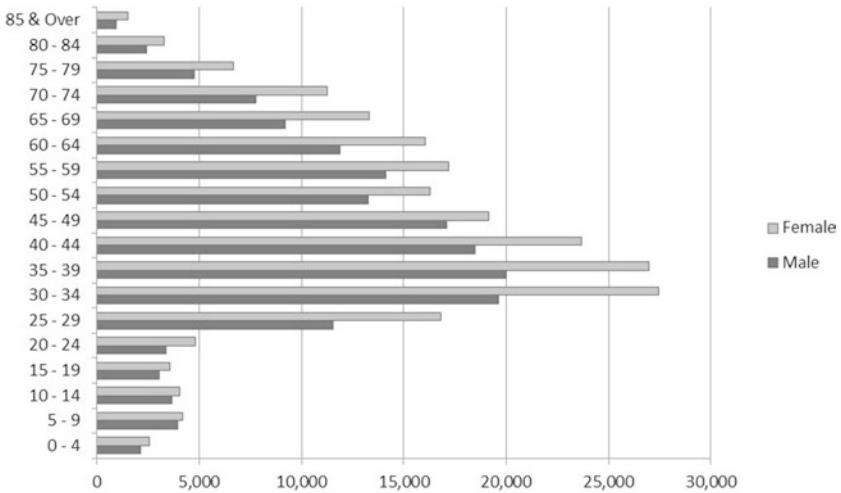


Fig. 3.3 Malaysian-born residents in Singapore, by age group and gender, 2010. *Source:* DOS (2011)

Although Singapore publishes statistics on the total numbers of Singapore PRs and new citizens, the exact numbers of Malaysians who have done so are not made available. Requests for such statistics have been refused on the grounds of them being ‘confidential and sensitive’ (Ahmad, 2002). My request to the National Population and Talent Division (NPTD) in December 2012 was refused as the information was ‘not available for release’ (personal communication, 18 December 2012).

However, it is possible to obtain an estimation from census and other statistics. From 2000 to 2010, about half of Singapore’s resident population were born in Malaysia (The World Bank, 2011d, p. 100). In 2010, Singapore’s resident population was 3.77 million. By projection, this means that in 2010 there could have been an estimated 1.88 million Malaysian-born persons who had acquired Singapore citizenship and permanent residence. In 2010, 35 percent of Malaysian-born non-student residents in Singapore were tertiary educated, compared to 23 percent in 2000 (p. 96). This indicates an increased share of Malaysians in Singapore’s ‘foreign talent’ population (see next paragraph). A recent World Bank report mentions that according to the Singapore Department of Statistics (DOS), in 2010 there were approximately 691,000 Malaysians residing in

Singapore, of which a fifth are tertiary educated (The World Bank, 2015, p. 23). The same report also highlights that this estimation excludes non-resident Malaysians in Singapore, which is thought to constitute a large proportion of Singapore's migrant population of about 1.3 million. In sum, due to the lack of accurate and publicly accessible data, it is extremely difficult to estimate the actual numbers of Malaysians in Singapore.

The late 1990s saw Singapore welcoming 'foreign talents' as contributors to its vision as a 'talent capital', articulated through its Singapore 21 and Remaking Singapore campaigns. One of the Singapore 21 subject committee reports explicitly explained the need 'to attract the foreign talent to cast his lot with Singapore and opt to become a PR and perhaps later for his children to be citizens' (Singapore 21 Subject Committee, 2000, p. 13). The report also argued that talent is 'crucial to Singapore's survival and success' (p. 1) and that 'attracting talent involves promoting Singapore to foreigners and removing obstacles to the entry of talent' (p. 16).

As a result of Singapore's liberal immigration stance for some groups, the proportion of foreigners ('non-residents') and Singapore permanent residents have increased (Fig. 3.4). Since 1987, there has been an increase

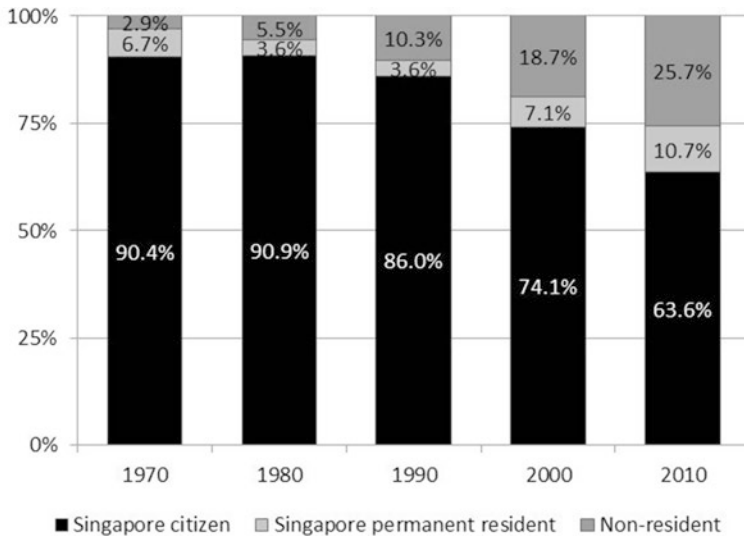


Fig. 3.4 Singapore population by residence status, 1970–2010.

Source: Compiled from Yeoh and Lin (2012)

in the number of permanent residence granted to foreigners, with the sharpest jump occurring during 1989–1990 (Fig. 3.5). While in the 2000s one in four persons (i.e. 25 percent) in Singapore was a foreigner (Koh, 2003, p. 232), this has increased to 38 percent in 2012 (calculated from NPTD, 2013, p. 47) and 39 percent in 2015 (calculated from NPTD et al., 2015, p. 5). In a Parliament written answer, it was reported that from 2001 to 2010, Singapore granted an annual average of 13,110 citizenships and 48,203 permanent residence (C. H. Teo, 2011). Furthermore, persons from Southeast Asian countries contributed to 49.4 percent of new citizens and 49.2 percent of new PRs (ibid.).

In late 2009, however, the Singapore government shifted its stance from open skilled immigration and naturalisation towards a more restrictive one. This was in response to Singaporeans' concerns on the increasing numbers of immigrants, PRs, and naturalised new citizens. This was implemented by moderating labour immigration, tightening the assessment of citizenship and PR applications, and establishing 'a greater distinction in privileges and benefits between Singaporeans and PRs in the areas of education and healthcare' (Wong, 2010, p. 5). As a result, the number of permanent residence granted has significantly dropped by 25 percent, while the number of citizenships granted has dropped by 3 percent between 2009 and 2010 (Fig. 3.6). From 2010 to 2014, 20,000 new citizenships

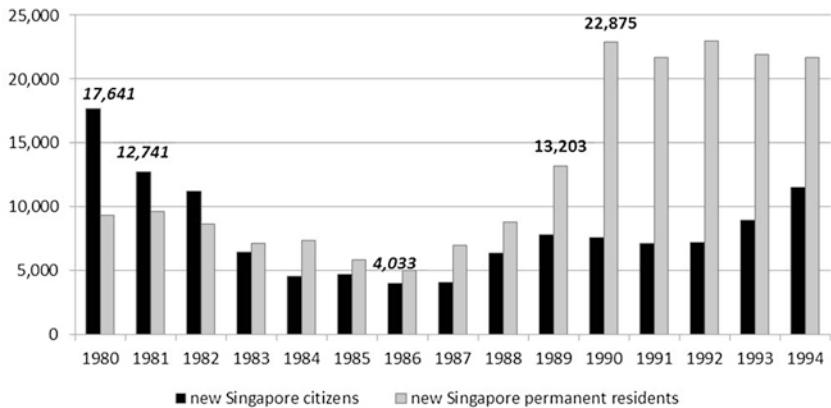


Fig. 3.5 Singapore's permanent resident (PR) and citizenship trends, 1980–1994. Source: Wong (1997)

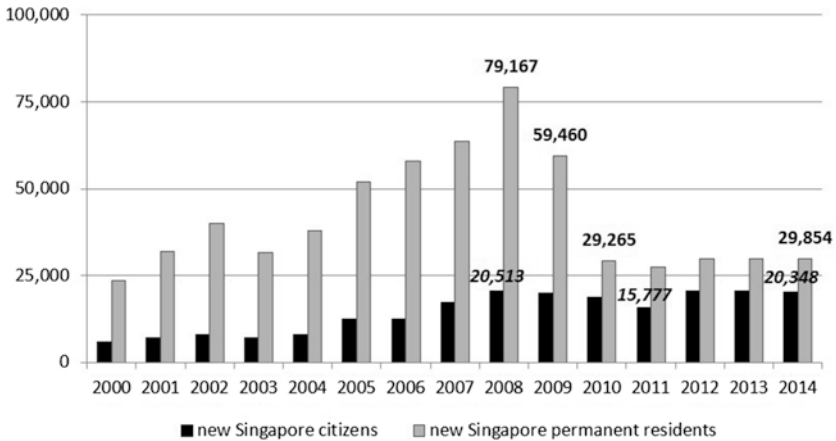


Fig. 3.6 Singapore's permanent resident (PR) and citizenship trends, 2000–2014.
Source: NPTD (2012, p. 23); NPTD et al. (2015, p. 14); Wong (2010)

and 30,000 new PRs were granted annually. Singapore's tightening of immigration and citizenship policies will affect existing Malaysians who are resident in Singapore, especially in their citizenship and migration decisions, as well as those who are contemplating moving to Singapore in the near future.

Malaysians in London and the UK

The UK has been a popular migration destination for Malaysians, especially due to the colonial and Commonwealth connection.⁶ During the British colonial period, junior Malayan civil servants were selected for higher education in the UK as part of their professional training (Malaya, 1949, p. 96). Some Malaysians who are Citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies (CUKC), and who qualify under birth, naturalisation, or residential requirements, enjoy the Right of Abode (ROA) in the UK. This means that they can enter and leave the UK free of immigration control. They can also live and work in the UK without restrictions. Their children who were born before 1 January 1983 also enjoy ROA in the UK. Furthermore, as Commonwealth citizens, Malaysian residents in the UK enjoy the same civic rights as British citizens. This includes voting in elections, standing for election in the British House of Commons,

and holding public office in the UK. By 2007, the UK was hosting about 61,000 Malaysians (The World Bank, 2011d, p. 90). During 2004–2011, Malaysians residing in London made up 33–48 percent of Malaysians in the UK (Table 3.4). In 2012, it was estimated that there were 69,939 Malaysians in the UK, of which 18,000 were in London (The World Bank, 2015, p. 18).

Prior to 2008, Malaysian migrants entered the UK through a few popular migration routes. This includes secondary to higher education followed by work and settlement, working holiday followed by work and settlement, and Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) status (i.e. permanent residence) earned by birth or descent.⁷ In February 2008, the UK Border Agency (UKBA) introduced the Points Based System (PBS) for immigration. The PBS allows temporary migrants to enter the UK through one of five tiers, consolidating over 80 previous routes of entry (Table 3.5). Applicants must pass a points assessment (based on qualifications, work experience, age, etc.) before gaining permission to enter the UK.

Since its introduction, the PBS has undergone numerous revisions and fine tuning of specific policies. Of note is the closure of Tier 1 (General) to overseas applicants in late 2010,⁸ which allowed non-European Economic Area (EEA) migrants to enter the UK without secured work sponsorships, as well as the closure of the Post-Study Work Visa (PSW), which allowed non-EEA graduates from UK universities to work in the UK for up to two years after graduation. Additional conditions introduced within each tier also meant that it became increasingly difficult for migrants to enter and remain in the UK. Figure 3.7 shows the trends in types of visas granted to Malaysians between 2005 and 2014.

The increasingly stringent immigration policies have produced impacts on Malaysian migrants' citizenship considerations and migration

Table 3.4 Malaysians in London, 2004, 2008, and 2011

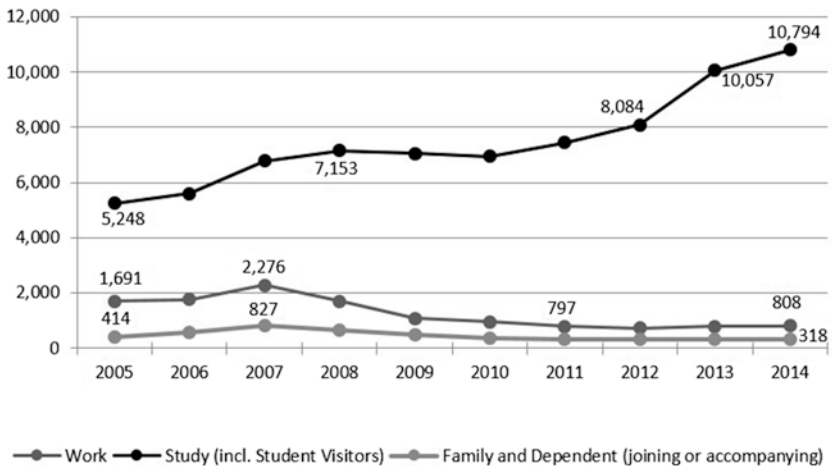
<i>Year</i>	<i>By country of birth</i>	<i>By nationality</i>	<i>By passport held</i>
2004	20,000 (38 %)	14,000 (44 %)	–
2008	23,000 (37 %)	17,000 (48 %)	–
2011	21,209 (33 %)	12,000 (41 %)	14,627 (35 %)

Source: GLA (2013, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c)

Note: Percentages in brackets indicate Malaysians in London as a proportion of Malaysians in the UK (by country of birth and nationality), and in England and Wales (by passport held)

Table 3.5 Five tiers of the UK Points Based System (PBS)

Tier	Target temporary migrant group	Sponsor required?	Replaces
Tier 1	Highly skilled migrants	No	Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP)
Tier 2	Skilled migrants with a job offer	Yes	Work permits scheme
Tier 3	Low-skilled workers (suspended)	–	Intra-corporate transfers
Tier 4	Students	Yes	Sector-based schemes (SBS)
Tier 5	Temporary workers and youth mobility	Yes	Students
			Temporary routes, such as working holiday

**Fig. 3.7** UK visas granted to Malaysians, 2005–2014.

Source: UK Home Office (2015b)

geographies. Firstly, the number of Malaysian nationals who were granted British citizenship almost doubled between 2008 and 2009 (Fig. 3.8). This suggests that perceived difficulties in obtaining valid UK visas might have pushed Malaysian migrants to acquire British citizenship in order to secure their continued residence and settlement in the UK. Secondly, there has been a shift towards citizenship by residence instead of by marriage, especially after 2008 (Fig. 3.9). Although changes to the family settlement

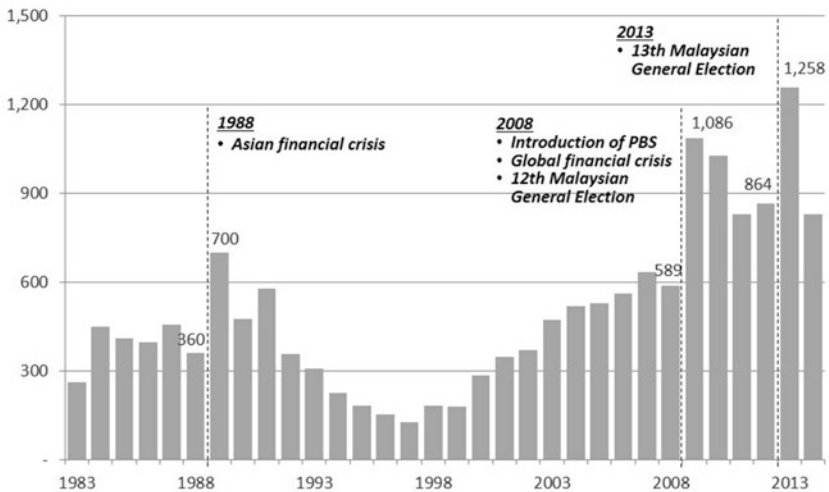


Fig. 3.8 Number of British citizenships granted to Malaysian nationals, 1983–2014. *Source:* UK Home Office (2009, 2015a)

policy (e.g. a new minimum income threshold for sponsoring foreign spouse and children; increasing the probationary period from two to five years) only came into effect on 9 July 2012, the Immigration Minister had announced the UK government's intention to review the immigration policies as early as September 2010 (UKBA, 2010). The early announcement could have prompted migrants who were already in the UK to apply for British citizenship by residence rather than by marriage.

Looking also at the trends in British citizenship acquisitions by Malaysian nationals during 1983–2014 (Fig. 3.8), there were three obvious bumps. In 1997/1998, this could be attributable to the Asian financial crisis. In 2007/2008, this could be attributable to the global financial crisis and Malaysia's 12th General Elections, in addition to the introduction of the PBS explained earlier. In 2012/2013, this could be attributable to Malaysia's 13th General Elections. There is also a visible hike in the number of student visas granted to Malaysians during this period (Fig. 3.7). These suggest that migrants' citizenship decision-making could be precipitated by global and national economic and political events. More importantly, and as we shall see in Chap. 5, these trends suggest that overseas Malaysians remain intimately connected to and affected by Malaysia's domestic politics.

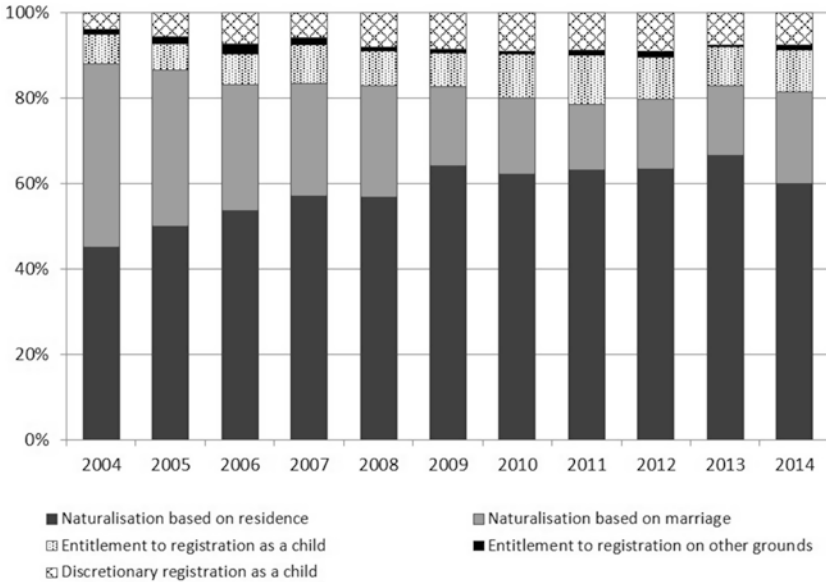


Fig. 3.9 Types of British citizenships granted to Malaysian nationals, 2006–2011. *Note: Excluding entitlement to registration as an adult, entitlement to register under section, and discretionary registration as an adult.*
 Source: UK Home Office (2015a)

In a study of the 2004 non-EEA migrant cohort entering the UK, Achato, Eaton, and Jones (2010) found that 40 percent of those who had entered through work-related citizenship pathways (i.e. highly skilled workers or those with a job offer in a shortage occupation) had remained in the UK after five years. Of these, 72.5 percent achieved settlement after five years. The authors further found that the majority of migrants entering through student visas switched to the work-related citizenship route (12,980 cases) rather than the family route (6660 cases), despite the latter route offering a shorter time frame to settlement. This could possibly explain the increase in the proportion of citizenships granted by residence to Malaysians rather than by marriage, as indicated in Fig. 3.9. This also suggests that some student migrants transit into work pathways, leading to settlement in the UK. Indeed, this is a typical migration and settlement pathway amongst my mobile Malaysian respondents.

MIGRATION PATHWAYS

While the previous sections describe the broad Malaysian migration trends, this section focuses on two typical migration pathways amongst my mobile Malaysian respondents. These are education-migration, and education followed by work and settlement. In what follows, I provide broad overviews of these migration pathways. The purpose is to contextualise my respondents' migration pathways to be detailed in Chaps. 4–6.

Education-Migration

In Chap. 2, I argued that overseas education as a symbol of social prestige and a means for social mobility can be seen as a colonial legacy that has been further institutionalised in post-colonial Malaysia. This section examines the scale of this migration trend during the post-colonial period.

Malaysian students have pursued overseas education through scholarships or private funds. In the 1950s, about 17,000 Malaysian students went to Australia under the Colombo Plan's Technical Co-operation Scheme (quoted in Sin, 2006, p. 242). In the 1972 country report for the Colombo Plan meeting, it was noted that there were 10,000–12,000 Malaysian students in Commonwealth countries between the late 1960s to the early 1970s (Commonwealth Consultative Committee on South and South-east Asia & Colombo Plan Bureau, 1972, p. 103). The report also noted that between 1967 and 1970, 9969 students were on government scholarships to Great Britain (56.2 percent), Australia (26.8 percent), New Zealand (13.2 percent), Indonesia (3.2 percent), and Pakistan (0.7 percent). By the mid-1970s, it was estimated that there were 20,000 overseas Malaysian students (The Treasury, 1975). Two decades later, this number has more than doubled: in 1999, there were 49,438 overseas Malaysian students (UIS, 2013).

The post-colonial Malaysian government's dual approach to higher education, couched under the philosophy of affirmative action, meant that non-*bumiputera* Malaysians faced fierce competition in gaining university placements. Under the NEP, quotas were introduced for public university placements. This was further compounded by limited university places. In 1971, about 3000 out of 8062 applicants (37.2 percent) were admitted into the three existing public universities (UNESCO, 1973, p. 102). In 1988, only 15.7 percent of 54,557 applicants gained public university admissions (Ghani, 1990, p. 6).

Between 1970 and 1983, the number of Malaysian students overseas has more than doubled, from 24,000 to 58,000 (Reid, 1988).

On the other hand, historical ties with Britain and the British education tradition had instilled a sense of elitist education ideology (Denny, 1999) where overseas degrees from elite universities are prized and preferred. Furthermore, under the NEP, education has been perceived as a key tool in restructuring the social, political and economic imbalance between ethnic groups. Thus, one of the strategies is to send students for overseas higher education on government scholarships. In the 1980s, there were 12,800 such students (Malaysia, 1984, p. 354). This was a substantial proportion (30.9 percent), considering that the total enrolment in local and overseas tertiary education in 1980 was 41,454 (Malaysia, 1986).

The inclination for overseas education has continued to today. Pyvis and Chapman (2007) found that Malaysian students often associated international education with Western education and qualifications. Denny (1999, pp. 76–77) also observed an ‘unmeasured and unquantifiable desire’ for overseas education amongst Malaysians. He further suggests that this could be a sign of Malaysians seeking an international perspective as a result of colonial rule and immigration. Overseas education is perceived to be of a higher quality and more marketable for employment (Sin, 2006, 2009). Indeed, overseas education has been seen as ‘a passport to lifelong security, comfort, and status’ (Selvaratnam, 1988, p. 183). For parents contemplating emigration, sending their children for overseas education is often a step towards preparing for their eventual familial emigration (Ghani, 1990).

Indeed, Malaysia has become one of the top countries with internationally mobile students. In the 1980s, significant proportions of Malaysian students enrolled in programmes overseas (47.1 percent in 1980; 37.5 percent in 1985) (Malaysia, 1986). From 2000 onwards, Malaysia has been one of the top 12 international student-sending countries (Fig. 3.10). From 1999 to 2012, Malaysia’s student migrant stock totalled 730,545, with an annual average of 52,182 (Fig. 3.11). At first glance, the proportion of outbound students compared to students enrolled in institutions of higher learning appears to have decreased steadily during this period, especially in the year 2000. This, however, could be explained by a number of reasons. First, there has been an increase in the number of public institutions of higher learning in Malaysia since the 1990s (see Koh forthcoming, 2017). From 1992 to 2006, 13 new public universities have been established in Malaysia. This meant an

	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
1	CHN	CHN	CHN	CHN	CHN	CHN	CHN	CHN	CHN	CHN	CHN	CHN	CHN	CHN
2	IND	IND	IND	IND	IND	IND	IND	IND	IND	IND	IND	IND	KOR	KOR
3	DEU	KOR	KOR	DEU	KOR	KOR	KOR	KOR	KOR	KOR	KOR	KOR	IND	GRC
4	KOR	DEU	DEU	PRK	DEU	DEU	DEU	DEU	JPN	JPN	JPN	JPN	GRC	JPN
5	FRA	SAU	FRA	MYS	MYS	USA	JPN	JPN	DEU	DEU	DEU	DEU	JPN	IND
6	SAU	FRA	MYS	USA	USA	MYS	FRA	FRA	TUR	TUR	FRA	FRA	DEU	DEU
7	USA	USA	USA	FRA	FRA	JPN	USA	USA	USA	MAR	MAR	GRC	FRA	FRA
8	MYS	MYS	TUR	KOR	TUR	KAZ	MYS	MYS	FRA	GRC	TUR	MAR	TUR	TUR
9	VNM	TUR	VNM	RUS	RUS	RUS	CAN	CAN	MAR	USA	GRC	TUR	ITA	ITA
10	NGA	VNM	RUS	TUR	CAN	CAN	RUS	MAR	CAN	FRA	USA	USA	MAR	MAR
11	RUS	RUS	SAU	CAN	JPN	RUS	MAR	RUS	MYS	MYS	ITA	ITA	USA	MYS
12	IRN	IRN	IRN	VNM	VNM	TUR	TUR	TUR	GRC	CAN	MYS	MYS	MYS	USA

Fig. 3.10 Top 12 countries with outbound mobile students, 2000–2013.

Notes:

- (1) Country codes based on ISO 3166 published by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO).
- (2) ‘Internationally mobile students (or mobile students)’ are students who have crossed a national border and moved to another country with the objective of studying. This includes prior education qualification obtained in another country other than the country of origin. The data covers tertiary education level only.

Source: UIS (2013)

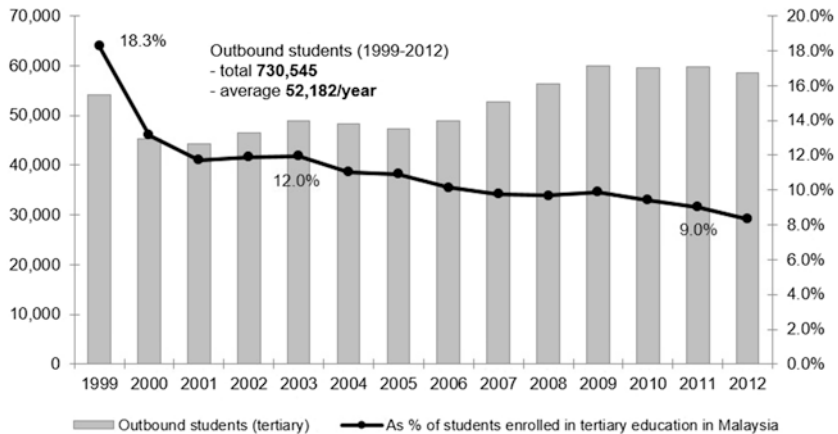


Fig. 3.11 Outbound mobile students from Malaysia, 1998–2010.

Source: DOSM (2001, 2006, 2011a, 2012a, 2013, 2014); UIS (2013)

expansion in the number of public university placements. Second, as we have seen in Chap. 2, there has also been an increase in the number of private institutions of higher learning in Malaysia following the Private

Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996. It is common for these private institutions to offer upper-secondary programmes such as GCE ‘A’ Levels and Australian Matriculation diplomas, as well as twinning programmes with overseas universities. Under such programmes, students would engage in ‘transnational’ study arrangements by splitting time between a Malaysian private institution and the partner overseas university and awarded the partner university’s degree qualification (see MOHE, 2010). This meant that these students would have been excluded from being counted statistically as ‘outbound mobile students’ although they would have ‘migrated’ for their education.

Malaysian students have been pursuing higher education in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and other countries. In the early 1960s, there were 2160 Malaysian students studying in selected Commonwealth countries (Table 3.6). In 1968, 54.6 percent (8000 out of 14,629) overseas Malaysian students were studying in Australia, Great Britain, or New Zealand (Takei, Bock, & Saunders, 1973, p. 23). The USA and Canada have also been popular destinations. Amongst the OECD countries, Australia remains the most popular destination due to its geographical proximity to Malaysia, its relative affordability for privately funded Malaysian students, as well as the availability of scholarships and sponsorships from Australian universities (Sin, 2006). The UK is a close second, partly due to the British colonial connection and a similar education system. Indeed, in her research on Malaysian higher education students conducted in the mid- and late 2000s, Sin (2009, 2013) finds evidence of an overall uncritical belief in the superiority of British education and UK universities. Similar to my argument in this book, Sin interprets this as clear evidence of British colonial legacy in

Table 3.6 Number of Malaysian students in selected Commonwealth countries, early 1960s

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number</i>
Australia (1962)	1280
India (1960–1961)	330
UK (1962–1963)	320
New Zealand (1962)	120
Hong Kong (1962)	60
Canada (1961–1962)	50
TOTAL	2160

Source: UNESCO (1965, p. 20)

Malaysia. Walker (2014, p. 336) also notes that there seems to be a sense of ‘brand loyalty to Britain reaching back to the colonial days’ for students from former colonies, including Malaysia.

Other than these Western countries, Singapore and Taiwan are also popular education destinations. In addition to Singapore’s geographical proximity and shared socio-cultural contexts, the Singapore government has also been actively recruiting Malaysian students since the late 1960s. In 1969, Singapore’s Ministry of Education started offering the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Scholarships for ASEAN nationals to pursue pre-university education in Singapore (Ho & Tyson, 2011). This coincided with the introduction of affirmative action policies and *bumiputera* quotas for entries into Malaysian public universities. Furthermore, the Tuition Grant Scheme introduced by the Singapore government in 1980 offered highly subsidised tertiary education fees in exchange for three years of postgraduate employment with a Singapore-registered or Singapore-based company (MOE, 2009).

Taiwan has also emerged as a popular tertiary education destination, particularly for Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools (MICSS) students. As I have explained in Chap. 2, MICSS students take the United Examination Certificate (UEC), which is not recognised for admission into Malaysian public universities. The UEC, however, is recognised for entries into universities in Singapore, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the USA, the UK, France, China, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and Indonesia, as well as private universities and foreign university branch campuses in Malaysia (UCSCAM, 2012). The number of Malaysian students studying in Taiwanese universities has increased from a mere 27 in 1990/1991 to 425 in 2005/2006 and to 3671 in 2014/2015 (Fig. 3.12). According to a report on MICSS graduates who went on to further studies in 2013, 46.4 percent went to overseas universities (*The Star Online*, 2015). It seems that the continual non-integration of the MICSS into Malaysia’s education system and the non-recognition of the UEC are major contributors to the education-migration outflows of MICSS graduates.

Education, Work, and Settlement

In this book, I argue that mobile Malaysians’ culture of migration is primarily education-led, that is, education motivates their first departure from Malaysia. Given that education is understood and practised as a

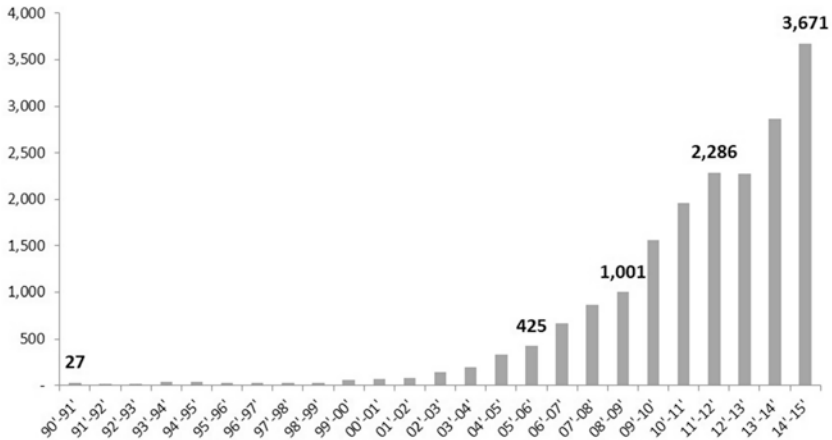


Fig. 3.12 Number of Malaysian students in Taiwanese Universities, 1990/1991–2014/2015.

Source: Ministry of Education, Taiwan (2011, 2015)

strategy for individual and familial social mobility, particularly for non-*bumiputera* Malaysians, the culture of migration begins *before* mobile Malaysians reached the stage for higher education. This has also been influenced by Malaysia's race-stratified education system institutionalised since the British colonial period: Anglo-Malay schools have received the most attention and government funding, while Chinese and Tamil vernacular schools were dealt with in a *laissez-faire* approach. The unequal treatment of schools—which translates into unequal treatments of their students and graduates—has been further exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian government through the NEP and other educational policies. Students from Anglo-Malay schools would generally enjoy better competitive advantage compared to, for example, MICSS students. The structural factors in Malaysia's education system ultimately affect parents' decisions about which types of schools to send their children to as early as the primary school stage.

Beine, Docquier, and Rapoport (2006) used age of entry to OECD countries as a proxy to determine whether migrants gained education before or after migration. Based on analysis of 1990 and 2000 census data, they found that Malaysia's brain drain ratios (*vis-à-vis* brain drain 0+) were 85.7 percent for brain drain 12+, 75.7 percent for brain drain 18+,

and 61.7 percent for brain drain 22+. These are considered one of the lower ratios for countries with over 0.25 million population. This implies that Malaysian emigrants obtained their education *after* migration. This could be a third reason explaining the decreasing proportion of outbound students compared to students enrolled for tertiary education in Malaysia. In other words, students left Malaysia for secondary or pre-university education (after 12 or 18 years old respectively), rather than for tertiary and further education. This supports my hypothesis that there has been a culture of migrating early for education, at least amongst mobile Malaysians.

Since the 1970s, the Malaysian government has been aware that not all overseas university students returned to Malaysia after graduation. Between 1968 and 1972, 583 out of 655 Malaysian students in Australia returned to Malaysia, while 72 were granted permanent residence in Australia (Commonwealth Consultative Committee on South and South-east Asia & Colombo Plan Bureau, 1972, p. 104). Between 1990 and 2000, the number of tertiary-educated Malaysian migrants in OECD countries increased by 40.8 percent (Table 3.7). Given the previous discussion about how Malaysian migrants gained education qualifications after migrating, this increase could possibly be attributed to non-returning student migrants.

The World Bank (2011d) estimates that a third of overseas Malaysians are tertiary educated, although actual proportions differ in each destination country. In 2010, these were 55.7 percent in the USA, 53.2 percent in Canada, 50.8 percent in Australia, 41.9 percent in New Zealand, 31.5 percent in Singapore, and 25.4 percent in the UK (p. 140). This is also evident in the sectors they were engaged in. For example, according to year

Table 3.7 Tertiary-educated Malaysians in OECD Countries, 1990 and 2000

<i>Resident in</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>Increase (%)</i>
Australia	34,716	39,601	14.07
USA	12,315	24,695	100.53
UK	9812	16,190	65.00
Canada	8480	12,170	43.51
New Zealand	4719	5157	9.28
Others	2607	4508	72.92
Total	72,649	102,321	40.84

Source: Docquier and Marfouk (2004)

2000 census data, 35 percent of tertiary-educated Malaysians in the UK and 24 percent in Australia were engaged in the health and social work sector, 22 percent in Canada and 17 percent in the USA were engaged in real estate business activities, while 24 percent in New Zealand were engaged in financial mediation (OECD, 2012b). Using various 2011 census data, a recent World Bank report estimates that the numbers of overseas Malaysians and the share of those who are tertiary educated are 61,675 and over 75 percent in the USA, and 23,530 and over 70 percent in Canada (The World Bank, 2015, pp. 13–18). The same report estimates that there are 116,193 overseas Malaysians in Australia, of which over 70 percent have completed secondary education and above (*ibid.*).

Working backwards from the number of tertiary-educated Malaysians in selected overseas education destinations, it appears that many do stay on after graduating (Table 3.8). The retention rate is especially high in the UK, at 133.3 percent in 2000 and 71.1 percent in 2010. The retention rate in Australia seems to have fallen from 41.7 percent to 34.3 percent between 2000 and 2010. One possible explanation could be that student migrants moved to Singapore for postgraduate employment due to Singapore's economic growth and favourable immigration policies in the 2000s.

In an online survey ($n = 158$) of overseas Malaysians conducted by Wake Up Call in February 2012, it appears that a substantial proportion stayed on for work after their overseas studies (Fig. 3.13). This was particularly

Table 3.8 Estimated proportions of Malaysian tertiary-educated migrants staying on after graduation in selected countries, 2000s and 2010s

<i>Destination</i>	<i>2000s</i>			<i>2010s</i>		
	<i>2000^a</i>	<i>1998^b</i>	<i>Stay on</i>	<i>2010^a</i>	<i>2007^b</i>	<i>Stay on</i>
Australia	38,620	16,118	41.7 %	51,556	17,691	34.3 %
USA	24,085	–	–	34,045	5398	15.9 %
UK	12,898	17,197	133.3 %	16,609	11,811	71.1 %
New Zealand	4221	1892	44.8 %	7608	1727	22.7 %

Source: ^aThe World Bank (2011d); ^bUIS (2013)

Notes:

1. Assuming three-year degree programmes, tertiary-educated Malaysians in 2010 would have entered the respective countries as international students in 2007.
2. 1998 international student data is used for 2000 as 1997 data is not available.

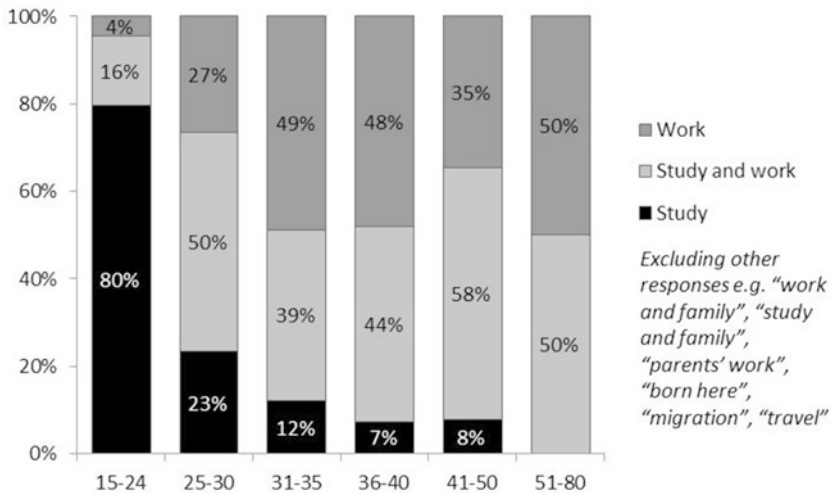


Fig. 3.13 Overseas Malaysians' reasons for residing in current place of residence, by age group.

Source: Calculated from Wake Up Call Malaysia (2012) dataset

significant amongst the 41–50 age group, followed by the 25–30 and 51–80 age groups. The relatively smaller proportions of stayers in the 31–35 and 36–40 age groups could be explained by higher chances of transnational career mobilities during their prime career years. In other words, they could have moved to another location for work after their overseas education.

To examine this further, I looked at data on duration of stays of tertiary-educated Malaysians in OECD countries. Based on year 2000 census data, the majority have resided in selected OECD countries for 10–20 years (Fig. 3.14). This is followed by stays of more than 20 years. Taking information from Figs. 3.4 and 3.5 together, this suggests that there has been a culture of migrating for education and staying on in their education destination countries for a significant part of their adult lives. If, following Beine et al.'s (2006) findings discussed earlier, we assume that Malaysian emigrants left Malaysia between 12 and 18 years of age, they would be in the age range of 22–38 years old after residing overseas for 10–20 years. This is a young and economically active age group who are still relatively mobile. And indeed, this was what I found amongst the mobile Malaysians I interviewed, particularly those who were resident in Singapore and the UK (compared to those who returned to Malaysia).

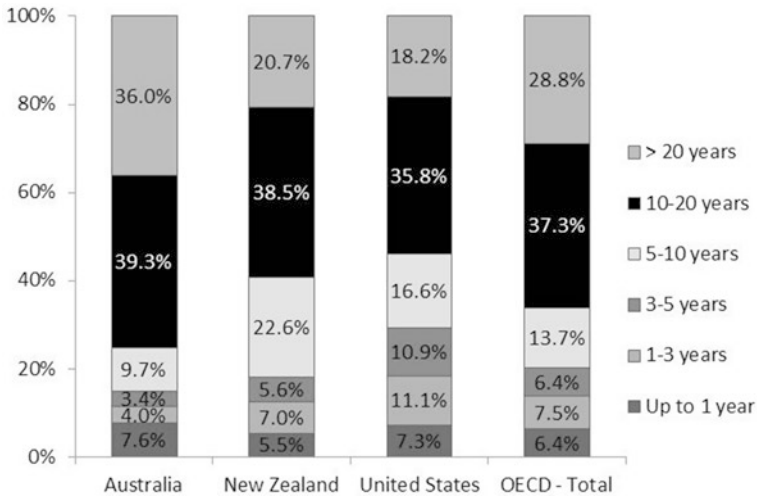


Fig. 3.14 Durations of stays of tertiary-educated Malaysian-born migrants in selected OECD countries, 2000.

Source: OECD (2012a)

MOBILE MALAYSIANS AND A CULTURE OF MIGRATION

Migration Is Normal

In sum, the data and analyses described above corroborate with my argument for the normalcy of migration and migratory movements amongst the Malaysian population in general, and mobile Malaysians and their families in particular. Indeed, I have found that migratory movements are a very common part of my mobile Malaysian respondents' family lives. Many had parents who hailed from different states in Malaysia. Their parents, in turn, had moved inter-state away from their own parental homes after marriage to set up their own nuclear family. For these respondents, childhood visits to their grandparents' towns and cities form a significant part of their emotional connection to Malaysia.

For example, S18 (mid-thirties, female, married) was born in City A in the state of Selangor. She and her sibling were sent as infants to live with their grandmother in City B in northwest Peninsular Malaysia while her parents lived and worked in City A. When she was about five years old, the family moved to Town A in the state of Johor as her father was

transferred by his company there. The family continued to move around within the state of Johor following her father's job transfers. By the time she started primary school, the family had moved to Town B in the state of Kelantan. S18 lived there for six years until she moved to Singapore for her secondary school education. In the short span of her early childhood years, S18 had migrated across four states in Peninsular Malaysia: in the northwest, Selangor in the mid-west, Johor in the south, and Kelantan in the northeast.

Another respondent, M17 (mid-thirties, male, married) was born in Town C in the state of Johor. When he was three years old, his family moved to City A where he spent his growing up years. Although the family resided there, his father ran factories in Town D in the state of Johor and Town E in the state of Perak. Growing up, he would spend his school holidays in these towns. As his relatives lived in Town C and Town F in the state of Johor, his family would also pay visits during school holidays. M17 subsequently went to Singapore for four years of secondary schooling. He then returned to Malaysia for pre-university education. He then went on to pursue university education in the UK and has worked in the UK, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia before his second 'return' to Malaysia. M17 credits his first return to Malaysia as a significant factor in inducing his current return.

I would not have returned to KL for the second time if I had not done the first stint. I know what I am getting myself into now. Whereas the laid back attitude of KL was stifling when I was [younger], now it is extremely liberating as [an older person who] has a kid, varied interests outside work, more experience and more capital.

Some of my respondents grew up with their family members scattered across two or three locations in Malaysia and/or Singapore, such as S21 (mid-thirties, male, married) who comes from a large family of nine siblings. His family engaged in a transnational household arrangement when he turned three: his father resided in Malaysia with the five eldest siblings, while he moved to Singapore with his mother and three siblings. When S21 was in secondary school, his mother returned to Malaysia to attend to his father's health, leaving S21 and his elder siblings in Singapore. As a child, S21 would make three annual stay-visits to his hometown: during Chinese New Year, mid-year school holidays, and end-of-year school holidays. As each school holiday would last for one to two months, this meant that he spent about a quarter of a year in Malaysia.

Similarly, L10's (late twenties, male, single) narration of his family's migratory movements demonstrates how his family had undertaken circulatory mobility to suit life circumstances:

I was born in [City B] but I was raised in [City C in the state of Selangor]. ... When my dad graduated from [university] he got a job in [City A]. So my mum followed him down [to City A] and my mom got pregnant with my oldest [sibling] ... at that time there was no one who could take care of my mum when she was pregnant, because we have no family members in [City A]. So my mum had to go back to [City B].

Thus, L10's father had migrated for work, while his mother migrated for marriage. His mother then returned to her hometown to access her own family's help in caring for two young children. L10's family subsequently resided in City C.

While such temporary, circular, and frequent migratory movements occurred within Malaysia, some of my respondents experienced similar movements internationally. This has been the case especially for mobile Malaysians whose parents were already international migrants, such as L14 (early thirties, female, single) and L15 (mid-thirties, female, married). L14's parents came to the UK in the 1970s to pursue their university degrees. Her eldest sibling was born in City D in the state of Johor because her mother 'happened to be at home' then. After her parents graduated from university, they stayed on in the UK and worked for a year. During this time, L14 was born and automatically acquired British citizenship. This is because children born in the UK before 1 January 1983 were automatically British citizens regardless of the immigration status of their parents, unless at the time of birth the father was a diplomat or consul (UKBA, 2011). Subsequently, L14's parents decided to return to Malaysia as they felt that with family support, Malaysia was a better place to bring up their children. The family moved to City A, where L14 spent her growing up years. Her parents continued to live in City A until today, while L14 returned to the UK for university in the late 1990s.

L15 has a similar story. Her father also came to the UK to pursue his university degree, and she was also born in the UK and acquired British citizenship in the same manner as L14. As L15 was the first grandchild in the family, her grandmother wanted to bring her up in Malaysia. When she was less than a month old, her grandmother came to the UK and brought her back to Malaysia. L15's childhood years involved international and internal

migration, shuttling between her parents, her grandmother, and her extended family. When she was six years old, she returned to the UK to join her parents for a year. She then returned to Malaysia for her primary education. During her primary school years, she lived with her grandmother in Town G, an aunt in Town H, and another aunt in Town I within the state of Kedah. After completing her primary school, she joined her mum in the UK for a while, before returning to Malaysia for residential school. After completing her secondary school, she again joined her mum in the UK.

In sum, migratory movements, both internal and international, are a common component of my respondents' and their parents' lives. Perhaps as a result of these frequent migratory movements, mobile Malaysians seem to accept that migration is a very normal part of life. Perhaps then, by the time they reached the stage of departing from Malaysia themselves, it was not a very difficult decision to make.

Migration Geographies

While the previous section looked at migratory movements during mobile Malaysians' growing up years, this section examines their migration geographies over the life course. Figure 3.15 illustrates the migration geographies of all 67 mobile Malaysian respondents. Each horizontal bar maps individual respondents' country of residence throughout their life course. As is evident from this illustration, this is a group of highly mobile people. About a third were internal migrants prior to their departure from Malaysia (20 out of 67 respondents). 36.7 percent of non-returnee respondents returned to Malaysia before leaving again (18 out of 49 non-Malaysia-based respondents). Amongst the 18 returnee respondents, a third were second or third time returnees.

As Hugo (2011) observes of the Australian context, there is a complex and circular flow of Malaysian migrants into and out of Australia as both temporary and permanent migrants. In addition to temporary circular flows within the Malaysia-Australia corridor, there are also remigration of Malaysia-born Australian residents to third countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong, the UK, and New Zealand. Hugo also highlights that there are many Malaysians with Australian permanent residence status who were actually domiciled in Malaysia but returned to Australia to visit periodically.

Extending Hugo's observations to the mobile Malaysian respondents' migration geographies here, we can see that there could have been similar migration and residence strategies being employed. However, as

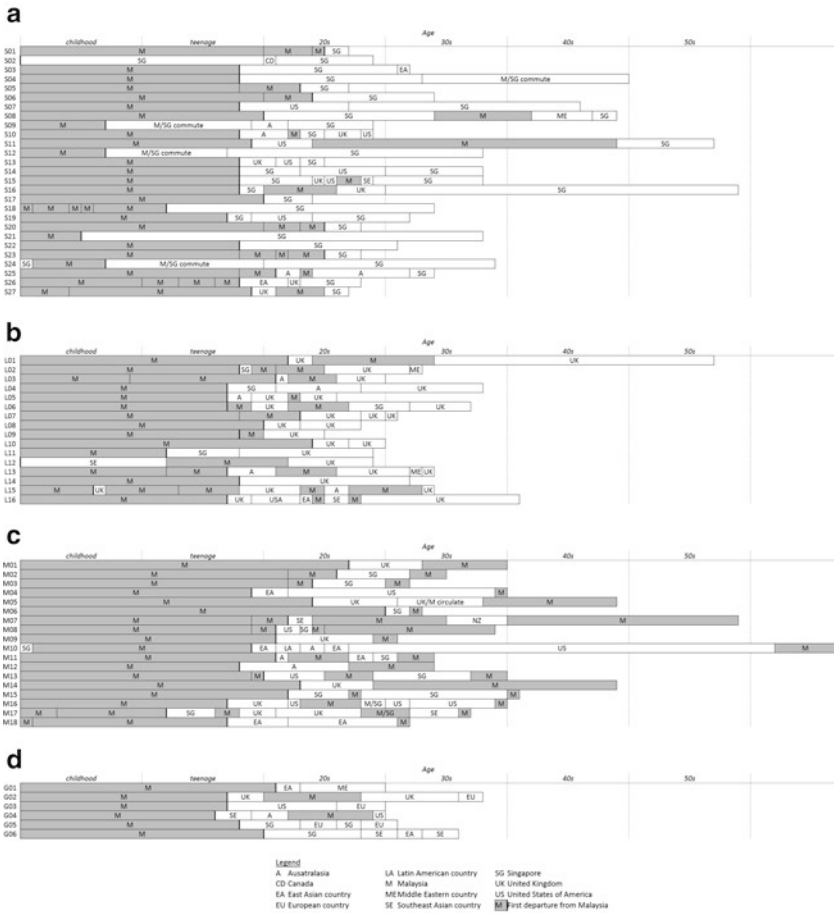


Fig. 3.15 Respondents' migration geographies. (A) Singapore-based respondents. (B) London/UK-based respondents. (C) Returnee respondents. (D) 'Global'-based respondents

I argue in this book, these strategic migration and residence mobilities must be contextualised to the structural frameworks of race, education, and citizenship in Malaysia's post-colonial environment. In other words, although the mobile Malaysian respondents in this study partake in a culture of migration that accords them transnational mobility, I argue

that this culture of migration has been in part an inevitable response towards structural constraints in post-colonial Malaysia. More importantly, over time, this culture of migration has developed to such an extent that the individual migrants who partake in it go into it automatically and almost by default. .

Migration Mentality

Despite my respondents' individual and family migration histories, it is interesting that none of them—with the exception of L16 (early forties, female, married)—voluntarily identified the commonality of migration behaviours and practices within their families and social networks. It appears that migration has become a kind of socialised habitus which informs and affects their subsequent migrating lives. In other words, migration has become an accepted norm for my mobile Malaysian respondents. They often cannot articulate their reasons for pursuing overseas education, or why they went through certain education streams and not others. Here, L16's narrative articulates this clearly.

You must put this in historical context also. I think [the] Chinese in Malaysia, because we were migrants ... like for example my grandfather was born in China and came to Malaysia as a [teenager]. I think if you are not ... that far away from that migration experience, ... it forms a large part of your psyche. I think a lot of Malaysian-Chinese have moved around so much that you don't realise how difficult it is.

I mean, you grow up with all these stories or all these ideas that: 'Oh yeah, you should just bear with it. You are going to have to go overseas to study anyway.' As if it's going to be so easy. I only realised this when I went to the US and met all these people who are in so much trouble, for the fact that they are separated from their parents, from their homes, from their friends. And I mean the American students who are complaining about their problems. And I thought: 'Yeah, but you just moved two states away to go to university. I have travelled thousands of miles to come here.'

With my experience it made me realise that people who grow up with so much of what I call ... migration stories, migration mentality ... I don't know, culture, that you actually forget how hard it is. And then you sort of impress upon your children that that is something that somehow they are supposed to do.

But that's also related to the way Chinese people are treated in Malaysia. Because you are also brought up with this whole idea that it's almost natural

to just go overseas to study—which is also true for Malays and Indians, not just Chinese. But it’s also been inborn ... it’s almost as if you have to seek a better life somewhere else.

L16 articulates the internalised socialisation of the ‘migration mentality’, pointing to two specific issues. First, the circulation of migration stories and experiences undertaken by their parents and grandparents appears to have translated into the normalcy of migrating lives amongst mobile Malaysians. Second, as a result of British colonial legacies of racial stereotypes, Malay indigeneity and race-stratified education system—all of which have been inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state in the form of *bumiputera*-differentiated policies—non-*bumiputera* Malaysians appear to have taken it for granted that migration is inevitable and is ‘something that somehow they are supposed to do’. This is what I call the culture of migration.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I expand upon this book’s argument that British colonial legacies further exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state institutionalised structural frameworks that have contributed towards a culture of migration amongst mobile Malaysians. In particular, I explained the significance of migration and migration-related issues (such as citizenship, indigeneity, differentiated and special rights) in the making of Malaysia, which in turn implicates upon the nature of Malaysian citizenship and the migration geographies of Malaysian migrants—internally and internationally. While the pre-colonial period saw small-scale, ‘voluntary’ local and regional migrations, the colonial period saw large scale, ‘involuntary’ labour immigration and ‘squatter’ resettlement migration. Furthermore, this ambiguity has been opportunely propagated by the colonial and post-colonial governments by overlapping citizenship with nationality.

During the colonial to post-colonial transition period, it was not uncommon for circular migratory movements to occur as borders were relatively porous. This has been in part a result of the constant shifting of territorial boundaries and the arbitrary amalgamation of political entities. In effect, this has produced a situation where many Malaysians and Singaporeans have extended families that have settled in various parts of Malaysia and Singapore. It was only with the official delineation of the national boundaries of the Federation of Malaysia—in 1957, 1963, and

1965—and Singapore in 1965 that individuals and families became formally registered and recognised as Malaysian or Singapore citizens.

During the 1970s-1980s, massive internal migration movements occurred as a result of the post-colonial Malaysian government's urban development policies under the NEP's poverty reduction mandate. In effect, this produced population resettlement patterns that were in many ways similar to the after-effects of the Briggs Plan during the Malayan Emergency. While the Briggs Plan created Chinese New Villages that were dominated by Chinese communities, FELDA projects created plantation estates that were dominated by Malay and Indian communities. In very similar ways, these government-led initiatives have led to the unintended creation of segregated Malay, Indian, and Chinese settlements and communities. This physical segregation further reinforces and exacerbates the existing racial hierarchy and racial stereotypes.

Overall, Malaysian migrants appear to have a greater propensity for migration—both internally and internationally. The number of international Malaysian migrants has been increasing rapidly, especially during the 1990–2000 decade. As my non-returning respondents are resident in either Singapore or the UK, I also provided the broad migration trends of Malaysians to these destinations. Broadly, we have seen that changes in citizenship and immigration policies in these destination countries, as well as global economic trends, have impacted Malaysian migrants' migration and citizenship decisions. However, Malaysia's domestic politics could also be a contributing factor. Notably, during the 12th and 13th Malaysian General Elections, there were sudden increases in the number of Malaysians who acquired British citizenship. There was also a sudden increase in the number of Malaysians who were granted student visas during the 13th Malaysian General Election. Given that education-migration is often a first step towards long-term residence and settlement, this suggests that mobile Malaysians' culture of migration is still going strong.

The dual approach to Anglo-Malay versus vernacular education systems in colonial Malaya, as well as the *bumiputera*-differentiated education system in post-colonial Malaysia has institutionalised a culture of migrating for overseas education. On the one hand, state-sponsored education-migration, predominantly for *bumiputera*-Malays, institutionalised temporary education-migration with the likelihood of postgraduate return to Malaysia to take up civil service positions. On the other hand, familial sponsored education-migration, predomi-

nantly undertaken by non-*bumiputeras*, is pursued as a means to social mobility and oftentimes leads to permanent settlement.

These contextual factors impact upon Malaysia's culture of migration in two ways. First, migration and mobility is a common way of life and thus perceived as something normal. This includes temporary and/or short-term migration between cities and states (e.g. for work or family relocation), as well as longer-term migration at certain life stages (e.g. education or marriage). Crucially, the normalcy of migration is carried into mobile Malaysians' migration pathways. Thus, what we describe as 'transnational' or 'international' migration—assumed to be a more or less permanent stay in a cross-border location—would perhaps be conceived of by mobile Malaysians as a temporary step in their circulatory and perpetual migrating lives. Thus, a stay of two to five years could be seen as temporary, with a view towards an eventual return to Malaysia, often perceived as the perpetual 'home'.

Second, this culture of migration is also inherently *bumiputera*-differentiated. Here, two extreme examples capture this stratification. On the one hand, government scholars and civil servants—predominantly *bumiputera*-Malays—are typically sent to Western and Commonwealth countries such as Australia, the UK, New Zealand, and the USA. On the other hand, MICSS students—predominantly non-*bumiputera* Chinese—turn to destinations such as Taiwan, Singapore, and the USA because their UEC qualifications are recognised in these countries. This means that overseas Malaysian communities in specific geographies are stratified by the education systems they went through in Malaysia, prior to their emigration. Given the *bumiputera*-differentiated nature of Malaysia's education system from the primary level onwards, this means that this education-inspired culture of migration continues to perpetuate the ethnic stratification introduced by the British colonial administration in the very first place.

In the next chapter, I detail the various education-migration pathways I found amongst my mobile Malaysian respondents. I pay particular attention to how race is materialised, experienced, and propagated through these education-migration pathways.

NOTES

1. With the exceptions of S16 and M10 in their 60s (i.e. born in the 1950s).
2. In the Malaysian public school system, students would normally complete secondary school at ages 17–18 and pre-university at ages 19–20 (see Fig. 2.2).

3. Excluded from this discussion are works on international migration of non-Malaysians to Malaysia.
4. Calculated from Hirschman's (1975) estimation of 490,000 net emigration from Peninsular Malaysia compared to the 1970 Malaysian population of 8.7 million.
5. Calculation from the 2010 Malaysian population of 26,013,000 (Table 1.2).
6. Of the top ten nationalities granted visas (excluding visitor and transit visas) to the UK between 2005 and the first quarter of 2015, five (including Malaysia) are Commonwealth country nationalities (UK Home Office, 2015c). The remaining five are China, the USA, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and Turkey.
7. Other routes include illegal and undocumented immigration.
8. With effect from 6 April 2015, Tier 1 (General) was closed to all applicants, including those who were already in the UK (UKBA, 2015).

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Education-Migration Pathways and the (Re) Production of Race

In Chap. 3, we have seen how education is often a first step towards mobile Malaysians' emigration and long-term settlement overseas. Furthermore, linking this to what was discussed in Chap. 2, we can begin to see how this culture of education-migration can be understood in the context of British colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship that have been inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state. This chapter extends this line of argument by focusing on mobile Malaysians' education-migration pathways, paying particular attention to how race is in turn produced and reproduced in relation to these pathways.

In addition to detailing empirical findings, the broader aim of this chapter is to contribute towards existing knowledge on education-migration and consequent migration pathways, such as skilled migration. Indeed, despite literature highlighting the need to interrogate the inter-relationship between education-migration and other forms of migration (Findlay, King, Smith, Geddes, & Skeldon, 2012; Li, Findlay, Jowett, & Skeldon, 1996; see also Raghuram, 2013), little has been done in this regard, especially with respect to the Malaysian case. This is not to say that existing research on the Malaysian emigration do not point out that migrating for education has often been a step towards familial migration and permanent settlement in the host or third countries. In fact, studies on the Malaysian-Chinese diaspora do highlight this (e.g. Cartier, 2003; Nonini, 1997). However, these studies come with two shortcomings. First, they contribute towards the assumption that there is a common

and homogenous experience amongst the Malaysian diaspora. Second, and more importantly, they contribute towards the reification of race as a divisive and taken-for-granted social category. Both points highlighted here contribute towards the obscuring of any diversity in experiences and motivations for migration amongst the Malaysian diaspora—that is, any diversity *despite, and in addition to*, race. This also includes the examination of how education experiences in Malaysia (i.e. prior to emigration) relate to the varied education-induced migration geographies of the Malaysian diaspora.

This chapter examines mobile Malaysians' culture of migration, specifically in relation to education-induced migration. This chapter extends three interrelated arguments. First, it is necessary to extend the temporal lens backwards to examine how the historical development of the domestic education system implicates upon contemporary international education-migration. Second, and relatedly, this enables an examination of how education-induced migration often becomes a first step towards other types of migration pathways (e.g. marriage migration, skilled migration, etc.). In this book, I refer to this continuum of migratory pathways as mobile Malaysians' culture of migration. Third, extending this book's argument about the longevity of British colonial legacies in post-colonial Malaysia, and more specifically in relation to contemporary migration phenomena, this chapter argues that the colonial institutionalised idea of race (re)produces this culture of education-induced migration. Furthermore, race is in turn reproduced in mobile Malaysians' education-migration pathways.

Before detailing the empirical findings and analysis, the following section provides a recap of Malaysia's race-stratified education system (Chap. 2) and education-migration trends (Chap. 3), and relates this to mobile Malaysians' culture of migration.

RACE AND EDUCATION-MIGRATION PATHWAYS

Mobile Malaysians' culture of migrating for overseas education can be traced to two intertwined historical processes. The first is the British colonial administration's two-pronged approach towards Anglo-Malay versus vernacular education during the colonial period. Anglo-Malay education was prioritised as this assisted in legitimising the British's role as 'Malay Protectors' (Koh, 2008, p. 27). In contrast, vernacular education was not a priority in the British's agenda and received less

intervention and support. This, compounded with the physical and cultural segregation of racial communities as a result of the British's 'divide-and-rule' strategy, set the foundations for the second process during the post-colonial period, which is the development and institutionalisation of a race-stratified education system. While both the British colonial administration and the post-colonial Malaysian government play important roles in this to some extent, the respective racial communities are also active stakeholders who have staunchly defended the continuation of their vernacular schools, language, and culture.¹

The dualistic approach towards *bumiputera* and non-*bumiputera* education worsened after the 1970s. Careful readers will notice that the practice of prioritising Malays for government-sponsored overseas scholarships has been taking place in colonial Malaya. However, this operated on a much smaller scale compared to the systematic prioritisation of *bumiputera* education implemented in post-colonial Malaysia after the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1971. On the one hand, state-sponsored overseas education, predominantly for *bumiputera*-Malays, created a flow of temporary migration with the likelihood of postgraduate return to Malaysia to take up civil service positions. As some of these government scholarship holders were accompanied by their spouses and young family members, this has also led to permanent settlement in the host countries.² This was especially the case for those who went to the UK for their overseas education. Their children who were born before 1 January 1983 in the UK enjoy the Right of Abode (ROA), a status akin to permanent residence in the UK. On the other hand, private and familial-sponsored education-migration, predominantly undertaken by non-*bumiputeras*, is pursued as a means to social mobility and oftentimes turns into permanent settlement. While both migration flows may result in the similar result of permanent settlement following an initially temporary overseas education stint, the difference is that those in the former pathway enjoy a relatively equal option of settling overseas or returning to Malaysia to a favourable postgraduate employment, while the latter would view returning to Malaysia as a less favourable or unviable option.

As a result, mobile Malaysians' culture of migration is also inherently racialised and *bumiputera*-differentiated. Other than the two examples described above, another specific education-migration pathway is that undertaken by graduates of the Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools (MICSS), who are predominantly non-*bumiputera* Malaysian-Chinese. MICSS are not government-funded and adopt a curriculum

developed by the United Chinese School Committees' Association of Malaysia (UCSCAM) and the United Chinese School Teachers' Association (UCSTA). MICSS students graduate with the Unified Examination Certificate (UEC), a leaving school certificate that has not been recognised for entry into Malaysian public universities. As a result, they have turned to Taiwan, Singapore, and the USA because the UEC is recognised for entry into institutes of higher learning in these countries. As the MICSS students and graduates have a strong and active alumni network, this has also facilitated the exchange of information pertaining to overseas education and postgraduate employment opportunities, as well as the rapid institutionalisation of this particular education-migration flow from Malaysia to Taiwan, Singapore, and the USA.

The examples above suggest that, overall, mobile Malaysian communities in specific host countries and geographies are stratified by the education stream they were channelled through in Malaysia. Given the *bumiputera*-differentiated nature of the Malaysian education system from the primary level onwards, this means that this education-induced culture of migration continues to perpetuate the racial stratification introduced by the British colonial administration in the very first place.

This chapter examines how this occurs by detailing eight distinct education-migration pathways found amongst the mobile Malaysians interviewed in this study. The first are daily commuters between Malaysia and Singapore, undertaken by those who were resident in Johor Bahru (JB), Malaysia's second largest city located at the Malaysia-Singapore border. The second are recipients of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Scholarship offered by the government of Singapore and administered by Singapore's Ministry of Education. The third are those who enrolled in twinning programmes in private institutes of higher learning, mostly located in Kuala Lumpur (KL) and the state of Selangor. The fourth are the MICSS students who typically further their studies in Taiwan, Singapore, and the USA. The fifth are non-*bumiputeras* who went to Malaysian public universities. The sixth are non-*bumiputera* Malaysians government scholarship holders. The seventh are *bumiputeras* who went through residential schools set up specifically for *bumiputeras*. Finally, the eighth are those who strategised the fastest possible route in their education-migration trajectories.

The eight pathways described in this chapter are by no means representative of the education-migration pathways of *all* mobile Malaysians. Instead, what I attempt to demonstrate here is the complex interrelationships

between race, education, and migration in post-colonial Malaysia, which has important implications for how mobile Malaysians understand and rationalise their migration pathways (detailed in this chapter), as well as how they enact their Malaysian citizenship vis-à-vis their migration geographies (to be detailed in Chaps. 5–6). This chapter argues that because race has been structurally embedded in Malaysia’s race-based education system and exacerbated through the practices of pro-*bumiputera* affirmative action policies, the racial ideology is carried forward into mobile Malaysians’ migration geographies. In other words, race is perpetuated and reinforced through the specific education-migration pathways, which have been stratified by race in the very first place.

INTERLUDE: RACE AND SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES BEFORE LEAVING MALAYSIA

Before detailing the eight education-migration pathways, it is worthwhile to introduce the narratives of M01 (early forties, female, married), M06 (early thirties, female, married), and S07 (late forties, male, married) pertaining to their observations and experiences of racial relations linked to schooling and growing up years in Malaysia. Their narratives are crucial because they signal the fact that understandings and biases about race were seeded during mobile Malaysians’ schooling and growing up years *in Malaysia*. On the one hand, these internalised knowledge and biases are carried forward into mobile Malaysians’ various education-migration pathways, with the effect of reinforcing and perpetuating racial stereotypes. On the other hand, those who had a more positive experience of interracial interactions in schools or throughout their growing up years in Malaysia appear to adopt a more tolerant view of *bumiputera*-differentiation. Generally speaking, this group appears to have a higher propensity for returning to Malaysia. This suggests that a more positive experience of racial relations, as well as a more tolerant view towards practices of pro-*bumiputera* policies prior to migration could influence mobile Malaysians’ propensity to return to Malaysia.

M01, for example, grew up ‘in a Malay environment’, ‘got on very well with the Malays’, and understood the Malay culture. After completing her postgraduate degree in the UK, she chose to return to Malaysia. While she is aware that pro-*bumiputera* treatments prevail in the Malaysian workplace, she is able to reconcile this and did not see it as an obstacle preventing her return. As she explains:

As long as you understand their [i.e. the Malays] background, where they are coming from, and their expectations, you can survive very well in Malaysia. It's a survival skill. But some Malaysian-Chinese, for example those from Penang, they go through Chinese [national-type] primary schools, Chinese [national-type] secondary schools, and even university without any Malay friends. So they might face a barrier that they can't overcome. But if you let your children grow up in a multiracial environment, the child will be more flexible, tolerant, and have a better understanding of different cultures.

M01's observation about the racial inclinations of the Malaysian-Chinese who were educated in national-type Chinese schools is also echoed in M06's narrative below, albeit from the opposite perspective. M06 was educated in a national-type Chinese school while her husband was educated in a national school. She makes the following general observation about the Malaysian-Chinese educated in these two different education streams.

When it comes to culture, maybe because we studied in [national-type] Chinese schools, maybe we read about Chinese culture, Chinese history, and all those stories. Maybe that's why we are more inclined to China. When we travel and see the place, we might feel that it's familiar ... But for my husband, ... when he visits China, to him it is a foreign culture. But for us who are Chinese-educated, it's very familiar. So there is a difference ... when they [i.e. the Malaysian-Chinese educated in national schools] view Malaysia and when they view China.

M06's observation shows that Malaysia's education system—which in itself is an outcome *and* perpetuator of Malaysia's socialised racial ideology inherited from the British colonial period—has produced a clear divide between people who went through different education streams. Indeed, Raman and Sua (2010, p. 130) observed that Malaysian students may 'go through the entire process of schooling with little or no ethnic interaction at all'. However, M06's observation here suggests that 'racial' division also occurs amongst coethnics—in this case, the Malaysian-Chinese—whom, as the racial ideology goes, *should* exhibit the same inclination and propensity towards all things 'Chinese'. Instead, the specific education stream one goes through appears to exert more influence on one's propensities towards divisive or tolerant forms of racial essentialism.

Indeed, this is also something I found in S07's narrative. S07 studied in a national school, and appears to accommodate a more tolerant and less victimised view of *bumiputera* policies. Like M01, he grew up with Malay

friends and understands that ‘the Malay culture is a very gentle culture’. Furthermore, he claims that ‘if you know them and you grew up with them, you’ll feel very comfortable, you won’t feel intimidated’. As he narrates his experience:

Like for example I tried to get into the Royal Military College.³ There were several rounds of cuts, short-listing, and I went to the very last round ... But I knew my chances were slim because the quota for non-Malays is very small. So I’m competing with non-Malays, I’m not competing with everybody. I’ve got friends who went with me who are Malays. And I know I’m better in grades, better in sports, better in every category. But he [i.e. a Malay friend] got it. So I knew it was due to race. But I never felt a grudge against them [i.e. the Malays]. Because I can see where that came from, because they are afraid of you. You are a non-Malay, so [they] want to protect the status quo.

So I never felt a grudge. I mean, I felt sad I couldn’t go in. There were a few of us, only one Malay got in. The rest, there were a few Malays who also didn’t get it. We hang out, we didn’t get it, so it’s ok. You know, he went in, we were quite happy for him. But I knew my chances were very tough, because I checked the other Chinese ... You can have seven ‘A’s, that guy’s got nine (laughs). You run so fast, he will run slightly faster. Because it was not just grades and sports, the things they tested you on. You might be a school runner, that guy’s a District runner. You are the District runner, that guy’s the State runner ... That’s why when I went in I knew from day one I had to compete in a long race, in that sense.

But again, I always tell my wife that I never felt a grudge. Because I accept it. Because it’s sort of like, in America they call it affirmative action. They want to help the native American, the Afro-American, because in some sense they were disadvantaged. So you want to give them a break, it’s ok.

But it makes me better. It makes me compete more, it makes me a better person. So for me to be equal I know I have to be better. So I will always be better. So when you come to a place where everything is neutral, you are already better. I mean, by instinct you are. So you go to school overseas, you are better because you have to be better, to be equal ... So maybe it’s something. I don’t know. Maybe it’s something that is advantageous for the Malaysian non-Malays. It spurs you on. It gives you an extra dimension. So maybe we should be thankful for that.

Interestingly, S07 was able to see past his personal experience of racial discrimination—in the form of racial quota limiting his chances to enter the Royal Military College—and interpret this positively as ‘something that is advantageous’ to the non-*bumiputeras*. His narrative also suggests

that pro-*bumiputera* treatments in Malaysia have produced a sense of self-reliance and resilience amongst the non-*bumiputeras*.⁴ This presents a stark contrast against M06's narrative. While M06 emphasised Chinese essentialism and inclinations towards Chinese language and culture from the perspective of a Malaysian-Chinese educated in a national-type school, M01 and S07 emphasised the understanding and tolerance of *bumiputera*-differentiation from the perspectives of the Malaysian-Chinese with a more intimate understanding of the Malaysian-Malays.

These differences in attitudes towards race and culture, however, do not necessarily translate into the national school-educated non-*bumiputeras* remaining in Malaysia because they can better understand and tolerate structural constraints imposed upon them. This is because non-*bumiputeras* from either education streams face the same (racialised) constraints in higher education, the job market, and in everyday life. The constraints may not be recognised at the primary, secondary, and pre-university stages, but they become visible and real at the higher education stage and beyond. This has contributed to a culture of migration, especially for overseas education, amongst mobile Malaysians. The following section details each of the eight education-migration pathways briefly described earlier.

EIGHT EDUCATION-MIGRATION PATHWAYS

JB-Singapore Commuters

In Chap. 3, we have seen that there has been a history of to-and-fro migratory and commuting mobilities across the Singapore-Malaysia causeway. By the 2000s, the number of daily commuters had grown more than five-fold to 150,000 on a daily basis (*New Straits Times*, 2009). This constitutes a substantial 15 percent of the overall JB population during that period. Thus far, however, there is no publicly available demographic data on the daily commuters.

Amongst the daily JB-Singapore commuters are school children who would typically leave their JB homes as early as 5:00 a.m. on school buses, catch some sleep during the 2-hour (or more) journey to their schools in Singapore, and return to their JB homes after 8 or 9 pm at the end of every day. Indeed, this was what some of my ASEAN Scholarship peers originating from JB did on a daily basis throughout their primary school years, until they moved into student hostels in Singapore after receiving the scholarship.⁵

One might wonder why parents would subject their young children to such harsh commuting on a daily basis. In addition to geographical proximity, the Singapore education system is favourably perceived as superior compared to the Malaysian education system. The use of English as a medium of instruction in Singapore as opposed to *Bahasa Malaysia* (or Malay) in Malaysia is preferred by middle-class parents. This is because English is seen as an important international language skill for their children's future careers. This could also be a cultural legacy amongst the ethnic Chinese. Takei, Bock, and Saunders (1973, pp. 7–8) have previously suggested that the Chinese are more willing 'to exploit opportunities to utilise English-language education as a means of obtaining positions in the modernising sections of the society'.

However, I argue that this could also be understood as effects of British colonial legacies. As I have explained in Chap. 2, English-medium schools have been prioritised by the British colonial administration, and institutionalised as a stepping stone towards prestigious civil service jobs. Furthermore, following the introduction of pro-*bumiputera* affirmative action policies in the 1970s, parents would have been aware of the limited opportunities for their non-*bumiputera* children to access public university places and government scholarships for overseas education. Since higher education is seen as a means towards social mobility and access to better postgraduate employment by middle-class parents, this meant that they had to plan early to secure their children's higher education pathways in the future. For JB parents, then, the daily commute to Singapore is a convenient and feasible solution. Earlier entry into the Singapore education system prepares their children to excel academically for entry into overseas universities at a later stage. Furthermore, Malaysian upper secondary and pre-university qualifications, the *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysian* (SPM) ('Malaysia Certificate of Education') and *Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia* (STPM) ('Malaysia Higher School Certificate'), were perceived to be less useful in gaining admissions into overseas universities than Singapore's GCE 'O' and 'A' Levels.

S12's (late thirties, male, married) narration captures the commonality of such practices amongst JB residents.

My parents used to work in the educational field, so they know that in terms of equality, in terms of education, we will get a better grasp of English which they think is important ... From the age of seven we have been crossing the causeway to study in Singapore. So that starts my relationship and my [sibling]'s relationship [with] Singapore. We study through primary school, secondary school, and through college, through university.

Similarly, S09 (late twenties, female, single) started commuting to Singapore at age seven for her primary school education. She continued these daily commutes through her secondary and pre-university years. Her two siblings also did the same. With her GCE 'A' Levels, S09 then went to an Australian university. Another respondent, S24 (late thirties, male, single), was born in Singapore but commuted daily to Singapore as his family returned to JB after his birth. He completed his pre-university education in Singapore and also went to an Australian university. Both S09 and S24 eventually returned to Singapore for postgraduate employment. At the time of interview, S09 is a Singapore permanent resident (PR), while S12 and S24 have taken up Singapore citizenship. After years of being accustomed to Singapore life through their early participation in Singapore's education system, it is very common for JB-Singapore daily commuters to settle permanently in Singapore in their adult years.

Indeed, S12's education pathway was crucial in directing him towards permanent settlement in Singapore. He moved to live in Singapore after ten years of daily commuting. After graduating from a Singapore public university, he became a Singapore PR due to the ease and security the status offered him in terms of immigration and employment. As his narrative below shows, the choice of permanent settlement in Singapore has also been informed by his perception that he would not be able to secure employment in the Malaysian job market due to his lack of Malay language skills.

Once you have gone through the educational cycle [in Singapore], and you know, in terms of speaking Malay we are not conversant in it, because we [were] not trained in it. We just know the basic things; we don't really understand the Malay language. So in terms of looking for jobs, the obvious choice would be in Singapore. Once you get the job here, you marry, you settle down in Singapore.

Although JB-Singapore commuters have been arguably shielded from experiencing *bumiputera*-differentiated treatments first-hand in terms of their education experiences, S12 had the benefit of observing MICSS students who became his university peers. His observation below concerns the language ability of MICSS students who were proficient in Mandarin but less so in English.

Education in Singapore will provide you with an advantage. I have actually seen my [MICSS] friends ... They came to [Singapore] because they are the top-tier [students]. They have to pass special entrance exams [to get into Singapore public universities] ... So this group of people are basically top

in brains ... in terms of Maths and Science they are top-notch. But they are still disadvantaged because of their linguistic capability. They can't present themselves well, they struggle with their written language, their presentation. So, for the first two years, you can see they struggle. But as usual, Malaysians are very resilient, they learn and pick up. They will eventually catch-up. But there is a catching-up.

So, to me it is a very clear-cut case. If I am in Malaysia, I will still make the same decision: send the kids to Singapore. Unless Malaysia change the emphasis [to] English [as] the national language ... You need to have a good grasp of it in order to compete.

S12's observations led him to conclude that English language skills, emphasised and embodied in Singapore's education system, is key to providing individuals with an advantage to compete in society. While his MICSS peers were 'top-notch' in terms of their scientific and mathematical knowledge and skills, they were 'disadvantaged' due to their lack of English language capabilities. In this way, S12's educational pathway has reinforced his belief that an English education in Singapore is better than a Mandarin or Malay education in Malaysia. This perpetuates the same belief, and thus the same education mobility strategy that his parents had laid out for him and his sibling.

ASEAN Scholars

In 1969, the Singapore government started offering the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Scholarship for ASEAN nationals to pursue pre-university education in Singapore (Ho & Tyson, 2011). This coincided with the introduction of pro-*bumiputera* affirmative action policies and *bumiputera* quotas for public university entry in Malaysia. The Scholarship has since been extended to lower and upper secondary levels, thus recruiting students into Singapore when they were between 12 and 16 years old.⁶ S18 (mid-thirties, female, married) received the Secondary One ASEAN Scholarship; L04 (late thirties, female, married) the Secondary Three ASEAN Scholarship; and S19 (early thirties, male, married) the Pre-University ASEAN Scholarship. While it is typical for students on these scholarships to continue their university education in Singapore, as was the case for S18, this was not the case for L04 and S19.

S18 came to Singapore for her secondary school education. Her sibling also did the same, although not on an ASEAN Scholarship. Their parents eventually relocated to JB to be geographically closer to them. S18's application for the ASEAN Scholarship was part of her parents' plans for her education pathway. As she explains:

During primary school, my parents already knew that they wanted me to try for [the ASEAN] scholarship ... [I] eventually got the scholarship and that's why we came [to Singapore]. So that was the start.

Hence, the Secondary One ASEAN Scholarship 'was the start' of S18's long stay in Singapore. After completing her GCE 'O' Levels, she received the ASEAN Pre-University Scholarship to continue her pre-university education in a Singapore junior college. She then entered a Singapore public university. After graduation, she worked in Singapore and subsequently married a Singaporean she met at university. At the time of our interview-conversation, she holds a Dependent Singapore Permanent Resident status through her marriage.

L04 came to Singapore after her *Sijil Rendah Pelajaran* (SRP)⁷ ('Lower Certificate of Education') examinations. After completing her GCE 'O' Levels in Singapore, she received the ASEAN Pre-University Scholarship. Thereafter, she obtained a Malaysian government scholarship for her university education in Australia. She rationalises this as 'purely by luck' and 'being in the right time, right place', as this happened during the period when *bumiputera* students were prioritised for Malaysian government scholarships. L04 credits her ASEAN Scholarship days for this, as she 'obviously proved an impeccable record' in her academic studies in Singapore. In this case, the ASEAN Scholarship became a stepping stone for her further education-migration pathways.

S19's decision to take up the ASEAN Pre-University Scholarship was one of careful calculations. He had wanted to pursue overseas university education in Australia or the USA. The Scholarship offered him a two-year 'wait out' period during the 1997 economic crisis, as well as a stepping stone to another scholarship for his overseas education.

⁷97 was the economic crisis, so it was really a toss-up between going abroad immediately after SPM or coming to Singapore for the ASEAN Scholarship. It sounded like a lot of money to me back then to just go direct to either America or Australia. So I thought maybe come to Singapore and do two years of 'A' Levels, wait it out and see what happens ... It eventually turns out in 2000 I got a scholarship to go to America. I wanted to study overseas, so that was that. And because of the scholarship I came back [to Singapore].

By being embedded in the Singapore education system, S19 was able to accumulate the relevant educational capital that enabled him to compete

on a meritocratic basis for his second scholarship. If he had stayed on in the Malaysia public school system, he would have faced limited scholarship opportunities as a non-*bumiputera*. His second scholarship, offered by a Singapore company, required him to return to Singapore for at least six years of postgraduate employment with the scholarship-sponsoring company. Thus, although he did ‘migrate’ onwards for higher education, he eventually ‘returned’ to Singapore for employment. He married a Singaporean he met during his US university years. At the time of interview, he holds Singapore PR status and has purchased a public flat in Singapore with his wife.

Twinning Programmes

According to Richards (2012), the emergence of the private market for higher education in Malaysia in the 1990s has been a result of two factors: firstly, the government’s realisation of the need to curb the exodus of students seeking overseas higher education and, secondly, human resource projections aligned with the government’s industrialisation plans. Indeed, following the institutionalisation of the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996, there has been an increase in the number of private institutions of higher learning in Malaysia. These private institutions typically offer upper-secondary programmes (e.g. GCE ‘A’ Levels and Australian Matriculation diplomas) and/or twinning programmes with overseas universities. Under twinning programmes, students would typically start their course in the Malaysian partner private colleges and institutes and complete their final year in the degree-conferring overseas university. Amongst the mobile Malaysian respondents interviewed in this study, it is interesting that none of those residing in Singapore took this route. Instead, some of those who are residing in London and the UK went through this route. Here, I elaborate on L03’s (late twenties, female, single) and L07’s (late twenties, male, single) experiences.

L03 was born in City B but grew up in City A. After completing SPM, she enrolled in a twinning programme in a private college in KL. She spent the first three years (Foundation Year and the first two years of her degree) in the college and her final year in Australia. When asked if she ever considered going to a Malaysian public university, her answer demonstrate the taken-for-granted nature of going for the twinning option.

I don't think it was an option to us ... Well, it was an option, you [could] always have done that. I just think the way my parents geared us up was to go and do 'A' Levels or Foundation Year, or something of that sort, as opposed to going to [Malaysian] universities ... It's an upbringing. So we never really considered it. It was like: 'Oh, if you don't have money then you would have to do that.'

L07 was born in City D in the state of Johor and moved to City A after his SPM. He completed a one-year South Australian Matriculation (SAM) programme at a private college in KL. Upon graduation, he enrolled in a twinning programme through a Malaysian private university. After the first two years of his degree in the Malaysia campus, he moved to the UK to complete his degree at a partner university. Similarly, L07 could not really explain why he had not considered studying in a Malaysian public university.

Oh, public university? Um, I did (hesitantly). But my parents were not very keen. Because of the level of education, the level of standards. And because my mum is a [healthcare professional] and my dad works in an international company, they deal with all sorts of people like local graduates [from Malaysian universities], overseas graduates. And they often tell me, in their opinion, because they have seen how local graduates perform in their company and in their sector, I think their impression is the standard is not as high as those [who have] graduated from [overseas]. So I think because of that, they want me to go overseas instead of studying in a local university.

In addition, L07 could not articulate his reasons for choosing the SAM over the STPM.

I did consider doing STPM ... But my parents didn't recommend me doing STPM. I don't know why. But I think from my own opinion, I probably wouldn't have done it too. Because I probably won't get a lot out of that compared to doing Matriculation or 'A' Levels. Because to go into universities overseas, or even any university, you need pretty good English ... When I first graduated from high school, my English was not very good, to be honest. So I think going into STPM wouldn't improve that aspect of the problem. So I went to Matriculation instead.

Evident in both L07's explanatory attempts is the unquestioned assumption that he *should* go for an overseas education rather than attending Malaysian public universities. The overseas education option, and hence

the SAM and twinning programme, is 'better' because it is perceived to offer opportunities to improve his English and accord a 'higher standard' in work performance once he successfully graduates with an overseas degree. No mention, however, was made to the difficulties of gaining admission to Malaysian public universities due to the *bumiputera* quota. This suggests that strategies to overcome structural forces in accessing higher education have been internalised and became an accepted way of life. In other words, going for overseas education became a default education-migration pathway one goes into without questioning, at least amongst people who would eventually become mobile Malaysians. Indeed, my findings here corroborate with Sin's (2006, p. 250) non-*bumiputera* Malaysian students in Australian universities who 'belief that the quality of Malaysian public universities has been greatly compromised', and who have an 'ingrained perception' that non-*bumiputeras* like themselves will face restricted access to these universities due to the practice of pro-*bumiputera* affirmative action policies.

However, it is also important to note that the mobile Malaysians discussed in this book are middle-class and relatively privileged individuals who can afford to pursue familial-sponsored overseas education. One could also argue that for non-*bumiputera* individuals without the same financial means, *not* pursuing university education (in Malaysian public universities or through twinning programmes) is another way of negotiating with pro-*bumiputera* affirmative action policies. As M01's earlier narrative suggests, it is a matter of 'surviving' in Malaysia.

While S13 (mid-twenties, female, single) did not enrol in a twinning programme, she chose to take 'A' Levels in a private college instead of the STPM. She subsequently obtained a scholarship for her degree in the UK, sponsored by a Singapore company. When asked why she chose 'A' Levels instead of STPM, as well as why she did not consider enrolling in Malaysian public universities, S13's response was that 'it was sort of given already'. She then qualified her response as follows.

Actually I'm not even sure how I came about to that thinking. But it was more like my parents already sort of said: 'It's good for you to explore something overseas if you can.' ... In Malaysia, the local universities, from what I hear, and from what my parents say, some of them are quite ... as in it's a bit harder, you know, because there are a lot of policies that might not be so favourable towards you ... But then again I have not experienced local universities. So yeah, just for record purposes, I do not know anything, I just hear-say (laughs).

While S13 alluded to unfavourable policies for entries into Malaysian local universities, it is interesting that she felt compelled to add a caveat by jokingly saying that she ‘[did] not know anything’ and that it was only ‘hearsay’. Here, S13’s behaviour needs to be contextualised to the discussion of race and how the post-colonial Malaysian state has institutionalised the criminalisation of anything that could be alleged to incite racial tensions (Chap. 2). Hence, S13 was being careful and performing self-censorship automatically and intuitively. This shows the long-lasting effects of the British colonial legacy of race in post-colonial Malaysia that have been internalised and carried forward by mobile Malaysians individually and collectively.

MICSS Students

Amongst the MICSS respondents, there were two typical education-migration pathways: the first is to Singapore, and the second is to Taiwan. As G05 (early thirties, male, single) candidly remarked: ‘Either we go to Singapore or we go to Taiwan. Because local [universities in Malaysia] don’t accept us (laughs).’ S14 (late thirties, male, married), S15 (late thirties, male, married), and G05 are typical of the former strategy of going to Singapore, while M04 (early forties, male, single) and M18 (early thirties, female, single) are of the latter strategy of going to Taiwan. S14, S15, and G05 finished high school at the time when the Singapore government was actively recruiting Malaysian students and professional workers. With attractive university scholarships and tuition grants, Singapore universities became a popular option especially for MICSS students. They were able to take special entrance exams to gain admission into Singapore public universities. During this period, only certain subjects, particularly science and engineering, were open to foreigners. According to S15, the majority of his MICSS peers entered Singapore universities through the same means. In fact, 50 percent of his cohort were residing and working in Singapore at the time of our interview-conversation.

S14’s response to my question on the reason why he did not consider entering public universities in Malaysia reveals the typical considerations for MICSS students. Firstly, being educated in a system that prioritised Chinese language and culture meant that his Malay language skills were not up to par for him to pursue university education where the medium of instruction was Malay. Secondly, for families without sufficient financial resources to fund their children’s overseas education in Western countries,

Singapore and Taiwan became alternative solutions as the costs were more affordable. This is especially if they were able to secure scholarships offered by these universities.

If I study in Malaysia I would have to take STPM, right? [At least that's the case] at that time. And I only have SPM. And frankly speaking, my SPM is not outstanding, especially Malay [language]. So it never crossed my mind. And for students studying in Chinese independent schools, if you are from humble background, either you take the scholarship to Singapore or you go to Taiwan. At that time [these were] the two major choices for me. Of course if your family is relatively well-off, then you have the chance to go overseas such as [to] Australia or USA.

G05 further makes the observation that although Singapore may not be the destination for university studies amongst his MICSS peers, it has turned out to be a popular destination for work after graduation. Amongst his cohort of about 300 students, a large majority went to Malaysian private colleges, about 50 went to Taiwan universities, and about 10 to Singapore universities. G05 observes that many of his high school peers were working in Singapore at the time of our interview-conversation: 'In the end, everybody comes to Singapore (laughs).'

M04 and M18 went to Taiwan to pursue their university degrees upon completing their UEC examinations. For M18, this was a natural choice as her elder sibling, also a MICSS student, had done the same before. She did not consider any other location and instead followed the education pathway her parents had laid out for her. M04, on the other hand, made a conscious decision to study in Taiwan as part of his long-term migration plan. As the eldest son with two younger siblings, he felt that it was his responsibility to pave the way for his siblings' further education and migration trajectories. After three years in a professional training programme at a Taiwan university, he was able to transfer credits and enrol in a US university. Upon graduation, he stayed on for work in the USA and pursued his Masters on a part-time basis. M04's narrative offers a glimpse of his considerations.

I started planning for my future before I graduated in Taiwan. Malaysia will not recognise my Taiwan qualification. So you can only work in some Taiwanese company, or a Chinese-run company in Malaysia. Also, when you graduate from Taiwan, your Malay and English are not as strong. You only know Mandarin. Will you be able to survive in Malaysia? No way. So back

then I was already searching around for the next possible route. I looked at how some of my seniors from high school were doing well in the US. So I contacted them to find out some information. After graduation I just continued to migrate further. It's all just following the plans.

These narratives show the structural barriers created by the exclusion of MICSS from Malaysia's mainstream education system. The exclusions are not only limited to the recognition of qualifications. More significantly, the exclusions have been based on two factors. First, language as a medium of instruction created a division between those with a good command of Malay, the national language required for public university entries and employment in certain sectors and industries in Malaysia, and those who do not. Second, there is a systemic segregation between national schools and MICSS—an obvious example being the lack of opportunities for social and educational interactions between students from the respective education streams. Ironically, this has fostered strong alumni networks amongst MICSS students. This is also contributed by the long tradition of community self-support and education philanthropy amongst the Malaysian-Chinese community which has supported the MICSS in the absence of government funding and recognition. These alumni networks serve as important resources for information and contacts about higher education, employment, and livelihoods in specific migration destinations. In this way, the already racialised and language-stratified education system (re)produces, and further perpetuates, a racialised education-migration flow in post-colonial Malaysia.

Non-bumiputeras in Malaysian Public Universities

S23 (late twenties, male, single), S20 (late twenties, male, single), and S01 (late twenties, female, married) are non-*bumiputera* Malaysian-Chinese who got into Malaysian public universities. While S23 got into his first choice programme and university, S01 and S20 did not. S01 was limited in her choice and could only apply to University A because it was the only university that accepted graduates from the Science stream into the programme she applied for. While she successfully got into University A, she noticed that there were only 5 Malaysian-Chinese students including herself in her cohort of about 200 students. S20 was allocated to a university in a remote location which was relatively less-established in the field he wanted to specialise in. Here, he explains how university placement allocation works in Malaysia:

When we finished STPM, ... you apply to the government, you fill in a form. And generally they look at your grades and also some other factors. And ultimately they decide where they will post you [to] ... if you are fortunate enough, you get the [programme] you want. If you are unfortunate you get something else.

Although S23 got into the programme of his choice at University B, he thought that his 'chances were quite slim' before the placement results were released. In fact, he had enrolled in Form Six (for STPM) and a diploma programme at a private college in KL in case his application to University B was not successful. The programme that he was admitted into was a diploma transition year for fresh SPM graduates. Only those who pass the selection criteria at the diploma stage would be able to enter the degree programme. S23's account below shows how *pro-bumiputera* practices took place in reality.

... my first year batch we had about 60 people ... The racial balance was quite ok, about 30 Malays, 30 Chinese ... But because of some sort of racial quota—I mean it's not set in rules, it's not set in stone ... but it will look horribly wrong if a big percentage of Chinese went up [i.e. pass the diploma stage and successfully enter the degree programme]. So after that they cut down to 30 people, and among them were 20 Chinese and 10 Malays. And then the university took in 15 other Diploma holders from [other] institutions ... before we joined back into the Degree programme ... After that the racial quota became two-thirds.

Although the majority of the Malaysian-Chinese students in S23's diploma programme did well and could legitimately transition into the degree programme, an 'unofficial' racial quota was practised so that it would not 'look horribly wrong'. Implied in S23's narrative above is that if there were no such racial quota, the proportion of Malaysian-Chinese would be higher.

When asked about whether there were students other than the Malaysian-Malays and the Malaysian-Chinese, S23's explanation demonstrates the stereotypical race-stratified division between professions amongst the racial groups in Malaysia.

I would say, in [University B], very rare to see Indians. Very, very rare. I think it's more of the upbringing in Malaysia, that usually Indians, their parents will be asking them to be dentists, doctors, or lawyers. So, you see how the thing works? You can see the trend.

This shows that racial stereotypes, generally tied to the division of labour during the British colonial period, have transcended the colonial to post-colonial transition and is still very much alive in Malaysian social life and in people's ways of knowing.

Non-bumiputera Government Scholars

While there are pro-*bumiputera* quotas for government scholarships, it is not impossible for some non-*bumiputeras* to obtain such scholarships. L06 (late thirties, female, single), for example, was a non-*bumiputera* government scholar. As the scholarship covered pre-university studies, she moved to KL for 'A' Levels before completing her university degree in the UK. Her pre-university and university experiences as a non-*bumiputera* government scholar significantly informed her migration decisions, which includes considerations about the extent of racial discrimination in Malaysia. As she explains:

... the Chinese [scholars] were allowed to do three years university degrees abroad if you get straight 'A's. But if you were Malay, you can get lousy scores, like all 'C's. I scored all 'A's and they scored all 'C's and we all end up in the same place.

That's why I don't want to go back [to Malaysia]. Because discrimination is too much for me. I don't see the point why I worked harder, but because I'm Chinese, I get discriminated. I think it's rubbish. And I think it still happens. I see it in my own family. My [relative] married a Malay. Not just a Malay. A Malay with royal blood. So [my relative] gets double passes. One, because [the spouse] is a Malay, and then [there are] all these side royalty benefits. That is totally not right. It's not right.

At least here in London, you don't ... ok, maybe not now, maybe a few years back there would be some [who] will call you 'stupid Chinese', but not so much now ... the impact is not so obvious ... there's no quota. Whereas in Malaysia there are quotas on things. Like scholarships, two-thirds was always for *bumiputera* and one-third [for] Chinese.

In addition to her observations of discrimination based on *bumiputera* status, L06 has also noticed differences between the Malaysian-Chinese and the Malaysian-Malay scholars during her studies in the UK.

Author: When you got your scholarship, how many [Malaysian-] Chinese were there? Say altogether?

L06: 65. See, I know. We all worked so hard when we were here. And during that time we try to maximise ... because we never knew whether we would have money to come back [to the UK] again. So while we were here we were working part-time, like [in] restaurants—illegally. And then we use that money to travel around, to Europe ... and we went for summer exchange to America ... Whereas the Malays [who] came with us, they don't work part-time. And they spent all their pocket money buying hi-fi. It's really funny. Buying hi-fi or second-hand cars ... Even my English uni friends at that point said: 'You see, they buy hi-fi, you go abroad.' It's quite funny (laughs).

Although this has been recounted with humour, it is evident that racial stereotypes persist and were carried into L06's migration. Her narratives demonstrate her easy identification with 'the Chinese' and distinction from 'the Malays'. L06's case shows that even if efforts were made to transcend the *bumiputera* versus non-*bumiputera* divide in the form of shared overseas education experiences as government scholars, in reality this may serve to reinforce existing racial divisions. Linking this back to this book's argument, the significance of British colonial legacies is in their longevity that transcends the material end of the colonial period. In this case, the legacy exists in the form of an internalised racial ideology that surfaces at both the individual and institutional levels.

Bumiputera Residential Schools

In Chap. 2, we have seen that schools and colleges for *bumiputera*-Malay students were set up following the implementation of the NEP. Both L13 (mid-thirties, female, married) and L15 (mid-thirties, female, married) went to *bumiputera* residential secondary schools. As entries are competitive, a sense of prestige is attached to graduates from these schools. Similar to how the Malay College Kuala Kangsar (MCKK) enabled a direct link to postgraduate civil service positions during the colonial period, graduates from these residential schools often end up securing government scholarships for overseas education. L15 makes the following observation of her peers who have settled comfortably in the UK, which also led to her reflection on the segregated nature of Malaysia's education streams.

And they are all like doctors and paediatricians and specialists. And I'm sure they are all JPA [i.e. government] scholars ... Some of them are my batch mates from my residential school, some are my juniors. When they blog they have like someone's child's birthday, and they have it in a castle somewhere. It's very expensive (laughs). I mean like all the nice clothes and the decorations, the food. Nice life.

And some of them, they are probably just here to stay [temporarily] because they bought property in Malaysia. So they are coming back [to Malaysia] at the end of the day, like when they retire. These are mostly Malays. I don't know any Chinese.

The strange thing is, the only Chinese friends I know of are Singaporeans, the ones I made friends with during my undergraduate days [in the UK]. Because I went to a *Sekolah Kebangsaan* [i.e. national school], and then I went to a convent, so there were a lot more other races. But [when] I went to a residential school, it was 100 percent Malay, not even *bumi* [i.e. *bumiputera*]. Obviously Malays are *bumis* ... [but] you still have like Christian [*bumis*], not just Malay, or Muslim. And when I went to university, then only I had Indian friends. The Indian friend is from Kenya (laughs). So when I think about it, it's quite strange (laughs).

And even in [Malaysian public] universities, I can see there is polarisation. Like the Chinese with the Chinese during group work. Or like socialising. Malays are with the Malays, Indians are with the Indians ... I like to think that it's not because you want to segregate yourself. The language, the culture, and the things you talk about are different ... You really have to make an effort to make friends with each other.

L15's observations above point to two issues in relation to the longevity of British colonial legacies and the culture of migration amongst mobile Malaysians. First, race-based segregation institutionalised in different education streams at the primary school level has been carried onwards into the later education stages. As she observed, racial polarisation occurs at secondary and higher education levels as well. This means that the post-colonial Malaysian state's efforts to consolidate a common national education system from the secondary school stage onwards (see Chap. 2) have not been successful in removing racial segregation. Second, although *bumiputera* residential schools were theoretically open to all *bumiputeras*—and not just *bumiputera*-Malays—this has not been the case operationally, at least from L15's personal experience. Furthermore, the continued polarisation of *bumiputera*-Malay education has created a group of *bumiputera*-Malay government scholars who have attained social mobility—much like the creation of the Malay political, bureaucratic, and education elite class

during the colonial era. In this way, the British colonial legacy of race-stratified and race-prioritised education system has continued to extend its influence in post-colonial Malaysia.

The Fastest Possible Route

If overseas education is the ultimate and often taken-for-granted goal, some individuals and families would go to the extent of strategising the fastest possible way to achieve that end goal. This involves the familial 'spatial strategies' (Waters, 2006) of migrating to selected education destinations at different stages in order to capitalise on different programme durations and course commencement times. M17's (mid-thirties, male, married) and L05's (mid-twenties, female, single) education-migration trajectories typify such strategies.

After completing primary school in Malaysia, M17 went to Singapore to attend secondary school. One of the reasons for doing so is to cut short his secondary school years by a year, as this would take four years in Singapore compared to five years in Malaysia. After completing his GCE 'O' Levels, his parents arranged for him to return to KL to pursue GCE 'A' Levels at a private college instead of doing the same in Singapore. This was because this would take 18 months in KL compared to two years in Singapore. This meant that he would be able to commence university in the UK by the month of September of his GCE 'A' Levels year, instead of having to wait around for nine months for entry the following year if he had gone through the Singapore route. This is because in Singapore GCE 'A' Levels results are announced in March after the examinations were taken in October and November of the preceding year. As M17 explains:

Well, the whole thing, you know ... parents are quite funny. They think they are doing the best for you, right? So they do certain things ... English education [in Singapore for] four years, you cut short [by] one year already. And then after 'O' Levels, basically come back and do it in KL, you do 'A' Levels in 1.5 years. So you cut short another year rather than you finish in November and then you have to wait until September in order to go to the UK. So it was for the wrong reasons, basically, when we came back [to KL].

L05 went to a public primary school in City E in the state of Perak. Her family then moved to City A, where she attended a private school offering the national curriculum. After completing Form Four, her parents sent her

to Australia for Year Eleven and Year Twelve. Her parents' consideration then was that if she had gone through the normal Malaysian public school route, she would have had to lengthen the duration by two years for pre-university.⁸ After completing secondary school in Australia, she applied to universities in Australia and the UK. Although her first choice was UK University Y, she decided to start the programme in Australian University X first. Here, she explains her rationale:

I actually started at [Australian University X] first ... Because you know how the terms there, the dates are different, right? So I basically started there first. Because [UK University Y] wasn't going to start until September anyway ... If I don't get into [UK University Y] or like a good university, then I wouldn't come [to the UK], I would stay [in Australia]. So I started there for a semester. And then I already knew I got a place here [in the UK], so then I came.

Both M17's and L05's education-migration trajectories have been carefully strategised *geographically* to save the total amount of time—and costs—invested in education. Reducing the duration of years in education meant an early head start in one's career, as well as being in employment. This meant a longer time to advance in one's career, and for capital accumulation as return on investments in one's overseas education. Given that these overseas education ventures were financed by individual families—in some cases having to finance more than one child—it is understandable that strategies to cut short time spent in education were pursued where possible.

CONCLUSION

Education-to-Work: A Continuum

In this chapter, I examined eight education-migration pathways found amongst the mobile Malaysian respondents. Although the specific pathways and geographies may be different, there is a common theme that underlies these migration pathways: education as the key reason for departure from Malaysia in the first place. Furthermore, education-migration pathways have been strategically chosen, plotted, and embarked upon by individuals and families in order to circumvent social mobility obstacles in

the Malaysian context—whether personally experienced or based on perceptions, beliefs and assumptions. This underlines the significance of the British colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship that have been inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state, which have been in turn internalised by mobile Malaysians, subsequently informing their education-migration choices. For example, perceptions about the inferior quality of education in Malaysian institutions versus the superior quality of education offered by Anglo-Western and British institutions were passed on through intergenerational transfers and circulations within social networks. Over time, this reinforces the preference for overseas/Western education, thereby contributing towards the establishment of a culture of migration amongst mobile Malaysians.

Situating mobile Malaysians' migration geographies in the context of existing literatures on student migration and skilled migration, I argue that the migration geographies of transnational skilled migrants—in the Malaysian case specifically, as well as elsewhere more generally—must be analysed through a theoretical lens that sees 'education' as a continuum from the primary school stage, and not one that is confined to the tertiary level. This approach sees international student migration and transnational skilled migration as a connected whole in relation to migrants' migration trajectories. As Carlson (2013, p. 178) suggests, is it important to take a 'processual perspective [to understand] how students *become* geographically mobile'.

(Race-Stratified) Education System Perpetuates Race

While O'Brien (1980, p. 60) notes that there is as yet no 'definitive study of present-day consequences' of Malaysia's education system institutionalised during the colonial period, in this chapter I have attempted to do so by examining how racial stratification in the education system transpires into mobile Malaysians' migration geographies. Specifically, this chapter has shown that Malaysia's race-stratified education system has been instrumental in perpetuating the racial stereotypes and racial ideology inherited as British colonial legacies. The eight education-migration pathways described here show how there are specific (racialised) networks and flows of education-migration amongst mobile Malaysians. Generally, JB-Singapore commuters and ASEAN scholars ended up in Singapore; MICSS students ended up in Taiwan, Singapore, and the USA; and those from private colleges and twinning programmes ended up in countries

with twinning arrangements such as Australia and the UK. In this way, geography matters to mobile Malaysians' education-migration pathways. Significantly, geographical connections between these specific education-migration destinations are not merely in terms of physical and scalar distances. Instead, these places are connected in a web of social networks that are continuously developed and perpetuated by alumni members and earlier migrants. This was especially obvious in the case of the MICSS students who had to rely on their alumni networks since their schools do not receive government funding and developmental attention.

While this corresponds to existing migration theories such as network and cumulative causation,⁹ I argue that attention needs to be given to the racially induced manner of such geographical flows in the Malaysian case. In particular, *race is essentialised and reproduced in and by these education-migration pathways*. As the variegated education-migration pathways and perspectives of the mobile Malaysians discussed in this chapter shows, race informs how people make education and migration decisions. At the same time, essentialised understandings about one's racial identity and position vis-à-vis others are reinforced through specific education-migration pathways. This highlights the need to examine how race matters to education and transnational migration theoretically and in terms of education and migration policies.

In this chapter, I have focused on examining how race works geographically in specific relation to Malaysia's race-stratified education system. While Lee (2012, p. 249) notes that 'racial sorting into private and public spheres begins in tertiary enrolment and extends to the labour market', my findings suggest that racial sorting begins at the primary school stage and perhaps even earlier. Furthermore, the structured racial sorting of young mobile Malaysians into race-stratified schools appears to influence their understandings of race, how they rationalise their education-migration pathways and their return migration decisions. This relates to this book's broader argument about how mobile Malaysians' culture of migration can be understood as an outcome and consequence of British colonial legacies. Race, in this context, has been embedded in the education system structurally as well as in terms of one's 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990). This is why mobile Malaysians easily repeat and reproduce the same racial stereotypes and ideology that has prevailed in the socially constructed discourse of race in colonial Malaya and post-colonial Malaysia.

The specific education streams my respondents go through seem to shape their relative affiliations to either an essentialised ethnonational identity (e.g. those educated in national-type schools) or a more pan-Malaysian

identity which accommodate understandings of race-based affirmative action policies (e.g. those educated in national schools). This highlights the significance of Malaysia's education system in perpetuating inherited colonial legacies of race and education. In particular, and as we shall see in Chap. 5, the Malaysian-Chinese community 'produces "ethnic citizens" nurtured through a Mandarin-based educational and cultural system ... preserving a Chinese element to Malaysian nationhood' (Hwang & Sadiq, 2010, p. 209).

According to Sai (2013, p. 50), education was 'a privileged site' for colonial nationalism and multiculturalism orchestrated by the British colonial administration in Malaya and Singapore. She further argues that '[a]n obvious lacuna in existing literature on nationalism is neglect of the role played by the coloniser in fostering nationalistic belonging to the putative nation' (p. 45). Harper (2011, p. 200) also notes that '[t]he principle of colonial education had a long afterlife'. In particular, he highlights that 'many of the methods of late colonial development were carried forward into the new era' (p. 203). Furthermore, education continues to be politicised, where 'the colonial tendency towards ethnic preference was now seen as a prerequisite for national unity, and was intensified at the expense of social equity' (p. 205).

Indeed, my findings in this chapter suggests that British colonial legacies of race and education that have been inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state significantly influence mobile Malaysians' education-migration pathways and their understandings of race and ethnonational identity. Malaysia's race-stratified education system continues to perpetuate and reproduce racial divisions. At the same time, as we shall see in Chap. 5, a de-racialised and de-politised multicultural nationalism informs mobile Malaysians' understandings of citizenship, national identity, and loyalty in a post-colonial, multi-ethnic context.

NOTES

1. For example, at the occasion of the ten-year review of the National Cultural Policy conceived at the 1971 National Culture Congress, the Malaysian-Chinese and Malaysian-Indian communities issued memorandums highlighting the government's neglect of Chinese and Indian language and education (The 10 Major Indian Associations of Malaysia, 1985; The Major Chinese Organisations in Malaysia, 1985).
2. Typically Western and Commonwealth countries such as Australia, the UK, New Zealand, and the USA.

3. The Royal Military College (RMC) is a school training young Malaysians for service in the Malaysian Armed Forces. It is seen as a prestige to enter the school due to its highly selective admission tests.
4. This is also echoed in S05's narrative, as I will discuss in Chap. 5.
5. In addition to tuition fees, the scholarship also covers room and boarding in selected student hostels where ASEAN scholars are housed with other privately funded students.
6. The number of ASEAN Scholarships awarded annually has increased from about 20 in the 1970s to about 800–1000 in the 2000s (Tan, 2013).
7. The SRP is awarded after obtaining a pass in an examination taken after completing nine years of schooling, after Form Three (or Secondary Three). The SRP was replaced by the *Penilaian Menengah Rendah* (PMR) ('Lower-Secondary Assessment') in 1993.
8. In the Malaysian public school system, students would typically start the six-year primary school at age seven. Those who go into the *Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan* ('national secondary school') stream would then start the five-year secondary education, while those who go into the *Sekolah Menengah Jenis Kebangsaan* ('national-type secondary school') stream would have to go through one year of Remove Class, a transition year to prepare students from vernacular primary schools (where the medium of instruction is in Mandarin or Tamil) for Malay as the medium of instruction (see Singh & Mukherjee, 1993, p. 95). Students from both streams then go on to the same two-year pre-university programme (Form Five and Form Six), culminating in the STPM. See Fig. 2.2.
9. According to the network theory, migrants draw upon formal and informal networks for information and resources in making their migration decisions and to manage migration costs. Cumulative causation explains that with time, migration flow sustains itself as each migration act cumulatively contributes to ease subsequent migration along the same pathway.

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Interpreting and Practising Citizenship

In the existing migration and citizenship studies literature, citizenship has often been discussed in relation to the three interrelated concepts of identity, membership, and rights (Bauböck, 1995; Castles & Davidson, 2000). According to Isin and Turner (2002, p. 4), citizenship is a crucial element connecting various policy domains as it brings forth three inter-related issues: firstly, the extent of its membership boundaries (i.e. who is included and excluded); secondly, the associated rights and obligations; and thirdly, the depth of identity and belonging. These issues are also of particular concern to migrants of all types, as their status along the continuum of inclusion—from completely excluded aliens to fully recognised residents—are dependent upon their formal citizenship status and informal societal recognition in their home and host contexts.

However, citizenship is not just a legal-political status conferred by the state, or a kind of socio-cultural membership acknowledged by members of the community (see Faist, 2000, ‘dimension of citizenship’ and ‘realm of membership’). In fact, many scholars have highlighted the need to examine how citizenship is experienced, understood, imagined, enacted, and contested by people in their everyday lives (Ho, 2009; Leitner & Ehrkamp, 2006; Leuchter, 2014; Staeheli, Ehrkamp, Leitner, & Nagel, 2012). In other words, citizenship is as much a top-down, state conferred status at the national scale as it is a bottom-up, lived experience from the individual perspective. As Staeheli (2011, p. 393) rightly puts it, citizenship is ‘multifaceted’ and ‘takes on different aspects and significance for people in different contexts’.

Citizenship—at least in the Western liberal democracy sense—has been understood as an officially recognised status with accompanying civic, social, and political rights (Marshall, 1950). While writers such as Max Weber have argued for a universal, ‘ideal type’ citizenship from the Western perspective, this view has also been challenged by scholars in citizenship and migration studies (Isin & Wood, 1999; Young, 1989). Others have highlighted the need to understand the meanings and relationship between the state, citizen, and migrant in non-Anglo-Western societies where conventional categories of Western citizenship may not apply. For example, Miller (2011b, p. 809) highlights that ‘pre-existing loyalties and identities have not always sat comfortably alongside the nation-building projects of post-colonial states’. Ho (2008, p. 11) further calls for ‘a culturally sensitive way of understanding citizenship ... both as a subject of enquiry and as a mode of analysis (or way of understanding the world)’. Based on an examination of how citizenship evolved from the late Qing Empire to the Republic era in China, Culp (2007, p. 1837) argues that the different Chinese terms used to connote and translate citizenship ‘reflected the practical and conceptual complexities of citizenship as a category of identity and form of action’. While these scholars refer to the contextualised theorisation of ‘citizenship’ and ‘nationality’, I argue that equal attention must also be given to the contextualised meanings of ‘race’.

This chapter examines mobile Malaysians’ citizenship interpretations and practices by interrogating the relationship between race, citizenship, and national identity. It also analyses mobile Malaysians’ understandings of their Malaysian citizenship in relation to notions of belonging, security, obligations as citizens, and trust in the government. Focusing on citizenship practice, that is, how citizenship has been interpreted and carried out by the citizenry, is important and crucial to this book’s argument. This goes beyond merely understanding ‘the personal context of national sentiments’ (Mann & Fenton, 2009). Instead, this focuses on ‘actually existing citizenship’ (Desforges, Jones, & Woods, 2005, p. 448), which is how citizenship is carried out by citizen-subjects based on their interpretations and understandings of what citizenship entails. As Ronkainen (2011, p. 248, original emphasis) suggests, ‘[o]nly when citizenship is studied as *practices* ... do the hypothetically associated possibilities and problems to [citizenship] status get their meanings and contents’.

Expanding upon this book’s argument about the longevity of colonial legacies that have implications for contemporary migration phenomena, this chapter contextualises mobile Malaysians’ citizenship interpretations

and practices to three interrelated themes. These are firstly, the purposive ambiguity between citizenship and nationality; secondly, the race-based *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship; and thirdly, the intertwining of race, politics, and the government.

Before describing the research findings, the following sections outline the theoretical and empirical discussions on citizenship and nationality, the ambiguities between citizenship and national identity, as well as the notion of differentiated citizenship.

CITIZENSHIP, NATIONALITY, AND RACE

Citizenship is not just a social contract between the nation-state and the citizen. Citizenship is also associated with national identity or nationality. This becomes more complicated in multi-ethnic and immigrant nation-states, where an overarching nationality may be either at odds with the ethnic and cultural diversities within the population, or exclude certain minority features at the expense of prioritising a common national identity. Furthermore, discourses of national loyalty and patriotism are often used as a precondition for inclusion as citizens of a country (Kofman, 2005). Notwithstanding Brubaker's (2004a) positive stance towards the inclusionary prospects of patriotism in the American context, this chapter argues that discourses of national loyalty could produce the opposite effect of exclusion within the citizenry due to racially differentiated citizenship rights.

In the Malaysian context, race, citizenship, national identity, and loyalty are concepts that are complexly intertwined with each other. Existing Malaysian studies literature has mostly focused on ethnic politics (Ratnam, 1965), multiculturalism and national integration (Lim, 1985; Oo, 1990; Saad, 1980), and the politics of belonging and racial relations (Abraham, 1997; Lee, 2004). There is obviously extensive work examining the relationship between ethnic and national identity, which is often assumed as a precursor to national integration and national unity. It is in this context that the discourse of loyalty is situated and embedded. In contrast, little attention has been focused on the relationship between ethnic/national identity and citizenship as a political right. This is perhaps attributable to the prioritisation of race as a basis for social categories, as well as the stickiness of Furnivall's (1948) 'plural society' hypothesis, resulting in the preoccupation with 'multi-ethnic Malaysia' (Lim, Gomes, & Rahman, 2009).

Although this also takes place in Singapore due to her colonial past as a part of British Malaya, research has found slight differences in the post-colonial period. In their study of ethnic and national identity amongst undergraduate students in Malaysia and Singapore, Liu, Lawrence, Ward, and Abraham (2002) found that: firstly, Malaysians had a significantly stronger ethnic identity than Singaporeans; and secondly, Malaysians showed a preference for the ethnic label while Singaporeans preferred the national label. Amongst the Malaysians, preference for the ethnic label was strongest for both the ethnic majority Malays and the minority non-Malays. However, there was ‘no sense of ethnic in-group ontogeny, or focus on creating a narrative about historical origins at the ethnic level’ (p. 17) amongst Malaysian and Singaporean students. These results suggest a strong correlation between socialised narratives of national history and ethnic/national identity. In other words, ethnic and national identities coconstitute each other.

In his theoretical discussion of ethnicity and national identity, Oommen (1997a) uses the term ‘ethnification’ to explain processes through which ethnicity becomes the definitive factor in the collective recognition of membership associated with a territory. As he argues, the process of ethnification results in some groups being perceived as outsiders and therefore never belonging to the nation. In the Malaysian context, Holst (2012) draws from Eder, Giesen, Schmidtke, and Tambini’s (2002) ‘ethnification’ concept to explain how race becomes deeply embedded in the Malaysian society and subsequently takes on a life of its own in constructing and perpetuating racial discourses. Holst finds that this, in turn, affects all segments of society including politicians, civil society activists, and students. Using both the concepts of ethnification and ethnification in the Malaysian context, we can postulate explanations for the conflation of racial and national identity on the one hand, and the politics of these identifications on the other.

More importantly, we can understand how and why a discourse of national loyalty has been invoked to counter and suppress racial tensions. According to Shklar (1993, p. 184):

... loyalty is ... deeply affective and not primarily rational ... Belonging to an ascriptive group to which one has been brought up, and taught to feel loyal to it, since one’s earliest infancy is scarcely a matter of choice. And when it comes to race, ethnicity, caste, and class, choice is not obvious ... Political loyalty is evoked by nations, ethnic groups, parties, and by doctrines, causes, ideologies, or faiths that form and identify associations.

Indeed, in Malaysia's case, national loyalty has been ascribed by top-down forces such as government discourse and national education policies. Consequently, affiliation of cultural belonging to the nation (i.e. national identity) has been prioritised at the expense of political belonging (i.e. citizenship).

Yeoh, Willis, and Fakhri (2003, p. 2) note that '[the] attempt to forge a national identity requires the subsuming of other ethnic, gender or religious markers into a common affiliation with "the nation"'. Indeed, this strategy has been adopted by the colonial Malayan and post-colonial Malaysian governments to effectively govern the multi-ethnic population and to balance the diverse interests of the communities that are often at odds with one another. As we shall see later, the effects of this enduring strategy of prioritising national identity over citizenship can be seen in mobile Malaysians' citizenship interpretations and practices.

Citizenship and National Identity: Deliberate Ambiguities?

As Bénéï (2005, p. 13) notes, the 'relationship between nationality and citizenship is a blurred one'. Citizenship, interpreted as formal civic membership to a political entity which comes with associated rights and duties, has often been conflated with nationality, interpreted as cultural belonging to a national entity with shared historical and cultural values at the national scale. On the one hand, Miller (2000) takes an optimistic stance and argues that a shared sense of national solidarity does not conflict with minority group identities within the larger national polity. On the other hand, Oommen (1997b, p. 49) argues that citizenship should not be linked to national identity as this enables 'the dominant collectivity [to define] itself as the nation and confining others as ethnies'. In Miller's case, citizenship is conceptualised as active civic and political participation. National identity is necessary and crucial to the enactment of citizenry actions because it provides a shared sense of solitary belonging to the nation. For Oommen, however, citizenship is conceptualised as rights that are not equally conferred because inclusion to the national community is itself unequal. Clearly, the question of whether there should be clear definitional segregation between citizenship and national identity must be debated in relation to specific contexts.

Malaysia is a case where the relationship between citizenship and national identity has been kept ambiguous. This can be seen as a legacy of British colonialism. Indeed, the conflation of citizenship with nationality is especially evident in the British case. As Karatani (2003) explains, the creation of British citizenship was repeatedly postponed for more than three decades until the British Nationality Act of 1981 was enacted. She argues that because Britain as a political unit evolved into a ‘global institution’ above and beyond the nation-state (i.e. the British Empire, followed by the Commonwealth), the definition of Britishness (or what it means to belong to Britain) had to remain unspecified. The “fuzzy”, “vague” and “malleable” nature of Britishness’ (p. 3) thus contextualises the conflation of citizenship and nationality in the British experience.

Gorman (2006) suggests that the notion of British subjecthood is manifested in ‘loyalism’ which is associated with a personal relationship to the sovereign. He further finds that (p. 21)

individual national allegiance and citizenship were both invested in the monarch, and this loyalty—subjecthood—provided the leavening factor of Empire. The colonies were tied to the crown through the institution of responsible government; the dependencies through the direct rule of the monarch. The demarcation between allegiance and citizenship, though, was constantly evolving, as opposed to the static fusion of both identities in the constitution of a republic.

As we have seen in Chap. 2, this echoes the colonial and post-colonial Malaysian citizenship constitution experience.

Differentiated Citizenship?

In her critique of the ideal notion of universal citizenship, Young (1989) argues for citizenship to be conceptualised as differentiated based on group differences. According to her, full enjoyment of citizenship must take into account ‘special rights that attend to group differences’ (p. 251), as this removes the possibilities of oppression premised on cultural differences. In her view, compensation in the form of special treatments is fair because this addresses social inequalities arising from group differences. She further argues that affirmative action policies are justifiable as these compensate for biases that privilege ‘the specific life and cultural experience of dominant groups’ (p. 271). Thus, differentiated citizenship is necessary as it contributes towards a more just disbursement of citizenship rights which takes into account the indivisible differences.

This is also Kibe's (2006) argument in the cases of the indigenous Ainu and Koreans in Japan. According to Kibe, Japanese citizenship has been traditionally conceptualised as 'an ethnoculturally homogenous form of political community' (p. 418) despite the existence of heterogeneous cultural groups within the Japanese citizenry. In his view, differentiated citizenship is appropriate for Japan for three reasons: first, it allows citizenship to be disconnected from nationality; second, it accommodates cultural plurality rather than an uncritical uniformity; and third, it acknowledges that the national and non-national are not either/or social categories. Differentiated citizenship, in this sense, follows 'a graduated structure' (p. 421) that allows for the coexistence of differences within the broader category of Japanese citizenship.

However, Holston (2011) shows that differentiated citizenship in Brazil, interpreted based on the principle of proportional equality, results in differential treatments of citizens according to their recognised differences. For example, working women are given early retirement as legal compensation for being overworked compared to men. As such, this differentiated citizenship 'uses social differences that are *not* the basis of national membership' (p. 341, original emphasis) such as race, gender, and class as the principle for differential treatment. The problem with such a system, as Holston argues, is that it 'legalises new inequality [and] reinforces existing social inequalities by rewarding them' (p. 339). In other words, this version of differentiated citizenship is inclusive in terms of recognised membership to the national community, yet highly unequal in terms of rights and privileges.

These debates show that differentiated citizenship may be appropriate in some contexts but not in others. Furthermore, the ways in which differentiated citizenship has been interpreted and operationalised in specific contexts may result in very different outcomes for members of different social groups within the citizenry. In the Malaysian context, the *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship is premised upon socio-politically constructed notions of race and indigeneity that has roots in British colonial legacies. This has implications upon how mobile Malaysians individually and collectively understand and practice their citizenship.

INTERPRETING CITIZENSHIP

In Chap. 2, we have seen how state-led constructions of the Malaysian citizenship have been conflated with national identity, with an emphasis on national loyalty. At the same time, racial issues have been sensitised

and prohibited from public debates. These appear to have translated into mobile Malaysians' interpretations of their Malaysian citizenship: they seem to accord their citizenship with significant emotional and apolitical meanings. For them, Malaysian citizenship appears to be conflated with nationality and a sense of unquestioned affiliation to Malaysia.

However, upon scrutiny, I found that the 'Malaysia' that they identify with is not the nation or the country per se. Instead, 'Malaysia' is often thought of as experiences of growing up (e.g. childhood memories, geographical places, and specific events), personal and familial social networks, and similar values and characteristics shared by an imagined ethnonational community. While these sentiments were true in most of my respondents' cases, they were particularly evident in my conversations with L12 (late twenties, female, single), L04 (late thirties, female, married), and S05 (late twenties, female, single).

Primordial Belonging

L12 was born in Malaysia but followed her family migration to other parts of Southeast Asia as a child. Her family returned to Malaysia again, and she spent her adolescent and college years in City A in the state of Selangor. She thinks fondly of this experience and appears to associate this specific space-time with her strong affiliation as a Malaysian. As she explains:

Just, you know, like going to the *mamak*¹ with my friends. When we were in college, before university, I have a lot of good friends ... My best school friends have moved to London or Australia or America, so they are not really in Malaysia. We only go back there for holidays. But my college friends, they are still in [City A]. So from that network, I have really good people left in [City A]. So you go to the *mamak*, you go to cyber cafes, then you go to class. That was just what we did every day. It was just relaxed. I like that. Yeah, that was good.

L12 holds permanent resident (PR) status in a European country, which accords her free entry into the UK and European Union countries. In addition, she has extensive social networks spread across major cities in the world. Despite her capacity to be internationally mobile, she demonstrates a strong affiliation to being 'Malaysian' and a strong desire to return to Malaysia. When asked to explain what she meant to convey by 'being Malaysian', she said:

What do I mean by it? I don't know ... I just mean that that's my home ... I mean, I'm patriotic in the sense that I'm proud of my country. But ... you know, there's not some political ideology there. It's just a sense of ... that's my home. Yeah, *kampung* ('village', used to mean 'hometown').

Although she did not explicitly link her *kampung* to City A and her growing up years there, this is evident in her reply to my question on the notion of 'home'.

Author: So throughout your movements across all these different places, have you ever felt that any one place is more home to you?

L12: [City A] (affirmatively).

Author: [City A]? Even now?

L12: Yeah, [City A] ... I mean, London is home to me as well. But in a different way. Like City A to me is more stable. Because I have old friends and I have family there. And I have old memories. London is home as well, but a dynamic home, you know? If I leave London, I will still have friends in London. But I'm not going to have the roots ... So that makes it very difficult to [stay]. It's easy to leave, I think, because you don't have roots.

Author: Comparatively you think of [City A] as where your roots are?

L12: Yeah, absolutely.

The sense of having roots embedded in one's *kampung* shows the emotional significance of hometown, memories, and social relationships associated to a particular time-place. In L12's case, it was a specific schooling and growing up experience in City A that grounds her Malaysian identity and belonging.

When asked about what her Malaysian citizenship means to her, L04 (late thirties, female, married) explains: 'It's my childhood, I suppose. It's almost like giving up my childhood, my life. All the good friends and the family.' In fact, she thinks of her Malaysian citizenship as 'this umbilical cord that won't come out'. Furthermore, she 'won't have bothered much' about keeping her Malaysian citizenship unless she was 'truly cut off from Malaysia'. Crucially, the 'Malaysia' she refers to is in terms of her family members who were living in Malaysia, despite being articulated as a sense of affiliation and identity to the country.

This sense of perpetual belonging to Malaysia through an invisible 'umbilical cord' has been something she constantly negotiates with.

Throughout her migration trajectories across Singapore, Australia, and the UK, she had always believed that ‘we were *always* planning to go home’ and ‘we *never* intended to stay here’. Having made the observation that none of her Malaysian peers who studied in Singapore went back to Malaysia, she voluntarily brought up the issue of return as loyalty.

L04: So where is the loyalty then (laughs)? Where is the loyalty if not one went back?

Author: But does going back mean you are loyal?

L04: I don’t know. Yeah, sometimes I think so. Going back means you are loyal. I don’t know. I don’t know.

Author: But staying away, like in your case, you are also loyal.

L04: No, I don’t feel loyal ... I feel angry about the situation ... I could consider myself British maybe in 20 years’ time. But [being] British doesn’t mean anything. Because they say that 60 percent weren’t born in Britain. You can be British, but where you are from is a different matter. It’s a personal matter, where you were born.

Author: So even if you take up British citizenship, you will still think [that] you are Malaysian?

L04: I will still think [that] I [was] born in Malaysia. Yeah, I will say I was from Malaysia. But right now, if it’s [in] a restaurant, I would say I am Singaporean (laughs). Every time we are in a restaurant and someone goes: ‘Where are you from?’ I go: ‘Japan! Singapore!’ I said (in hushed tone to husband): ‘Don’t say Malaysia. I don’t want to go into any conversation about political issues.’ So in that sense I am not proud of Malaysia. Yet I have a loyalty to it. If not I would have readily given up my passport.

While L04 is aware of the strong ‘loyalty’-like emotion she associates with her Malaysian citizenship, this emotional connection appears to be tied to her childhood experiences, friends, and family in Malaysia. However, keeping her Malaysian citizenship is important to her, because this signifies an umbilical cord that perpetually ties her self-identity and belonging to ‘Malaysia’. Consequently, returning to Malaysia is a demonstration of loyalty, and something she had previously conceived of as automatic and non-negotiable: she was *always* going to return home to Malaysia.

I use the term ‘primordial’ to describe these feelings of attachment, identity and belonging mobile Malaysians associate with their Malaysian citizenship. Although the term invokes a sense of naturalised identities (as opposed to socially constructed identities),² I chose to use it as it captures how my respondents understand their Malaysian citizenship as a kind of inborn identity. My deliberate use of this term also works to reinforce this book’s argument: that Malaysia’s racial politics and *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship have paradoxically contributed to mobile Malaysians placing emotional significance to their Malaysian citizenship—which is in turn informs their citizenship and migration practices.

Ethnonational Imagined Community

Malaysia’s *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship and race-based affirmative action policies have impacted on how my respondents think of the ‘Malaysia’ they identify and associate with. This was particularly evident in my conversation with S05 (late twenties, female, single). The excerpt below followed an earlier conversation about her distrust of government initiatives. Following a slight pause, S05 brought up the point of feeling proud as a Malaysian.

S05: Oh well, Malaysia is a good place (laughs). I am proud to be Malaysian.

Author: What are you proud of?

S05: The Chinese (affirmatively). There is a special quality that the Singaporeans don’t have. Because we are subjected to these so-called unequal treatments for a long time, so we work extra hard to achieve what we want. Yet at the same time ..., we know our limits. Like there are some facts you have to acknowledge, but you have to work extra hard to overcome them. Trying to compromise within these given constraints, but still being able to achieve your own purpose.

So I think this ability to forgive and to be tolerant³ is not found in people from every country. You must have gone through certain conditions in certain environments. For example, Singaporeans, the majority are Chinese and the government is quite fair and transparent, so there are things everyone takes for granted. But the Malaysian-Chinese may not think that way.

So I feel that with this advantage, the Malaysian-Chinese can survive no matter which part of the world they go to. Like language is one of the advantages. Because we are proficient in English, Mandarin, Malay, so we can survive in Western countries, in China, in Southeast Asia. This is a very strong advantage.

Author: But based on what you have just said, your definition [of Malaysian] is Malaysian-Chinese.

S05: Yes, because we are after all Chinese. I can relate better from this perspective.

S05's sense of pride and affiliation to an imagined community (Anderson, 2006) is tied to a specific ethnonational group—the Malaysian-Chinese. From her perspective, her Malaysian citizenship is equated to, and conflated with, a strong sense of ethnonational identity. Her narrative also suggests that *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship and race-based affirmative action policies have led to hard work and resilience as inherent characteristics associated with the Malaysian-Chinese—a similar sentiment we have seen in S07's narrative in Chap. 4. This has perhaps emerged as a survival strategy to circumvent structural obstacles in education, employment, and business subjected upon non-*bumiputeras* in Malaysia.

However, there is a more important point worth mentioning. It appears that the British colonial understanding of race and racial ideology in Malaya have survived beyond the colonial period and have inserted themselves into contemporary social life in Malaysia structurally through the *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship. In this context, Malaysian-Chineseness is 'understood in terms of the essence of race' (Gabriel, 2014, p. 1215) that also works to reinforce the official racial categories of Malay, Chinese, Indian, and others as distinct and separate from one another. Here, Yao's (2009, p. 253) observation of Malaysian-Chinese essentialism is particularly telling: 'For [the Malaysian-Chinese], there is the consolation of ethnic pride and cultural ownership of many superior and wonderful things, even if they are a poor compensation for being denied the rich state resources'. While there is a sense of ethnonational pride in being Malaysian-Chinese, this essentialised ethnonational identity could be pursued 'as a means of "protection" against the majority' (p. 261) whose interests are constitutionally and politically secured. Indeed, as I will later show, this racialised understanding of cultural citizenship has also been carried mobile Malaysians' transnational migration trajectories, with implications for their citizenship practices and strategies.

Citizenship, Loyalty, and Politics

In Chap. 1, I described the linking of citizenship and emigration with the notion of loyalty in the Malaysian context. To explore this, I would always ask a question on citizenship as loyalty during interviews. Most of my respondents readily agree to the notion that citizenship is tied to a sense of loyalty. In particular, this relates to a sense of loyalty or patriotism they equate with and attach to their Malaysian citizenship. However, this sense of loyalty or patriotism is something that they cannot quite articulate and reconcile with. The paradoxical coexistence of this unconditional loyalty with *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship rights appears to be equally puzzling and unexplainable for some of my respondents. As S25 (early thirties, female, single) explains:

I don't know whether we are loyal to Malaysia or not (laughs). We always talk bad things about Malaysia but we always laugh [about it]. All those stupid politics, discriminating laws ... But when you talk about citizenship no one wants to actually give [it] up. That's the thing, no one wants to give [it] up! ... Maybe because your home is there, your family is there ... you grew up there, and there're things there that you want to keep.

On the other hand, S08 (late forties, male, married) is clear that his loyalty lies with the country, and *not* with the government. This is evident in his answer to my question on whether he has a sense of loyalty to Malaysia.

I do, obviously I do. Otherwise I won't bother so much about what the stupid politicians say, about what they do, [about] how they are going to screw the country, right? Very angry about it sometimes. If I'm not loyal to Malaysia, I wouldn't give a damn. So I think deep down inside I still do. But if you were to ask me whether I will give up my career or my life for it, I'm not sure. So the only thing is that I'm loyal to the country. But whether I'm loyal to the government, I'm not sure. At the moment I am very, very angry with the government, the Malaysian government.

Paradoxically, the strong sense of loyalty associated with mobile Malaysians' citizenship does not necessarily translate into active enactments of civic responsibilities, or contributions to homeland development as one would expect of diasporas who claim a yearning for their home country. Furthermore, while recent diaspora literature document long-distance nationalism and participations in homeland politics (Lyons & Mandaville,

Table 5.1 Respondents' participation in electoral voting

	<i>Singapore</i>	<i>Malaysia</i>	<i>London/UK</i>	<i>Global</i>	<i>Total</i>	
Registered, voted	8	6	2	3	19	28.4 %
Registered, not voted	4	4	2	2	12	17.9 %
Not registered	11	5	11	0	27	40.3 %
Not applicable	2	1	1	0	4	6.0 %
Unknown	2	2	0	1	5	7.5 %
Total	27	18	16	6	67	100.0 %

2012), such activities were mostly absent amongst my respondents. In fact, 40.3 percent of my respondents have not registered as voters (Table 5.1).⁴ Amongst those who are registered voters, 38.7 percent (12 out of 31) had not voted.

This phenomenon of not registering as voters and not exercising one's voting rights needs to be understood in the context of limited access to postal voting for overseas Malaysians. I have explained elsewhere that prior to January 2013, postal voting was only available to civil servants, military personnel, full-time students, and their spouses living abroad (Koh, 2015c). During the lead up to the 13th General Elections in 2013, postal voting was made available to overseas Malaysians who meet certain eligibility conditions: they must be Malaysian citizens who are registered voters; they must have resided in Malaysia for a total minimum of 30 days within the preceding five years before the dissolution of the current parliament; and they must not be resident in southern Thailand, Singapore, Brunei, and Kalimantan in Indonesia (SPR, 2013). The relaxation of postal voting restrictions for overseas Malaysians has resulted in a shift in electorate composition. The number and proportion of postal voters has increased from 2954 (0.02 percent) to 146,736 (1.1 percent), of which 9311 voted overseas (6.3 percent of all postal voters) (SPR, 2014, pp. 80–81, 87).

In addition to the constraints to overseas voting, there are two further points to contextualise my respondents' voting behaviours. First, there is a general lack of political consciousness—or at least a reluctance to be political—amongst most of my respondents. My conversation with G02 (late thirties, male, *bumiputera*, single) demonstrates this.

Author: As a Malaysian citizen, do you think that you have any expectations of the Malaysian government or Malaysia the country?

G02: Ok, that is another topic. Very huge topic, actually. Honestly, that is a thing that I should criticise about the politics in Malaysia, which I don't really enjoy. I think there is something wrong about the politics in Malaysia. But I don't think I should bring in this issue. But I personally think that actually there are a lot of improvements that needs to be done in our government ... But let's put it aside first about the politics. Your next question is about what? Can you repeat the question again?

Interestingly, G02 automatically connected my question about citizens' expectations of the government to criticisms of politics and the government. Furthermore, G02 did not answer my question. Instead, he purposefully skirted around the question and changed the subject. The general practice of steering clear from politics, or any debates about politics, needs to be understood in the post-colonial Malaysian context where politics—often equated to *racial* politics—is a sensitive and sometimes taboo issue.

In Chap. 2, we have seen how the post-colonial government securitised race through various techniques of governing such as constitutional amendments and the introduction of preventive detention laws. Political control has also been extended to students. Malaysian overseas students under government scholarships have been warned against participation in political activities and demonstrations. In April 2012, the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (*Bersih*) called for a global 'Walk for Democracy' to petition the Election Commission of Malaysia (SPR) for a free and fair election process. Two days prior to the event, an email circular was sent to JPA scholarship holders in a city in the USA (personal communication, 8 May 2012). The email reminded them:

Please think and use your wisdom carefully before making any rash action that could affect your own self, sponsoring department and nation in general. Refrain yourself from joining, conspiring or contributing in whatever ways to any activities that may be considered detrimental to the government and nation. Instead, your full concentration and energy should be channelled to obliging the contents in [the Federal Scholarship Agreement].

The implicit message in the email is that participation in any form of democratic activities deemed to be anti-government is a violation of scholarship obligations. Furthermore, there is a deliberate conflation of 'government' and 'nation' as one and the same. Such warnings were not only targeted

at government scholarship holders. Prior to a scheduled demonstration on 12 January 2013 at the Malaysian High Commission in London, a similar message was announced on the Education Malaysia UK and Ireland website. The message read (Education Malaysia UK & Eire, 2013b, my translation):

[We] wish to advise all Malaysian students not to get involved in or participate in the demonstration directly or indirectly ... Every Malaysian student in the UK and Ireland should ... uphold their conduct as a Malaysian citizen and the responsibility to take care of the country's image.

A further message from the director of the organisation less than a week later (Education Malaysia UK & Eire, 2013a, *verbatim*) repeated the same cautionary note as the email to JPA scholars:

... Malaysian students in UK & Ireland are also reminded to do not have the intention, plan, organize or involve in any activity prohibited by the sponsorship parties or the government ... If you are caught and found guilty, it brings bad consequences to you and this also troubles other parties, including yourself, your families and the communities.

Here again, implicit suggestions of 'bad consequences' as a result of any 'prohibited' activities serve as warnings against civic and political participation.

As a result of these overt and explicit warnings, some may choose to steer away from any political activity to avoid 'getting into trouble'. This, by extension, could also include participation in electoral voting. For example, some may worry that their votes could be monitored. Indeed, it has been found that there is a general distrust of the electoral process amongst Malaysians (Merdeka Center, 2012).

Secondly, choosing not to vote is also influenced by the distrust of the government and the perceived unreciprocated 'love' for Malaysia. While many of my respondents readily admit to an emotional affiliation and belonging to 'Malaysia', some—like S08 mentioned earlier—are quick to point out that their feelings do not apply to the government. Thus, there is sometimes a sense of doom and inability to effect any change, even if this was theoretically possible through electoral voting. As I have explained earlier, *Barisan Nasional* (BN)—or rather, UMNO—has been equated to the Malaysian government. The sense of distrust of the government amongst mobile Malaysians must be understood in the context of race-based political representation and the continued prioritization

sation of *bumiputera*-Malay interests as a political strategy. This, I argue, is a colonial legacy that has been inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state.

My findings about my respondents' attitudes towards citizenship as political rights cohere with Welsh's (1996) analysis. Based on a survey of political attitudes amongst Malaysians conducted in November 1994, she found that Malaysians generally adopt a semi-democratic stance. However, ethnicity is the most significant differentiating factor in attitudes towards political rights and political participation. With reference to voting rights and elections, her respondents felt that: firstly, not all Malaysian residents and citizens should have equal voting rights and, secondly, elections are not considered to be important. In particular, her respondents were willing to restrict political participation for groups 'perceived to threaten social order, lacking qualifications to participate, or holding "deviant views"' (p. 889). Generally, the Malays opposed the expansion of democracy, the minorities (especially the Indians) favoured democracy, while the Chinese were more ambivalent.

Welsh's findings are important to contextualise my respondents' attitudes towards citizenship as a political right. Firstly, it appears that citizenship as political rights is not a priority for Malaysians generally. This can be explained by the deliberate ambiguity between citizenship and nationality that has been tied to the constitution of citizenship in Malaysia. Secondly, Malaysians appear to accept unequal and differentiated citizenship rights. This is understandable in the context of the post-colonial Malaysian state's exacerbation of the colonial legacies of race and citizenship, particularly in terms of the constitutional protection of 'Malay' special rights and various techniques of governing. Thirdly, Malaysians do not seem to consider electoral participation to be the most critical aspect of Malaysian democracy. This can be understood in the context of problems with the electoral process, as well as the uncritical equation of what would be normally seen as democratic activities to defiant behaviours and contestation of the existing political regime.

PRACTISING CITIZENSHIP STRATEGIES

In this section, I examine how my respondents make sense of their citizenship strategies, as well as how 'loyalty' is implicated in their citizenship practices. I have earlier explained that Malaysia's citizenship has its roots in the MU citizenship controversy, which led to subsequent constitutional amendments making citizenship acquisition more stringent. Perhaps as a result of such understandings passed on from their grandparents and

parents, I find that the majority of my respondents—especially the non-*bumiputeras*—understood citizenship as a privilege that did not come easily or automatically. For them, citizenship is an exclusive birthright that should be treasured and appreciated, and not something to be taken-for-granted or given up easily. This understanding of citizenship as a form of security greatly influenced my respondents' citizenship strategies. As Malaysia does not recognise dual citizenship, this has prompted some respondents to go to great lengths to ensure the retention of their Malaysian citizenship in addition to their acquisition of other citizenship and PR statuses. This often occurs without the relevant authorities' knowledge.

Citizenship as Security/Insecurity

In conversations with my respondents, there has been a recurrent theme of keeping their Malaysian citizenship 'just in case'. Furthermore, this is often linked to a possibility of returning to Malaysia at some point in the future. Interestingly, the retention of their Malaysian citizenship is almost always explained as emotional affiliation and identity as Malaysian, although few are optimistic or have any concrete plans to return. My conversation with L11 (late twenties, female, single) illustrates this.

L11 has taken up British citizenship without renouncing her Malaysian citizenship. In the course of conducting this research, I have also come across anecdotal stories of overseas Malaysians doing the same, especially those who reside in the UK and the USA. While this may appear at first glance as a kind of flexible citizenship (Ong, 1999) strategy by accumulating multiple citizenship and PR statuses, L11's narrative uncovers the paradox of security and insecurity in her citizenship strategies. As she explains:

I just want a spare citizenship. Because ... I mean, I just don't think Malaysia is ... I mean, it's probably fine. But you know, we've been living away. It's like the 1969 May riots happened. I just don't think things are necessarily going to get any better. So I just want a spare citizenship, somewhere else. It's safer. Because if riots happen, if things get really bad, if you chase Chinese people out [of Malaysia] or whatever ...

As is it, the point is that I don't even really want to work there. I almost don't see a need to have Malaysian citizenship. But I want to have it because it's impossible for Chinese people to get citizenship under the current system. So I don't want to lose it. If they count the census or something, I'm still recorded as a Chinese person in Malaysia so they can't trample on us too much.

I don't want to give up my [Malaysian] citizenship because I have a strange kind of patriotism. For those people who are still there, they need to be helped, to be counted or something. But under the current situation, I don't actually want to work there. I don't actually want to be part of it. I just want to be somewhere else with the citizenship. I'm kind of protected.

L11's narrative above demonstrates two points. First, her understanding that the Malaysian citizenship is difficult to come by, especially for the Malaysian-Chinese, contributed towards her desiring a 'spare' citizenship as a security measure. This is linked to her fear of racial discrimination, which was explained using the May 1969 incident as an example. This shows the extent to which this incident has been deeply embedded in Malaysians' awareness as a reminder and warning of the severe outcomes of racial tensions in Malaysia.

Second, L11 is clearly aware that she has 'a strange kind of patriotism' that cannot be fully articulated. Crucially, this sense of national loyalty translates into paradoxical citizenship practices. On the one hand, a feeling of patriotism, understood in terms of her obligation to help other Malaysian-Chinese who are 'there' in Malaysia, accords L11 another reason to retain her Malaysian citizenship. On the other hand, the same feeling of patriotism towards the ethnnonational instills in L11 the fear of the 'other' in Malaysia—who are implicitly the Malays—who might drive out the Malaysian-Chinese from Malaysia. As a result of these conflicting feelings of belonging and unbelonging, L11's citizenship strategies have been informed by the paradoxical anxieties of security and insecurity. Underlying what appears to be flexible citizenship strategies are racial undertones of inclusion and exclusion. These, in fact, are the fundamental building blocks of Malaysia's *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship.

Obligations and Distrust

Citizenship, at least in the Western liberal sense, has been understood as a social contract between an individual citizen and the nation-state (Rousseau, 1968). In exchange for social, economic, and political rights, the citizen is obligated to fulfil certain responsibilities such as electoral voting, tax contributions, and compulsory military service. In Malaysia's case, however, obligations as citizens are differentially interpreted due to two reasons. Firstly, citizenship is not universal: it is racially differentiated

by *bumiputera* status. Since non-*bumiputera* citizens do not enjoy special rights and often face structural and everyday discrimination, it is common to find them feeling that they are second-class citizens and therefore do not need to reciprocate their obligations as citizens.

Secondly, and more importantly, there is a sense of distrust of the government. This sense of distrust needs to be further unpacked. In Chap. 2, we have seen how the Alliance and the *Barisan Nasional* (BN) coalitions led by UMNO have won every national election since Malaysia's independence. Since 1970, the post-colonial Malaysian government has also been equated to one that implemented race-based affirmative action policies. There have also been incidences where individual politicians have benefitted personally from the systemic discrimination. It is therefore not a coincidence that all of the mobile Malaysian respondents in this study equate 'the Malaysian government' to UMNO. In some cases, particularly for the Malaysian-Chinese respondents, 'the Malaysian government' has been conflated with 'the Malays'. Furthermore, the post-colonial Malaysian government have implemented various techniques of governing to quell social unrest and diffuse opposition voices during certain historical milestones. This has resulted in my respondents' negative sentiments towards the government and its initiatives as an automatic and default response. This is evident in M06's (early thirties, female, married) narrative below.

I heard from my friend, a Malay, that most of the Malays enter government-linked companies. He told me that it is very difficult for the Chinese to get in. He said that when he wants to recruit, he will tell his human resource (HR) department his requirements. Then the HR does the first filter. So by the time the candidates get to his level to be interviewed, there are no non-*bumiputeras*.

So he said that he thinks there are policies in place. They [i.e. the Malaysian government] say there are no such policies, but it's all bullshit. My friend is a Malay, and even he tells me it's like this ... it's all bullshit, the government. Asking people to come home and contribute. I read in the newspapers, the [government official], when he went overseas, some overseas Malaysians asked him what their salaries would be if they returned. His answer is: 'Why don't you go back first and see the situation? You have left for a long time. You don't know what the current job market is like.' Are you mad? I don't have a job [in Malaysia], asking me to just go back first, giving up my job overseas? Of course I will only come back with a guaranteed position.

M06's outburst above demonstrates the deep sense of distrust and dissatisfaction she has for the Malaysian government. Furthermore, this sense of distrust is immediately transferred to negative perceptions towards any government efforts to engage with, and facilitate, the return of overseas Malaysians. From the perspectives of mobile Malaysian-Chinese migrants who were in some ways 'forced' to leave Malaysia due to the *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship and race-based affirmative action policies, responding to the government's call for their citizenry obligations—in this case returning to Malaysia to contribute towards the country's development—may never be a priority. Return decisions, if made at all, would be on individual and familial considerations.

Distrust of the government is also contributed by personal experiences of *bumiputera* differentiation and discrimination. This was the case for S27 (late twenties, male, engaged). After graduating from a UK university, S27 returned to Malaysia to work for a Malaysian corporation where he experienced the effects of *bumiputera*-differentiated affirmative action policies in his day-to-day work life. He had joined the corporation through a two-year graduate training programme, where he observed that out of the cohort of about 30 recruits, there were only 5 Chinese and 3 Indians amidst the *bumiputera*-Malay majority. At work, he observed how most of his *bumiputera*-Malay colleagues and superiors were often incompetent, took things easy, and got away with it. In contrast, the non-*bumiputeras* were blatantly expected to do the 'nitty-gritty' hard work and more technical tasks, toe the line, and remain silent without challenging the status quo. Although S27 ranked second in his cohort of new recruits at the end of the six-month training, he was assigned to 'one of the worst performing' business units of the corporation, while most of his *bumiputera*-Malay colleagues got into profit-making 'good divisions' and therefore 'sure to get good bonuses'.

These experiences have evidently affected his trust in citizenship as a contract between the state and its citizens. When asked about what he feels his Malaysian citizenship is, S27 expressed his dismay:

(raises voice) Does it matter? How I feel, does it matter? It doesn't matter, you see. Who cares about me? Who cares about both of us, for that matter? Nobody cares. At least they [i.e. the Malaysian government] don't care.

When I was younger I was always wondering: 为什么这么多华人往海外跑?长大了自己变成难民我终于明白 (laughs) ('Why do so many Malaysian-

Chinese go overseas? I finally understood this when I became a “refugee” myself.’) I wouldn’t call myself a refugee, you know. But we are caught in a very uneasy [position] ... Like when you go to government offices, you don’t speak Malay, you get the cold shoulder.

I just don’t think that what we feel is important. Citizenship, what is citizenship? It’s the passport, the I/C ... But the thing is, fundamentally you are still different. You are still known as a Chinese. It’s only when you [are overseas] that you get to hang out with all the Malays. Malaysian Society. Once you go home, things will be different: ‘Oh, Chinese girl. Oh, Malay boy.’ You know, that kind of thing?

S27’s narrative demonstrates that *bumiputera* differentiation is a real and structuring factor. More importantly, this awareness has resulted in a sense of defeat and resigned acceptance that things will not change because what really matters is the decision made by ‘them’—the Malaysian government.

Interestingly, S27 equates his Malaysian-Chinese identity as a ‘refugee’, thus evoking the ‘forced’ nature of his departure from Malaysia. Malaysian-Chinese migration is arguably pursued by the middle-class with the luxury of choice and primarily for economic purposes (including education-migration as a step towards social mobility). This pales in comparison to refugees and asylum seekers who may be fleeing for their lives. However, seen from the perspectives of the Malaysian-Chinese who are continually denied access to equal and full citizenship rights, we can understand how they come to see themselves as second-class citizens who are ‘forced’ to seek their lives elsewhere.

Disappointments and Realities

For S06 (mid-thirties, male, married), the decision to relinquish his Malaysian citizenship for Singapore’s involved negotiating strong emotions alongside pragmatic considerations. For about seven to eight years after getting married, he warned his spouse against asking him to take up Singapore citizenship (‘Don’t talk to me about citizenship, ok? It’s a taboo. Don’t talk to me about that. No discussion at all, ok?’). This was because he felt a strong sense of belonging to Malaysia and still upheld the intention to return to Malaysia at some point in time.

However, his perspectives changed subsequently. Firstly, he took up Singapore citizenship in consideration of his spouse and children’s future. His spouse’s Singapore PR status was dependent on his. In the event of any mishaps to him before their children turn 18 or 21, she would

be vulnerable to the loss of her PR status. He was also enticed by the citizenship benefits given by the Singapore government in terms of baby bonuses and education subsidies. Secondly, he became increasingly disappointed with the Malaysian government. In particular, he was disappointed with the way the Malaysian government handled the 2008 economic crisis compared to the Singapore government, as well as the persistence of race-based affirmative action policies prioritising *bumiputera* citizens.

Malaysia government kept announcing mini-budgets. I asked my parents and my [sibling] if they got anything: ‘Nothing. What money?’ Everyday mini-budget but where the money goes nobody knows. Whereas Singapore government has taken out the reserve fund. We have seen that Singapore government has done its very best to protect as many Singaporeans as possible. Versus the other one! So I felt in terms of security, Singapore government will think for Singaporeans first. Regardless—the point is *regardless*—whether you are new citizens or you are local-born citizens. Whereas the other side, even [if] you are [a] local-born citizen, you fall under the category which is non-*bumiputera*.

The shifts in S06’s feelings about Malaysia and his understanding of what his citizenship means are crucial factors that have led him to make the difficult decision to become a Singaporean citizen. This decision was made not only for himself but for the sake of his family. When his first child was born in Singapore, he registered the child as a Malaysian citizen as he strongly believed that he would eventually return to Malaysia with his family in the future. Despite his initial strong sense of belonging as a Malaysian, the 2008 economic crisis pushed him to rethink his understanding of what citizenship is. While previously he equated his Malaysian citizenship to his sense of identity and a means of enabling a future return to Malaysia, he now thinks of citizenship as a form of ‘recognition by a country ... that treasures you’. This understanding has led him to see how the Singapore government ‘treasures’ Singapore citizens through equal treatment, a huge contrast from his perception of the Malaysian government. His disappointment with the Malaysian government ultimately pushed him to cross the bridge. After doing so, he resolves that he could return to Malaysia as an investor migrant should he want to do so in the future. While previously the possibility of returning to Malaysia was a significant factor preventing him from renouncing his Malaysian citizenship, this is now no longer important with the shift of time.

Furthermore, S06 realises how he was ‘brainwashed’ to feel strongly about being Malaysian:

I sang *Negaraku*⁵ for god knows how many years. To be honest, I don’t quite remember how to sing *Majulah Singapura*.⁶ ... Before this, the reason I told my wife not to talk about converting my Malaysian citizenship was also because of loyalty. Ever since I was born, I was brainwashed to be a Malaysian. I’m always a Malaysian. If it’s not because of the economic crisis, I would still believe that Malaysia is the best!

This points to the significant effects of national education and the prioritisation of national unity in post-colonial Malaysia. S06’s narrative suggests his acknowledgement and awareness of how he had been socialised and taught to be a patriotic Malaysian citizen/national. This, I argue, demonstrates the longevity of colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship which has been incorporated into post-colonial Malaysia’s education system. This, in turn, has produced Malaysians such as S06 and my other mobile Malaysian respondents who nurture a strong sense of primordial belonging to ‘Malaysia’ that has been conflated with their Malaysian citizenship.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I examined mobile Malaysians’ citizenship interpretations and practices in relation to the concept of differentiated citizenship theoretically, and to Malaysia’s racially differentiated citizenship empirically. My findings are twofold. First, my respondents associate their Malaysian citizenship with primordial and emotional meanings which may or may not be attached to the country, but are nevertheless articulated as such. The primordial, however, is actually attached to one’s childhood memories, personal and familial social networks, and/or imagined ethnonational community. Second, citizenship is practised and strategised in relation to intertwined and sometimes paradoxical concepts of security and loyalty. Significantly, despite claims to loyalty to ‘Malaysia’ and strong desires to retain Malaysian citizenship, civic/political voting is not a common practice.

In what follows, I discuss my findings in relation to the two themes mentioned earlier—loyalty and primordial belonging to ‘Malaysia’; and insecurity and distrust towards the Malaysian government—before concluding with a section on contextualising citizenship understandings to colonial legacies.

Unpacking Loyalty and Primordial Belongings

I have earlier explained that loyalty is a recurrent theme in state-led discourse and everyday life understandings of citizenship and emigration in Malaysia. My respondents' narratives suggest that loyalty is indeed significant in their interpretations and practices of citizenship. However, 'loyalty' is differentially understood, articulated, and practised in nuanced and paradoxical ways. Crucially, this 'loyalty' departs from, and challenges, state-led constructions of a de-racialised, pan-Malaysian national affiliation. This highlights the significance of racial ideologies underwriting the conceptualisation and constitution of citizenship, with long-lasting effects on contemporary transnational migration.

First, while my respondents conceptualise their citizenship in relation to 'loyalty to Malaysia', the 'Malaysia' that their loyalty lies with is actually a combination of many things that are not necessarily 'Malaysia the nation-state' or 'Malaysia the country'. Instead, the 'Malaysia' that their loyalty lies with include the presence of family members in Malaysia, nostalgic memories of living in Malaysia associated with a significant part of their life stages (e.g. L12's fond memories of college life and visiting *mamaks* with her friends) and an ethnonational sense of pride (e.g. S05's pride of being Malaysian-Chinese). This corresponds with Samers' (2010, p. 283) observation that 'what we might mistake for distinctly transnational practices and spaces may actually be ones of also locality, kinship, family relations, and gender'. This also concurs with Conradson and McKay's (2007, p. 169) conceptualisation of migrants' 'translocal subjectivity' as 'more closely related to localities within nations than to nation states'.

Furthermore, my respondents' sense of loyalty, which is primarily attached to locality and kinship, looms large in their imagined hopes for a future return to Malaysia, as well as the reason they keep their Malaysian citizenship 'just in case'. As Smith (2011, p. 190) notes, 'coming home' for migrants is actually 'a return to the symbolism and materiality of "domestic home spaces"—specific houses, pieces of land, loved ones, cherished spaces and places of previously transnational families'.

However, what is more interesting in the Malaysian case is that both the symbolic materiality of 'home' and the act of return are equated to 'loyalty' and 'retention of citizenship'. Here, my respondents' behaviours can be understood as their internalised disposition about the meanings of their Malaysian citizenship. As a result of a history of *racialised* citizenship constitution that has been coupled with *de-racialised* notions of nationality,

my respondents understand their Malaysian citizenship as a combination of two things: firstly, it is a status that is difficult to come by, and, secondly, it is conflated with national identity and deeply embedded with notions of national loyalty. This enables an understanding of how and why my respondents articulate their Malaysian citizenship through the concept of ‘loyalty to Malaysia’, even if this could be more accurately described as ties to locality and kinship.

More importantly, while my respondents appear to interpret and practice their Malaysian citizenship culturally and apolitically, there is an implicit undercurrent of race that has been internalised, accepted, and left unsaid but which surfaced in their automatic responses to my questions. On the one hand, this would sometimes be articulated as anger and disappointment towards ‘the Malaysian government’, or negative anecdotes about racial discrimination. On the other hand, this could also be expressed in the opposite direction as an essentialised non-*bumiputera* ethnonational pride. Most obvious, however, is the deliberate refusal to engage in discussions about race and *bumiputera*-differentiation—at least beyond the usual complaints about racial discrimination, which are often informed by hearsays instead of personal experiences.

Second, this sense of ‘loyalty’ translates into my respondents’ dichotomised view of their Malaysian citizenship vis-à-vis other citizenship and PR statuses. While the former is viewed with emotional significance, the latter are predominantly considered with pragmatism. Furthermore, my respondents seem to automatically equate their Malaysian identity with their Malaysian citizenship. This can be understood in the context of the historicity of citizenship in colonial and post-colonial Malaysia, where citizenship has been constituted as one that is conferred through a qualified *jus soli* principle (i.e. by birth and descent). This has led to my respondents’ conceptualisation of their Malaysian citizenship as primordial and emblematic of their personal identity and belonging. Theirs are not necessarily flexible citizenship strategies, as Ong’s (1998) observation of Chinese cosmopolitans, but instead this is because it is unfathomable for my respondents to give up their Malaysian citizenship—which symbolises *their* primordial identity—for another. However, this does not negate the possibility that there could be practical reasons to retain their Malaysian citizenship despite articulations of ‘loyalty’, such as access to property ownership and inheritance in Malaysia.

Third, some of my respondents easily and automatically equate their Malaysian identity—which has been conflated with their Malaysian citizenship—with an ethnonational identity. Such ethnonational identities are also conceptualised as a kind of inborn identity with certain characteristics. For example, the Malaysian-Chinese are conceptualised as tolerant, competitively advantaged, and able to survive anywhere in the world due to the limitations they experienced as a result of pro-*bumiputera* affirmative action policies in Malaysia. Furthermore, there is a sense of pride in identifying themselves as Malaysian (and Malaysian-Chinese specifically) vis-à-vis ‘others’ such as the Malaysian-Malays and the Singaporeans (and Singaporean-Chinese specifically).

Such essentialised understandings of an imagined community suggest a kind of ‘racialised ethnicity’, which Kivisto and Croll (2012, p. 12) define as ‘socially created and embedded notions about group differences predicated on observable physiological differences that are defined as having consequences for innate ability, moral character, and persistent inequality’. In this case, my Malaysian-Chinese respondents’ positions as ‘others’ in their home and destination countries have led them to construct their own sense of ethnonational identity and the associated characteristics that differentiate and make them a unique group. This is perhaps to counteract any sense of discrimination or being looked down upon as ‘others’ where they rightly belong, or yearn to belong. However, the problem is that ‘[o]nce cultural identity is claimed, one faces the responsibilities, obligations, and demands for loyalty and existential authenticity’ (Yao, 2009, p. 259). In other words, racialised essentialism becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy as self-identified labels as ‘Malaysians’ and/or ‘Malaysian-Chinese’ reinforce boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’ that crosscut citizenship, nationality, and ethnicity. While the colonial period saw clear boundaries and hierarchies between racial groups residing in Malaya, the post-colonial exacerbations of the colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship have led to the development of a more nuanced, complex, and paradoxical Malaysian identity.

Unpacking Insecurity and Distrust

Another component to my respondents’ retention of their Malaysian citizenship is their sense of insecurity as *incomplete citizens*, which explains their deep desire for security through the accumulation of citizenship statuses. However, ‘security’ needs to be unpacked. First, ‘security’ is

equated to a guaranteed possibility of returning to Malaysia in the future. Thus, all efforts are made to prevent the need to renounce Malaysian citizenship while accumulating other citizenship and PR statuses. L11's account shows how such pragmatic strategies coexist paradoxically with her awareness that she does not desire to return to Malaysia. Security, in this sense, is an excuse for a nostalgic hope one may not actively seek to realise. Crucially, this may not necessarily be part of a conscious agenda to 'bypass or exploit citizenship rules' (Ong, 1999, p. 113).

Second, 'security' is understood as hedging against perceived threats of racial discrimination. L11's desire for 'a spare citizenship', for example, was explained in relation to the May 1969 riots and how it is 'impossible for Chinese people to get [Malaysian] citizenship under the current system'. 'Security' in this instance needs to be contextualised to the racialised nature of Malaysia's *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship—which has its roots in the Malayan Union citizenship controversy—as well as the constant evocation of the May 1969 incident as a warning against possible racially induced incidents. This echoes Ong's (1996) concept of 'cultural citizenship' as 'a dual process of self-making and being made' (p. 738) in relation to state-led processes, although her argument pertains to how minority immigrants are racially produced and reproduced under Western liberal ideologies.

Additionally, 'security' in my Malaysian-Chinese respondents' citizenship interpretations and practices needs to be contextualised to their general sense of distrust of the Malaysian government, which has been equated to 'the Malays' and/or the ruling BN coalition led by UMNO. Although citizenship is normatively understood as access to civic and political rights as well as the state's responsibility to its citizenry, such interpretations are uncommon for my respondents. Most have not registered and/or participated in electoral voting, nor do they seem to believe in the possibility of social change through engagement with politics. Indeed, although some Malaysian transnational migrants actively participate in civil society initiatives such as MyOverseasVote, Global Bersih, and *Saya Anak Bangsa Malaysia* (Khoo, 2014; Lee, 2014), such behaviours were not evident amongst my respondents. In this sense, they practise citizenship culturally and do not actively engage with citizenship politically.

Such attitudes can be understood in relation to three factors: first, state-led constructions and everyday understandings of Malaysian citizenship as a form of cultural belonging; second, problems with Malaysia's electoral

system and unequal overseas voting rights (Koh, 2015c); and third, the grudging resignation that Malaysia's *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship cannot be changed or removed, at least under the current constitution. Thus, citizenship as security is pursued because the government is not trusted to be responsible and equitable to its citizenry.

Postcolonialising Citizenship

At the first glance, the notions of loyalty, primordial identity, security, and distrust tied to the Malaysian citizenship could be explained using Ho's (2009) concept of emotional citizenship. In particular, my respondents' attachment to kinship and non-participation in civic and political acts fit Ho's observation that 'the emotional attachment that individuals speak of might not take the form of political belonging; instead belonging is anchored in the family unit' (p. 797).

However, I argue that Ho's emotional citizenship offers only a partial explanation. More importantly, I am wary of emphasising the emotional, as this obscures a more important structural factor, which is the longevity of colonial legacies, particularly in post-colonial, multi-ethnic contexts such as Malaysia. Thus, in this book I chose instead to emphasise a post-colonial approach grounded in the historicity of citizenship to advance a historically informed understanding of how and why a citizenry interprets and carries out citizenship practices in relation to migration. In my approach, the emotional and the habitual are windows through which to expose the workings of long-lasting legacies of colonialism on contemporary migration.

In his study of the Chinese in Malaysia, Nonini (1997, p. 204) concludes that '[t]ransnational practices of modern Chinese persons cannot be understood separately from the cultural politics of identities inscribed on them by such regimes in the spaces they traverse and reside in'. In this book, I have shown that while this remains true, there are also diversities within the general category of 'mobile Malaysians', and in particular 'the Malaysian-Chinese' transnational migrant. For example, education streams and associated experiences appear to influence my respondents' understandings of 'Malaysia' and how that relates to their Malaysian citizenship. Furthermore, this also has implications for their attitudes towards *bumiputera* policies and their practices of citizenship to some extent.

Here, I am reminded of Staeheli et al.'s (2012) insight:

The citizenship of daily life is not simply constrained by law, but instead fuses law with abstract norms and the behaviours, relationships, and interactions of daily life. These interactions and encounters can lead to conflict, othering, and exclusion, but they can also lead to feelings of conviviality, to understanding, to belonging, to obligation, or to simply getting on with each other.

Feelings of conviviality with 'the other' may indeed occur, especially in transnational migration settings. However, as shown in this chapter and Chap. 4, in the Malaysian case, migration *also* perpetuates existing social stratifications that have been inherited as colonial legacies. In other words, race as colonial legacy initiates, and is in turn perpetuated by, mobile Malaysians' culture of migration. Taken altogether, I argue that the real impact of colonial legacies lie in the internalised understandings about race, education, and citizenship that continue to circumscribe citizenship and migration behaviours of generations after the end of the colonial period. This is what I call the longevity of British colonial legacies.

NOTES

1. *Mamak* refers to the Tamil Muslims in Malaysia, who typically own and operate 24-hour roadside stalls, cafes, and restaurants. *Mamaks*, referring to the food establishments, are popular hangout places for Malaysian youths.
2. See Kivisto and Croll (2012) and Jenkins (2008) on how primordialism has been discussed in relation to sociological debates of race and ethnicity; Tong (2010) on how primordialism relates to Chinese ethnicity; and Geschiere (2009) for a discussion of the notion of autochthony.
3. S05 used the term 包容, which carries connotations of embracing or accommodating diversity, magnanimity, and inclusiveness. Her use of this term suggests a sense of (racial) superiority that is tied to the ethnonational Malaysian-Chinese identity.
4. It has been recently reported that there are 4.2 million unregistered voters, of which 42.9 percent are Malays and 28.6 percent are Chinese (Wong, 2016).
5. Malaysia's national anthem.
6. Singapore's national anthem.

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Returning to Malaysia?

The previous chapters have described a culture of education-led migration amongst mobile Malaysians, which can be contextualised to the British colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state. This chapter examines return migration from both mobile Malaysian respondents' perspectives and the post-colonial Malaysian state's policy perspectives. This chapter argues that the post-colonial Malaysian state's return migration policies do not address the fundamental and structural issues that have led to the departure of mobile Malaysians in the very first place. Furthermore, these policies—in particular citizenship and immigration policies—continue to retain elements of the British colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship, which are the main contributors to the emigration push factors for mobile Malaysians. Consequently, there has been a colonial to post-colonial continuity in the practice of differentiated privileges and treatments towards citizen-migrants. This, in turn, results in mobile Malaysians having differential access to information and opportunities. It is this differentiated policy landscape and socio-economic environment that prevents some mobile Malaysians (and their foreign spouses and children) from considering and actualising (permanent) returns to Malaysia, even as they continue to nurture a diasporic hope to return 'home'.

This chapter begins with an overview of existing theoretical explanations of brain drain and return (lifestyle) migration. I then examine the factors affecting mobile Malaysians' propensity to return. Particular attention will be placed on their age and nature of departure from Malaysia, their duration of stay in Malaysia prior to their first departure from Malaysia, the presence of active family and other social networks in Malaysia, and their marital and familial circumstances (especially those with foreign spouses and children). Next, I discuss return migration and reverse brain drain policies implemented by the post-colonial Malaysian state. I then analyse mobile Malaysians' perceptions of the recently revamped Returning Expert Programme (REP). Finally, I conclude by positioning return migration in relation to the postcolonial approach to a culture of migration adopted in this book.

EXPLAINING (SKILLED) RETURN MIGRATION

Brain Drain

In existing migration literature, skilled migration has been theorised through concepts such as 'brain drain', 'brain gain', and 'brain circulation'. The term 'brain drain' was first used in reference to the post-World War II exodus of British doctors to the USA and Canada (Crush & Hughes, 2009, p. 342). It has since been used more generally to describe the loss of skilled professionals and related externalities accompanying their departure from their home countries. In contrast, 'brain gain' refers to the inflow of skilled professionals and the accompanying compounding effects in immigrant receiving states, while 'brain circulation' refers to the transnational circulation of human capital, bringing benefits to both host and sending states (Saxenian, 2005). Although different terms have been used, they are linked by a common theme: the migration of skilled persons across national borders.

The issue of brain drain (typically from developing to developed countries) has seen a transition from the pessimistic stance to discussions of brain circulation and 'talent flow' (Carr, Inkson, & Thorn, 2005). While previous normative debates focused on immigrant receiving states' responsibilities in tackling global inequalities (Kapur & McHale, 2005), emphases are now placed on the roles of sending states in engaging their diasporas to facilitate contributions back home (Brinkerhoff, 2006; Chappell & Glennie, 2009; de Haas, 2006; Ionescu, 2006) and the roles of diasporas as development agents in homeland development projects

(Faist, 2008; Hugo, 2011). For skilled migrants/diasporas, these take the form of diaspora networks (Kuznetsov, 2006), knowledge transfers, and return migration (Iredale, Guo, & Rozario, 2003).

In addition to literature taking the perspectives of sending and receiving states, there is also a complementary literature taking skilled migrants' perspectives. In this literature, it is often common to emphasise economic considerations. For example, Papademetriou, Somerville, and Tanaka (2008) suggest that highly skilled migrants consider 'drivers' and 'facilitators' as a total package in deciding their emigration destinations. 'Drivers' are 'first-order variables' of economic factors (e.g. opportunities, capital infrastructure, and the presence of a critical mass of other talented professionals), while 'facilitators' are 'second-order variables' or non-economic factors (e.g. fair and generous social model, lifestyle and environmental factors, and a tolerant and safe society). Favell, Feldblum, and Smith (2006, pp. 8–9) suggest that skilled migrants are 'career-frustrated "spiralists", who have gambled with dramatic spatial mobility in their education and careers abroad to improve social mobility opportunities that are otherwise blocked at home'. In their attempt to explain skilled emigration and return migration, Chappell and Glennie (2010) suggest that the former are shaped by considerations including income remuneration, employment, professional development, personal and professional networks, and political and economic circumstances in the homeland; while the latter are shaped by factors such as the general improvement of situations in the homeland, the feeling of belonging to one's culture and society, and the internationally temporary nature of one's skilled migration sojourn.

The examples above demonstrate that emphasis has been primarily placed on economic factors, while socio-cultural factors are often seen as complementary. Such economic-centric approaches, however, are counterbalanced by works discussing gender roles and relations in skilled migrants' migration decisions and experiences. Yeoh and Willis (2005), for example, highlight how Singaporean transnational female migrants in China negotiate their multiple roles as 'tied' or 'lead' migrants. Another approach considers the emotional geographies of transnational migrants. For example, instead of explaining skilled emigrants as rational *homo economicus* performing cost-benefit calculations, Ho (2011, p. 126) argues that Singaporean transnational migrants emigrate 'as a way of expressing their dissatisfaction with Singaporean policies and societal rules'. Singaporean emigrants' resentment towards the Singapore state must be

contextualised to their perception that the state privileges foreign talents over Singapore citizens (see Chap. 3; Ng, 2010; Yeoh & Huang, 2004).

Return (Lifestyle) Migration

In regard to skilled return migration, much work has focused on the return of student migrants or highly skilled migrants in specific professional sectors (Iredale et al., 2003). Studies on the return of student migrants include those focusing on cultural preferences (Lee & Kim, 2010) or scholarship obligations (Ziguras & Law, 2006), those highlighting the differentiated and complex nature of return decision-making (Szelenyi, 2006), as well as those examining return as one of the options of post-study migration (Soon, 2011). Studies on the return of highly skilled migrants include works employing econometric analyses of factors influencing return migration (Gibson & McKenzie, 2011; Güngör & Tansel, 2014).

Return has also been conceptualised as part of a long-term migration trajectory and not necessarily the end of a journey (King, 2000). This dovetails nicely with the idea of brain circulation, and evokes a positive image of flexible and autonomous migrants freely crossing national boundaries in pursuit of their transnational lifestyles. However, repeated returns and repatriations could be due to difficulties faced at either sending or receiving societies (de Bree, Davids, & de Haas, 2010; Salaff, Wong, & Greve, 2010) and not necessarily due to migrants' preference for transnational lifestyles (Sinatti, 2011). In fact, returnees often find themselves negotiating difficulties of integration and adaptation in both sending and receiving contexts (S. Y. Teo, 2011). Furthermore, return is differentially negotiated depending on the decision maker's socio-economic status, reasons for return, whether they are first or subsequent generation emigrants (Christou, 2006; King & Christou, 2011), as well as their perceptions of their individual circumstances and changing priorities (Erdal, 2014; Ma, 1999, 2009).

Return migration can also be understood as lifestyle migration. According to Benson and O'Reilly (2009), lifestyle migration is the phenomenon where relatively affluent migrants search for a better quality of life through migration. The lifestyle migration literature has thus far focused on retirement migration (Green, 2015; O'Reilly, Botterill, Stones, & Lee, 2014; Ono, 2015) and North-South migration (Croucher, 2012). While there are many overlaps with return migration, it is not until recently that some attempt to integrate both types of migration (Bolognani, 2014).

In sum, there are various emotional, ‘temporal, social, spatial, and legal dimensions’ of return and further migration (Jeffery & Murison, 2011). However, while (return) migration decisions may be highly individualised (Baas, 2015), they must also be contextualised to the structural frameworks that circumscribe individual agency.

A Contextualised Approach

The works described above highlight that explanations of different types of migration are inherently dependent on the chosen perspective. State-centred perspectives inadvertently prioritise policy considerations and the influence of push-pull factors. Migrant-centred perspectives highlight micro-individual circumstances, complexities, and heterogeneities that may defy clear-cut categorisation. Perspectives that are empirically contextualised demonstrate the need to analyse migration phenomena in relation to specific localities and temporalities. In this chapter, I adopt the third approach in understanding how and why mobile Malaysians make their return and non-return migration decisions. More importantly, I use a postcolonial approach that situates individual migration stories in relation to the structural frameworks—which can be understood as colonial legacies inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state—that circumscribe contemporary migration phenomena in Malaysia.

FACTORS AFFECTING MOBILE MALAYSIANS’ PROPENSITY TO RETURN

In Chap. 3, we have seen how some of the mobile Malaysian respondents’ migration geographies involved circular flows and repeated return migration and re-emigration. This section considers the factors affecting their propensity to return.

Age and Nature of Departure from Malaysia

In general, returnee respondents left Malaysia at a later age compared to non-returnee respondents (Table 1.3). The mean and median age of first time departure for returnee respondents is 21.0. This is much higher than the mean and median ages of first time departures for respondents in Singapore (16.4 and 18.0 respectively), London/the UK (15.5 and

18.0 respectively), and other global locations (18.0 and 17.0 respectively). With the exception of M17 (mid-thirties, male, married) who undertook secondary school in Singapore before returning to Malaysia for pre-university education, the remaining 17 returnee respondents completed at least an upper secondary education in Malaysia (94.4 percent). Of those 17, one left to pursue pre-university education, seven for university, three for postgraduate education, and the remaining six left for job-related reasons.

Most of the non-returnee respondents left Malaysia as young children and teenagers to pursue overseas education at various stages. This was especially prevalent amongst respondents in Singapore. Those who moved at relatively early ages to Singapore include, firstly, second-generation Malaysians born to parents who had migrated to Singapore and, secondly, those who lived in JB and commuted daily to Singapore for primary and/or secondary school. Three respondents who received the ASEAN Scholarship for Secondary One and Secondary Three studies in Singapore left Malaysia at the ages of 12–13 and 15–16 respectively. Further along the education stage are three respondents who came to Singapore for pre-university studies, four for university, and two for postgraduate studies. The primary reason for their first move from Malaysia—which may not necessarily coincide with the reason for their move to Singapore—has been for education. In fact, 25 out of the 27 respondents (92.6 percent) had cited reasons related to education (including following their parents' migration for early entry into Singapore's education system). Departures from Malaysia at young ages have been motivated by desires to access Singapore's education system, which the respondents and their parents perceive as 'meritocratic', 'competitive', and of a 'better quality' compared to the Malaysian education system. English language competency and internationally recognised qualifications are often cited as key considerations for education-migration.

The same theme of migrating for education is also found amongst the respondents in London/UK. Nine out of the sixteen respondents (52.4 percent) had arrived in London/the UK for pre-university, university, or postgraduate studies. Amongst those who came to the UK for university, four came through twinning programmes offered by private institutes of higher education in Malaysia. Fifteen out of the sixteen respondents (93.8 percent) first left Malaysia for education-related reasons. This includes two respondents who were born in the UK to their Malaysian parents, who had themselves arrived in the UK for university or further studies. This suggests

that there is an element of intergenerational continuity or the transfer of ‘family migration capital’ (Ivlevs & King, 2012) in some overseas Malaysians’ education-migration geographies. It would be interesting to see if this intergenerational culture of education-migration continues to the next generation, as well as how migration geographies differ across generations.

School Stream and Duration of Stay in Malaysia Prior to the First Departure

A second observation in comparing the respondents’ migration geographies is the significance of the school stream they were enrolled in while in Malaysia. In general, Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary School (MICSS) students have ended up in Singapore, while twinning programme students have ended up in London/the UK. MICSS students are embedded in strong alumni networks that are predominantly located in Taiwan, Singapore, the USA, and Malaysia. Since these schools do not receive government funding, the alumni has been a key source for funding and other support. This includes information about higher education, migration, employment, and settlement in selected destination countries. In Chap. 4, for example, we saw how M04 (early forties, male, single) reached out to his high school seniors for information and advice on immigration to the USA.

On the other hand, twinning programme students have ended up in London/UK because certain UK universities have twinning arrangements with Malaysian private institutes of higher education. They have chosen the UK as their migration destination because they wanted the option of postgraduate employment (and possible long-term settlement) in the UK—even if this has not been clearly decided upon when they first left for the UK. Interestingly, most of the respondents were not able to articulate specifically why they had opted for GCE ‘A’ Levels or South Australian Matriculation (SAM) in private colleges, instead of remaining in the public school system and taking the *Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia* (STPM) (‘Malaysian Higher Certification of Schooling’). This suggests that because pursuing an overseas education in the UK has been a taken-for-granted education-migration route for these mobile Malaysian respondents, they saw no point in taking the STPM, which is examined in the Malay language. In comparison, the GCE ‘A’ Levels or SAM, examined in the English language, were perceived to be more valuable as these offered more utility and versatility for their future education-migration.

In contrast, the returnee respondents had generally remained in Malaysia’s public education system for a longer duration compared to non-

returnee respondents. Amongst the Malaysian-Chinese returnee respondents, those who went to national schools appear to be more accepting of the ethnopolitics of Malaysian life, including the practice of pro-*bumiputera* policies, compared to those who went to national-type schools or MICSS. In general, these national school-educated returnee respondents' articulation of the practice of differentiated citizenship in Malaysia was one of acceptance or resignation. Furthermore, perhaps as a result of their longer stay in Malaysia prior to their first emigration, they were able to envision possible ways of living their lives in Malaysia as adults.

Since the returnees had generally left Malaysia at a later age compared to the non-returnees, this suggests that living in Malaysia during their young adulthood lives may have contributed towards their higher propensity to return. This is because such experiences accorded them the ability to realistically *imagine* their lives after return, and the knowledge and resources to *actualise* their returns. For example, M17 had returned from Singapore to attend private college in KL in his late teens. He subsequently stayed on in the UK following his university studies there. He then returned to KL for a second time because he 'know[s] what [he is] getting [himself] into' with the benefit of his first return previously. Others articulated their preference for a familiar lifestyle and living environment in Malaysia that they had grown accustomed to (e.g. living in landed houses, driving cars, socialising with friends and family, a more relaxed lifestyle), and their inability (and perhaps also reluctance) to adapt to lifestyles in foreign countries (e.g. living in high-rise flats, taking public transport, a more stressful lifestyle). A few, such as M03 (early thirties, male, single) and M08 (male, late thirties, married), saw entrepreneurial and career development opportunities in Malaysia and returned for those reasons. M03's second return to Malaysia was also precipitated by his retrenchment from his company in Singapore, and him being accepted into a part-time postgraduate course in a Malaysian public university. More importantly, as M07 (late fifties, male, married) explains, returnee respondents are the ones who know that they 'can survive' in Malaysia despite not being 'consider[ed] first class citizens'.

Drawing from a study of Australian self-initiated repatriating professionals, Tharenou and Caulfield (2010) find that these migrants are more likely to return when they perceive that it would be easy to actualise return migration, when they experience a shock that forces them to consider return migration, and when they are relatively less embedded in their host country. My findings here appear to concur with the Australian case. M03, for example, knew that it would be easy for him to return to Malaysia,

needed to find a new job after being retrenched, and had not fully embedded himself into Singapore life throughout his two sojourns there.

These examples suggest that previous life and education experiences in Malaysia could be a significant factor in facilitating return migration, as such experiences made it easier for mobile Malaysians to consider return. A later departure from Malaysia means that these mobile Malaysians had accumulated social capital that they could strategically deploy to facilitate their return. However, I argue that returnee mobile Malaysians' return migration should not be superficially analysed as transnational skilled migration or a particular form of lifestyle migration (see Benson & O'Reilly, 2009). This is because their return migration geographies, compared to those of the non-returning mobile Malaysians, must also be contextualised to the colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state. In effect, these legacies have structured the migration geographies of different groups of mobile Malaysians: those who had left Malaysia at an early age are less likely to return, while those who had stayed for a longer duration prior to emigration are more likely to consider return.

Active Social Networks in Malaysia

Related to the above, a longer duration of stay in Malaysia prior to emigration also means that returnee mobile Malaysians have active social networks in Malaysia. They may have university mates, secondary school classmates, and work colleagues who have remained in Malaysia. In contrast, non-returnee mobile Malaysians' social networks could be more concentrated in their destination countries, or spread across the globe. While these contacts could be helpful in providing information and support about international and transnational migration to other destinations, they could be less helpful in providing advice on return migration to Malaysia.

Duval (2004) finds that adult return visits played a significant role in facilitating return migration to the Caribbean in three ways: first, such visits assisted in renewing social ties which develop into meaningful relationships upon permanent return; secondly, return visits 'afford[ed] a degree of patterned recognition of lifeways and social connections' (p. 60) that served as yardsticks for migrants' calibration of their lives here and there; and thirdly, return visits assisted in the reintegration upon permanent return. Similarly, returnee mobile Malaysians could renew their active social networks in Malaysia relatively easily compared to non-returnee mobile Malaysians who grew up in other contexts. Furthermore, returnee

mobile Malaysians may have personal networks that can provide them with updated information about the job market and the socio-political environment in Malaysia. Most importantly, returnee mobile Malaysians could be in a better position to assess these information and the career and livelihood implications of their return. This is because they could usefully juxtapose these information to their previous adulthood experiences in Malaysia, while mobile Malaysians who had left Malaysia at a much younger age may not be in a position to do so.

Having an active social network in Malaysia can also facilitate reintegration into Malaysian social life after return migration. King, Christou, and Teerling (2011) find that second-generation Greeks and Greek Cypriots who have returned to Greece experience challenges in their integration into Greek society. In particular, they found that their experiences and memories of childhood return visits were different from their experiences upon return. In a similar way, mobile Malaysians who do not have active social networks in Malaysia are in the same boat as these second-generation returnees to Greece: they are essentially new foreigners in their 'homeland'.

Foreign Spouse

For most of the respondents, migration decisions are intimately intertwined with their marital and familial circumstances. Although career and economic considerations are also important, I found that the deal breakers, especially for respondents who are married and/or have children, are considerations related to their families. This is especially the case for those married to foreign spouses.

L01 (late fifties, female, married, *bumiputera*) went to the UK in the 1980s to complete a postgraduate degree. Her original intention was to return to her job in Malaysia after graduation. During her stay in the UK, she met and married her British husband. After graduation, she returned to Malaysia, and her husband followed once he found a job in Malaysia. As a foreigner married to a Malaysian woman, he was not able to secure permanent resident (PR) status to remain in Malaysia. Although he was able to obtain an employment visa, this was on a short-term basis and created a sense of insecurity for the couple. Even though he adjusted well to the local culture and had sincere intentions to reside long-term in Malaysia, he was forced to leave Malaysia after a near eviction incident. Here, L01 recounts the incident vividly:

I think what triggered [our departure] was the fact that his contract was not renewed. And then we had such an awful experience ... we had a knock on the door at 5 o'clock in the evening saying that he needs to get out, he needs to get out very quickly because ... his visa will run out, and they didn't get the work permit ... for his stay. So he rushed out quickly that night, drove all the way to Singapore, and then turned around and got back in. So it then hit him that it's really reliant on the job for his stay.

After this traumatic experience, the couple remigrated and settled down in the UK. However, this remains a sore point for L01.

L01: I gave up my friends, I gave up everything, because of the unfairness that I felt ... They [i.e. the Malaysian government] call it the brain drain, but we were brain pissed-off, you know. We couldn't stay! Immediately when his contract finished, that's it ... They don't take into account that he's married to me, or that he's a professional. They are very harsh, harsh and brutal.

Author: Did he apply for PR in Malaysia?

L01: No, he didn't, he didn't apply. I don't think it would have been [possible] ... I think now things have changed a lot. But during that time, no ... difficult ... At least here [in the UK], if by virtue of marriage, then you can still test whether it's genuine or not, isn't it? But in Malaysia they won't go down that route of checking. Because they are worried [that] there would be an influx of people getting married to our locals to get Malaysian nationality.

L01's experience demonstrates the significance of citizenship and immigration policies in circumventing migrants and foreign spouses' right to residence. Despite being married to a Malaysian citizen—and specifically a *bumiputera* Malaysian—L01's foreign husband did not have the recourse of obtaining permanent resident status by marriage. Instead, he had to rely on his work permit, as if he was merely a temporary foreign labour. While it is understandable for host countries to regulate and control the immigration statuses of foreigners, the Malaysian case, which has been described as one of 'Cold War mentality' towards immigration (Boo, 2010), further demonstrates the longevity of British colonial legacies of race and citizenship. As a result of the complex politics of race, indigeneity, and rightful belonging—which had its foundations in the formation of the Malayan Union (MU) and citizenship constitution detailed in Chap. 2—

Malaysian citizenship legislation has been one that is extremely alienating towards foreigners. This extends to the policy treatment towards foreign spouses married to Malaysian citizens and their foreign-born children.

It is widely known that foreign spouses and children of Malaysian citizens face great difficulty in obtaining PR status and Malaysian citizenship.¹ Foreign spouses are typically issued the Long-Term Social Visit Pass (LTSVP),² which must be renewed and prohibits them from employment in Malaysia unless an endorsement is obtained from the relevant authorities. There is a further gender discrimination: female foreign spouses married to male Malaysian citizens are prioritised over male foreign spouses married to female Malaysian citizens (see also Hodal, 2016). Female foreign spouses are eligible for permanent residence after five years of consecutive stay in Malaysia, and Malaysian citizenship by naturalisation after two years of permanent residence status (BJP, 2015; Loh, 2010). In contrast, male foreign spouses are subjected to a much longer residence requirement: ten years of consecutive stay for permanent residence, and ten years of permanent residence status for citizenship (*ibid.*). Unsurprisingly, like L01 and her husband, foreign spouses have been airing their grievances and pointing out the effect of their immigration statuses on their family life and settlement in Malaysia (“Forgotten”, 2008).

The exclusive and gender-differentiated nature of the Malaysian citizenship also extends to foreign-born children of Malaysians, especially if these children were born overseas with a non-Malaysian spouse. Under the Malaysian constitution, only a child born ex-territory to a Malaysian father can register for citizenship. This meant that foreign-born children of Malaysian women cannot register for Malaysian citizenship, as was the case for M16 (early forties, female, married). As she explains:

At that time there was also this ridiculous thing where if you are a Malaysian woman and you have a child outside of Malaysia, your child cannot be Malaysian. You have to fly back to Malaysia to have your child. But if you are a man, your child can be Malaysian ... I wasn't going to fly back thirty hours while I was nine months pregnant. I had them in [Country X]. And then when we came back [to Malaysia] I went to [the] Immigration [Department] and I tried to register them as a Malaysian. And they said: 'No, you can't do that because you are a woman.'

This gender-differentiated policy was only changed in April 2010 when the government announced that provisions will be made to enable Malaysian

women married to foreign spouses to obtain Malaysian citizenship for their children born overseas (*The Star Online*, 2010).

In addition to gender differentiation, there is also an element of ethnic differentiation and prioritisation. For example, S27 (late twenties, male, engaged) expresses the impossibility of settling permanently in Malaysia with his non-Malay, non-Muslim, Southeast Asian fiancée.

It will be hard to bring her to Malaysia. Come on, it's already tough enough for us [non-*bumiputera* Malaysian-Chinese], you know? For someone who is not born [in Malaysia], and who is not White, who doesn't speak Malay—I mean, how tough can you get? It's triple whammy, not double whammy. It's triple whammy.

S27's narrative illustrates the internalised racial hierarchy that I argue has been systematically introduced and developed since the British colonial period. Here, S27 alludes to a hierarchy where 'the Whites' are positioned above non-*bumiputera* Malaysians, and where non-White-non-Malay/Muslim foreigners are relegated to the lowest tier. S27's perspective here needs to be contextualised to the alleged acceptance of large numbers of Muslim ethnic legal and illegal foreign workers from Indonesia and the Philippines as Malaysian citizens.³ This is especially the case in the state of Sabah, which has a diverse mix of non-Malay *bumiputera* citizens and has been receiving large-scale legal and illegal immigration from these neighbouring countries. Sadiq (2005) argues that this phenomenon of 'documentary citizenship' has been motivated by the intention to "Malayize" or homogenize Malaysia' (p. 105) to ensure electoral majority. Through numerous regularisation exercises by the Sabah government (see Lindquist, 2009, Tables 4.2 and 4.3), these '*suffraged non-citizens*' (Sadiq, 2005, p. 118, original emphasis) constituted a large population of voters, significant enough to ensure the continued governance of the existing ruling regime. In fact, observers have noted that electoral votes from 'rural constituencies' (Wong, 2005, p. 312) which are *bumiputera* dominated and mostly in the states of Sabah and Sarawak in East Malaysia, carry more weight due to malapportionment and the strategic redrawing of constituency boundaries (see also Balasubramaniam, 2006; Chin & Wong, 2009; Freedom House, 2013; Lim, 2002; Welsh, 2015). These controversies have contributed towards some mobile Malaysians, like S27, to easily jump to the conclusion that non-*bumiputeras* continue to be

marginalised by an untrustworthy government—to the extent of prioritising ‘*bumiputera*’ foreigners over non-*bumiputera* Malaysian citizens.

In general, non-returnee respondents who are married to Singaporean spouses did not consider return migration. On the one hand, this is understandable as settlement in Singapore would have been the end goal for the respondents when they left Malaysia for education or work in Singapore in the first place. Without relinquishing their Malaysian citizenship, they are able to settle in Singapore as permanent residents by virtue of their marriage to a Singaporean citizen. On the other hand, it is interesting that none of these respondents mentioned the difficulties of obtaining Malaysian PR status for their Singaporean spouses. It was as if family relocation to Malaysia (i.e. ‘return’) was not an option they considered at all. This is similarly found amongst respondents in Singapore who are married to non-Singaporean spouses. For example, for S07 (late forties, male, married), settling in Malaysia was not an option as his Asian Chinese wife was ‘intimidated’ by the racial politics and ethnoreligious environment in Malaysia. The couple chose to make Singapore their home, and his wife subsequently took up Singapore citizenship. In Chap. 5, we saw how S06 (mid-thirties, male, married) took up Singapore citizenship as he considered his non-Singaporean wife’s immigration status in Singapore.

These examples suggest that, in addition to foreign spouses’ immigration status in Malaysia, another obstacle to return or re(settlement) in Malaysia is whether foreign spouses and family members could realistically adapt to life in Malaysia. Long and Oxfeld (2004, p. 14) point out that state policies determine ‘whether a return is only imagined or becomes physically possible and under what conditions’. Indeed, in the Malaysian context, the colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state have produced a complex socio-political landscape of differentiated othering—of citizens *and* foreigners alike—that in turn becomes an obstacle preventing return migration. Over time, the post-colonial Malaysian state’s discerning policy stance towards foreign spouses have been internalised by mobile Malaysians to such an extent that some automatically assumed that return is impossible.

However, it is also noteworthy to point out that this socio-political landscape is shifting as it is shaped by certain policies at certain temporalities. L01’s case, for example, would perhaps not be an issue if she and her husband’s return occurred 30 years later when immigration policies are

more favourable towards foreign spouses (see next section on reverse brain drain policies).

Children

In addition to the immigration circumstances of foreign spouses, some mobile Malaysians had to also reconsider their return migration intentions due to their children's circumstances. An example is L04's (late thirties, female, married) case. Throughout their migration stays in Singapore, Australia, and the UK, L04 and her husband had always intended to return to Malaysia to contribute their knowledge and skills ('We always intended to go home. Always!'). In fact, they had stayed on in the UK for seven years without contributing to the UK pension scheme because they were 'not going to stay for long'. However, they had to reconsider their plans as their child was diagnosed with a learning disability. As she explains:

We were just hovering along on [work] visas. I think we've never intended to stay here [in the UK]. But then our first [child] was diagnosed with [a learning disability]. And there were a lot of difficulties at the time with the diagnosis. And we had to work very hard on getting [our child] the therapies and the specialist supports and everything. So we knew that in Malaysia there is nothing available. I mean, that was not even available in Singapore. So that was the crunch, you know: We are never going to go back with [our child's] diagnosis. So then we decided to proceed with the plan for permanent residence. It was practically only six years ago that we changed our visas to a permanent visa, not a [work] visa ... The diagnosis was kind of the clinch. We decided to, you know, we are going to stay.

Despite her initial plans to return, the reality of a serious lack of medical and education support for their child in Malaysia became the deal breaker for L04's family.

Children's futures have also compelled some returnee mobile Malaysians to consider remigration. M08 (late thirties, male, married) had initially returned to Malaysia for his career prospects. He found that the Malaysian environment was more dynamic and advanced in his industry compared to Singapore, where he previously resided. However, after returning to Malaysia for more than a decade, he is starting to have doubts about his earlier decision to return. In addition to his worry over the rising crime rate in Malaysia, a more important concern is his children's educational prospects. As he explains:

About three to four years ago I started to think: 'If I hadn't make this decision, would I be better or worse today?' The reason is because I became a father ... My consideration is my kids' competitiveness in the future ... That is, if they want to be competitive. Under the current environment and education system in Malaysia, ten or twenty years later, will they be competitive? No way.

Similarly, drawing on her own experience growing up in Malaysia, L04 expresses her consideration about her children's future opportunities in the UK versus Malaysia. As she explains:

How do you explain to your child about difference in race? Or colour? Especially if [my child] wants to be a dentist or a doctor or ... Well, my family was really funny when I was younger. I wanted to be a doctor when I was five. And from five till about ten they will be like: 'Don't be a doctor.' (laughs). Because they were scared that I can't, [that] I won't get in[to a Malaysian public university]. And they are not rich enough ... So they discouraged me for years. 'Maybe just do pharmacy, or do a whatever degree, but not medicine.' Because they knew that I have to be super, super great to earn that 1 percent of that university placement. And how possible is that? Six year-old, to tell the child who is so young she can't be a doctor. So they've always discouraged me. I keep telling them, even today: 'Why did you discourage me? How did you know I couldn't do it?' (laughs) They said: 'We didn't want you to be disappointed.' That's all they said.

And now, in a similar way, L04's decision to settle in the UK to protect her children's future career prospects mirrors her own parents' desire to protect her from being disappointed decades earlier.

In their research on the role of children and children's education in Polish migrants' family migration decisions, Ryan and Sales (2013) find that such considerations are influenced by factors such as children's age and stage of education, as well as parents' expectations about opportunities for their children in the destination context. In the Malaysian context, considerations about children's education and future livelihoods take on an additional postcolonial dimension, since ethnic-differentiated access to education and social mobility in Malaysia were the push factors for many mobile Malaysians in the first place. In fact, when these mobile Malaysian respondents left Malaysia for overseas education during their teens and young adulthood years, they embodied their parents' concerns for them. Over time and across generations, concern for children's education and

future social mobility oils the perpetuation of the culture of migration within the mobile Malaysian family. Moreover, the crucial stage of making decisions concerning children's futures has also pushed some mobile Malaysians in Singapore to take up Singapore citizenship, thereby closing the option of 'returning' to Malaysia in the future.

For the few returnee respondents with school-going children, children's education did not pose a huge dilemma in their return migration considerations as they could afford to send their children to international schools. This was the case with M16 and M17: by placing their children in international schools, their children would not be subjected to the structural constraints of race and education during the family's return to Malaysia. In this way, they can be seen as returnee Malaysians who are living the expatriate life.

An outlier returnee is M15 (early forties, male, married) who has 'defied' the normal culture of migration from Malaysia to Singapore, and instead chose to relocate his family back to Malaysia. In doing so, he has been facing harsh social pressures. For example, a friend accused him of violating his children's human rights by depriving them of better quality education in Singapore. However, M15 wanted his children to grow up in a balanced—albeit challenging—environment rather than a 'comfortable' one. As he explains:

Maybe that is part of us, you know? That's how we have grown up. There are times when it's so hopeless. But you grow up from that hopelessness, and that process somehow also gives you some strength. And you have to find your own way: nobody is going to take care of your life ... That is what I feel our kids should have, rather than being in a completely comfortable environment.

To M15, then, returning to Malaysia offers his children a more balanced upbringing that goes beyond formal education.⁴ M15's explanation here also echoes S05's narrative in Chap. 5 suggesting the internalised resilience of the Malaysian-Chinese in facing the structural constraints of race, education, and citizenship in post-colonial Malaysia. More importantly, M15's example demonstrates that opportunities and constraints are relatively perceived by individual mobile Malaysians. What appears as constraints to the majority of the non-returnee mobile Malaysians may be perceived as opportunities by some returnee mobile Malaysians.

REVERSE BRAIN DRAIN POLICIES

The previous section discussed the factors influencing the return migration decisions of mobile Malaysian respondents. This section examines the role of reverse brain drain policies in facilitating return migration, the perceptions of mobile Malaysian respondents towards the policies, as well as alternative policy routes for mobile Malaysians' return. I argue that Malaysia's reverse brain drain policies, as they are currently configured, do not address the fundamental factors that led to the initiation and perpetuation of mobile Malaysians' culture of migration.

Policy Development

As we have seen in Chap. 3, Malaysia is experiencing a growing outflow of student-turned-skilled migrants and emigrants. Indeed, the post-colonial Malaysian government has been aware of the outflow of its tertiary-educated citizenry since the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, this was not recognised as a brain drain problem, as the majority were students pursuing overseas degrees on Malaysian government scholarships and expected to return to serve the government for five to seven years (Commonwealth Consultative Committee on South and South-east Asia & Colombo Plan Bureau, 1972). This perspective changed in the 1990s with the introduction of reverse brain drain policies administered by various ministries. This included the Scheme for Appointment of Overseas Malaysian and Foreign Scientists in 1995, the Returning Expert Programme (REP) in 2001, and Brain Gain Malaysia (BGM) in 2006. However, these programmes have not been particularly successful. The 1995 programme, also known as the Returning Scientist Programme (RSP), attracted 94 researchers, scientists, and engineers (including 24 overseas Malaysians)—all but one of them has since left Malaysia (Tan, 2010). The RSP was discontinued three years later in 1998. The BGM, targeted at overseas Malaysian and foreign researchers, scientists, engineers, and technopreneurs, appears to have been discontinued in the early to mid-2010s.⁵ Although the REP has been thus far the longest running programme, it has also not been particularly successful in terms of actual numbers of returnees. From January 2001 to February 2010, 840 out of 1455 REP applications were approved, of which 601 actually returned to Malaysia (Bedi & Azizan, 2010). Although these programmes target the

highly skilled in specific industries, and therefore cannot be expected to be large, they appear paltry when viewed in comparison to the scale of the overall Malaysian diaspora.

In 2010, the current Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak announced the New Economic Model (NEM), an economic restructuring initiative aimed at Malaysia achieving high-income country status by the year 2020. In line with the NEM, Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad (TalentCorp), a government-linked company was established in January 2011 under the Prime Minister's Department to oversee Malaysia's talent project. This includes revamping the REP. Under the revised REP, successful returnee applicants enjoy various incentives including, firstly, an optional 15 percent tax rate on chargeable employment income for five consecutive years; secondly, tax exemption for all personal effects brought into Malaysia; thirdly, tax/duty exemption up to a maximum of RM150,000 (US\$35,000) for the import of one locally manufactured complete knocked down or fully imported complete built up car; and finally, prioritised and fast-tracked PR status application for their foreign spouse and children (TalentCorp, 2015). As the World Bank (2015, p. 28) notes, the value of these incentives are dependent on the characteristics of the applicant: firstly, for an individual to benefit from the personal income tax incentive, he/she would have to be earning more than RM135,000 (US\$45,000) annually; secondly, tax exemption on imported cars is potentially very valuable as Malaysia has one of the highest foreign car import taxes in the world; and finally, PR for foreign spouses and children is potentially 'an important benefit of the programme' due to Malaysia's restrictive citizenship and PR laws.

According to the World Bank's (2015) assessment of the programme during its run between 2011 and 2013, the REP has been successful in facilitating the return of overseas Malaysians. The report found that the rates of return of successful and unsuccessful REP applicants were 73 percent and 64 percent, respectively. Furthermore, the report estimates that the REP increases the probability of return by 40–70 percent for those who have an existing job offer in Malaysia. One of the control variables in the regression analyses on the probability of approval to return through the REP is 'personal characteristics' (p. 33), which includes gender, marital status, level of education, years of overseas work experience, as well as time and experience in Malaysia. Interestingly—and perhaps predictably—this excludes applicants' ethnicity. I had requested

Table 6.1 Respondents' perceptions towards the Returning Expert Programme (REP)

	<i>Singapore</i>	<i>Malaysia</i>	<i>London/UK</i>	<i>Global</i>	<i>Total</i>	
Aware, positive	0	0	0	0	0	0.0 %
Aware, neutral	4	4	1	2	11	16.4 %
Aware, negative	11	5	4	3	23	34.3 %
Unaware, positive	0	1	1	0	2	2.9 %
Unaware, neutral	4	2	1	1	8	11.9 %
Unaware, negative	6	1	8	0	15	22.4 %
REP returnee, positive	–	1	–	–	1	1.5 %
REP returnee, neutral	–	1	–	–	1	1.5 %
REP returnee, negative	–	1	–	–	1	1.5 %
Unknown	2	2	1	–	5	7.4 %
Total	27	18	16	6	67	100.0 %

for such data from TalentCorp, and was informed that ‘we did not ask for that information from the applicant’ (personal communication, 8 March 2012). Given this book’s finding on the significance of ethnicity—and at the very least, *bumiputera* status—on mobile Malaysians’ culture of migration, it would be illuminating to have the necessary data for further analysis.

Mobile Malaysians’ Perceptions Towards REP

Table 6.1 shows the respondents’ perceptions towards the REP. Excluding five respondents’ whose responses are unknown, 62.9 percent (39 of 62 respondents) expressed negative perceptions towards the REP and/or unfavourable conditions returnees would face upon return. 4.8 percent (3 of 62 respondents) thought positively about the REP. They include a returnee who returned through the REP (hence a benefactor of the programme), a *bumiputera* (who would be less likely to face differentiated opportunities in Malaysia), and a retiree who had previously returned to Malaysia in his early forties (who has now passed his economically active years and hence unlikely to experience differentiated opportunities in his career). The remaining 32.3 percent (20 of 62 respondents) were neutral.

Each of the three REP returnees expressed a different view. The respondent who thought positively about the REP is running his own business and sends his child to an international school. He is therefore effectively protected from *bumiputera*-differentiated conditions. The respondent who is neutral about the REP expressed some teething problems with

the administrative processes and relocation experiences but is generally positive about her work. The respondent who is negative about the REP experienced obstacles in her application and relocation experience. While these three respondents are not representative of all REP returnees, their perspectives demonstrate the diverse perceptions towards the programme.

Of those who were aware of the REP, 67.6 percent (23 out of 34 respondents) adopted negative perspectives, while the remaining 32.4 percent (11 out of 34 respondents) were neutral. None of these 34 respondents thought positively about the REP. The neutral perspectives included those who thought that talents will come to Malaysia if the country offers the opportunities they look for, and that returnees will return anyway regardless of the existence of the REP.

The negative perspectives include, firstly, that the REP is ineffective as the programme does not understand its target audience; secondly, that the REP's perks are unattractive to transnationally mobile skilled migrants; thirdly, that the REP prioritised talent attraction but neglected the more important task of talent retention, which includes improving the lack of infrastructure, technology, human resource, and other necessary conditions for talents to thrive in Malaysia; and finally, that the REP has not addressed fundamental issues such as racial discrimination and the poor quality of education in Malaysia. The following quotes illustrate these sentiments.

Our impression is they are not really asking us to come back. Something like we have to first find a job in Malaysia, then we can apply to have the incentives ... A lot of people are a little taken aback by this approach ... A lot of people are arguing about this point. Because they are saying that: 'Well, we are so far from Malaysia. We do not even know what is happening over there. What [is] the working environment ...' And so on and so forth. (G05)

I think the most important thing is whether they have an opportunity when they come back ... When they come back, where can they work? Even [if] you give them all these tax rebates or all these perks, but if they can't make a living in Malaysia they will still leave, right? (M03)

I guess when you want to move forward, maybe when you are younger, when you have certain aspirations in life and you expect not to be handicapped, you can't live in a situation that handicaps you ... Unless that is tackled, I don't see how they can reverse the brain drain. (S18)

To attract people coming back to Malaysia is a good policy. But I find that retaining them is a different issue. I work in Singapore mainly because the

salary is more attractive. I get double the pay for doing the same work. So there is no way you can compete [with] that. But there are a lot of good talents overseas. To attract them to come back to Malaysia is one thing. To retain, I felt it's a totally different story. I felt that [for] the bureaucrats, politics are more important here than anywhere else. (M13)

Yeah they are just attracting you to come back. And after that once you are back you will be treated like shit. (L02)

There's no point for you to put a carrot and get people back to the country where they can't do anything. They'll just say: 'Oh, you are not a Malay.' ... Because the problem is the culture. Once they've fixed this, people will come back. If they don't, you can give them a lot of money, they are not going to come back. (L08)

They [i.e. the Malaysian government] were saying that many of the talents leaving the country, they do not come back, they call them disloyal, turning their backs on the country. My question is: the opportunity is not given to them, how do you expect people to survive in the country? You don't expect to get talents and lock them down, cast them aside in one corner of the world with no chance to progress. What's the point of staying back? If you want them to stay back, then make use of their full potential. If you don't want to, if you have no intention of allowing them to prosper, then you let them leave and find their better ways [elsewhere]. (S20)

These quotes express the underlying distrust of the government and return migration policies. More importantly, they highlight that there is a policy gap. While the REP offers incentives to attract and facilitate return migration, there is a lack of policies focusing on the retention of returnees. My mobile Malaysian respondents point out that returnees will be 'handicapped', 'treated like shit', 'locked down and cast aside with no chance to progress'. These expressions may appear to be extremely pessimistic and biased. However, they also show that the colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship have been exacerbated in post-colonial Malaysia to such an extent that mobile Malaysians easily assume that no real social change is possible.

Alternative Policy Routes for Return

Although some of my respondents appear to have settled permanently in their respective geographical locations, many continue to articulate hopes to return to Malaysia in the future. Three reasons are typically cited: first, Malaysia is

after all ‘home’; second, returning to Malaysia is anticipated in the near future when ageing parents in Malaysia require care; and thirdly, Malaysia is a good place for retirement. For the latter, the Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H) programme has been cited as an option for future return, especially for mobile Malaysians who have relinquished their Malaysian citizenship.

The MM2H programme, launched in 2002, offers a ten-year renewable multiple entry long-term social visit pass for foreign lifestyle migrants and retirees who meet certain financial and other requirements. MM2H evolved from the Silver Hair programme, introduced in 1996, which targeted foreign retirees above 50 years of age to make Malaysia their second home (Lee, 2006). As a lifestyle and retirement migration policy, the MM2H programme offers successful applicants privileges such as the eligibility to purchase homes and land in Malaysia as a foreigner (subject to legislations and minimum purchase prices in different states),⁶ tax free offshore income, no inheritance tax, tax exemption to purchase or import one car, and the eligibility to apply for the employment of one foreign maid (Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia, 2015a). While previously applicants married to Malaysian citizens are ineligible to apply, this restriction was removed in 2009 (*People’s Daily Online*, 2009). Furthermore, MM2H migrants are allowed to engage in part-time work and investment activities⁷ in Malaysia, subject to approvals. MM2H has attracted 29,034 migrants from 2002 to November 2015, the majority of whom were from East Asia and South Asia (Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia, 2015c).

In conversations I had with my respondents, the MM2H programme has often been cited as an alternative strategy to return to Malaysia in the future. For example, M06 (early thirties, female, married) commented:

If you convert [i.e. renounce Malaysian citizenship to take up another citizenship], it is impossible for you to recover your Malaysian citizenship. The government will consider that you [have] betrayed [the country] ... But you know, there are a lot of loop holes. If you want to come back, like MM2H, just buy a house and you can live here [in Malaysia].

M06’s casual note of ‘just buy a house’ and return through the MM2H programme highlights that mobile Malaysians are aware of this alternative policy route. Indeed, the existence of this programme is a factor that influenced some of my respondents’ citizenship and return migration decisions. L02 (early thirties, male, single), for example, had taken up British citizenship as he rationalised that it does not make a difference ‘whether you go back as [a] British or you go home as [a] Malaysian’. The existence

of programmes such as the MM2H offers mobile Malaysians like L02 the choice and ability to ‘return’ to Malaysia as a ‘foreigner’ should they wish to do so in the future.

However, this also demonstrates a more important point, which is mobile Malaysians’ differential response towards the MM2H programme versus the REP. Many of my respondents are either unaware of, or express distrust towards the REP and its associated promises of attracting returning talents. In contrast, they express a favourable—or at least neutral—stance towards the MM2H programme. This suggests that, for these transnational migrants, a policy targeted at lifestyle migration at near retirement age is more relevant and acceptable, compared to a talent return migration policy targeted at their current economically active working age. This, again, underscores the long-lasting legacy of the structural frameworks of race, education, and citizenship in post-colonial Malaysia. The culture of migration has developed to an extent where the majority of non-returning mobile Malaysians would only realistically return to Malaysia for retirement, lifestyle, or family reasons or when they are assured that they would be protected or immune against differentiated opportunities and treatments.

CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed mobile Malaysians’ propensity for return migration in relation to certain factors (e.g. age and nature of first departure from Malaysia, school stream and duration of stay in Malaysia prior to emigration, active social networks in Malaysia, foreign spouse and children’s circumstances) and related policies implemented by the post-colonial Malaysian state. I argue that, in order to understand mobile Malaysians’ propensity for return migration, we need to first gain an understanding of the nature of their departure in the first place. Furthermore, I posit that mobile Malaysians’ migration geographies—including return migration—cannot be sufficiently explained using the isolated theoretical lenses of return (skilled) migration or lifestyle migration. Instead, what is needed is a theoretical lens that offers the ability to postcolonialise mobile Malaysians’ return migration in a historically sensitive manner. Through such a perspective, we can understand contemporary education-led and skilled migration pathways and decisions in relation to an established culture of migration that has deep roots in colonial legacies.

The empirical data reported in this chapter reinforces this book’s argument about the significance of the colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship in circumscribing mobile Malaysians’ stratified migration geographies. Specifically, this chapter’s findings are fourfold.

First, the returnees have generally left Malaysia at an average later age, compared to mobile Malaysians who are resident in Singapore and London/the UK. This suggests that mobile Malaysians who have experienced a longer period living in Malaysia prior to their emigration could be more likely to consider and actualise return migration. The longer duration of stay has not only equipped them with social capital that they can utilise to facilitate their return, it has also socialised them to social life in Malaysia as young adults. As a result, these mobile Malaysians are able to envision and actualise their return migration.

Second, familial considerations play a significant role in mobile Malaysians' propensity to return. Those with foreign spouses and children have had to reconsider migration plans as they reconcile changing familial circumstances and the ethnopolitical obstacles to permanent residence in Malaysia. Depending on the specific temporality of their emigration and return, they could be subject to shifting citizenship and immigration policies that either obstruct or facilitate their return.

Third, the majority of mobile Malaysian respondents adopt negative perceptions towards the post-colonial Malaysian state's reverse brain drain policies. In addition to negative views about the disconnection between policy and implementation, there is a more significant and fatal perception. There seems to be a pessimistic assumption that nothing is going to change: *bumi-putera* differentiation, curtailment of career opportunities, and the lack of infrastructure and resources for returnees to prosper. The key message that comes across is that the problem lies in the retention of talents and returnees, not in attracting their return through perks and incentives.

Fourth, and finally, mobile Malaysians are more likely to return to Malaysia when they are assured that they can live comfortably and sustainably in Malaysia. For some, this is when they reach their retirement age. For others, this is when they and their immediate family members can live an expatriate life in Malaysia, protected against the various elements that had constituted their emigration push factors in the first place. Yet for many others, return is likely to be temporary during their economically active years, and especially if they have acquired another citizenship or PR status elsewhere.

And this is precisely why the post-colonial Malaysian state's return migration and reverse brain drain policies have been ineffective in addressing the outflow of mobile Malaysians. Firstly, the policies have been derived from the perspective of human resource needs in the context of Malaysia's political economy. Thus, these policies have neglected to consider the overall socio-cultural *and* racial environment mobile Malaysians will be returning to. Furthermore, while the revamped REP has addressed the

marital and familial needs of mobile Malaysians with foreign spouses and children by providing a fast-track PR application process, there is a lack of follow-up support such as facilitating the integration of returnees and their families into Malaysian life. Secondly, the existing policies have not addressed the fundamental issues that have led to the departure of mobile Malaysians in the first place. Education for children remains a key concern for mobile Malaysians who have children at schooling ages. Racial discrimination and perceived curtailment of career prospects continue to cloud over any real prospects of return, especially for mobile Malaysians who rely on their (already biased) social networks for information. Finally, an accumulated sense of distrust of the post-colonial Malaysian government leads to mobile Malaysians assuming that there would be no real change to the structural constraints that led to their emigration in the first place.

In the current milieu of increasing transnational mobility and connectivity, it is perhaps unrealistic to expect that transnationally mobile people like these mobile Malaysians would reside permanently in one place. It might also be unrealistic to expect that they will return to Malaysia in the near future, despite their nostalgic yearnings and diasporic intentions. Attracting return migration is only an attempt to correct the increasing outflow of mobile Malaysians. It merely addresses the symptoms of a more fundamental problem—the entrenched structural constraints of race, education, and citizenship that have been inherited, developed, and manifested in various spheres of Malaysian social life. There are always going to be people who aspire to emigrate, to explore, and to gain international experience. Malaysia, or any other country in the world, will not be able to completely stem this outflow. What can be done, however, is in improving the landscape of social life, particularly in ensuring that the enjoyment of universal human values of equality and responsible freedom of expression is possible and protected. This will assist in managing the scale of emigration and, more importantly, in making Malaysia an attractive destination for returnees and transnational migrants alike.

NOTES

1. The website of a migration agency stated that ‘[o]btaining PR [i.e. permanent residence] in Malaysia is a difficult and lengthy process’ (Borneo Vision [MM2H] Sdn Bhd, 2013).
2. The duration of the LTSVP ranges from three months to five years. Foreign spouses are typically issued one-year passes for five years before they are given five-year passes.
3. In 2012, a Royal Commission of Inquiry investigated the allegations of ‘Project IC’, where large numbers of illegal immigrants in Sabah were given Malaysian

- citizenship. The Commission concluded that ‘there is a possibility that [Project IC] did exist’ (Yuen & Sivanandam, 2014).
4. See also Erdal, Amjad, Bodla, and Rubab’s (2016) findings on Pakistani returnees’ prioritisation of education in the origin context as their motivation for return.
 5. I found a notice on the High Commission of Malaysia in New Zealand website publicising the BGM in 2010 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010). The notice included a link to the BGM website, which is no longer valid when I accessed it in December 2015.
 6. Foreigners are eligible to purchase freehold properties in Malaysia, subject to minimum purchase prices set by the Federal and/or respective State governments.
 7. However, MM2H migrants cannot own and operate businesses (Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia, 2015b).

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Conclusion: Postcolonialising a Culture of Migration

MOBILE MALAYSIANS AND A CULTURE OF MIGRATION

In this book, I argue that mobile Malaysians' culture of migration can be understood in relation to the British colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship that have been inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state. Using the Malaysian case, my purpose is to highlight the conceptual salience of adopting a postcolonial approach to migration and citizenship studies, which goes beyond 'blaming' colonialism and its legacies for social phenomena in the post-colonial period. Throughout this book, I have placed equal emphasis on colonial and post-colonial interventions. Most importantly, I have highlighted the interrelationships between them, especially in tracing and examining the intended and unintended outcomes and consequences.

With reference to the case of mobile Malaysians' culture of migration, this postcolonial approach has brought attention to the following findings.

First, mobile Malaysians' culture of migration is primarily education-led (Chaps. 3–4). A race-stratified education system and the practice of race-based affirmative action policies have led to mobile Malaysians moving overseas in search of education, employment, and livelihood opportunities. Over time, their education-migration turns into skilled migration, marriage migration, and long-term settlement. Furthermore, this culture of education-led migration has produced specific migration streams to

certain destination countries that are interlinked with individual migrant's school stream in Malaysia. In the cases of returnee mobile Malaysians, there appears to be some correlation with their school streams and schooling experiences in Malaysia, as well as their duration of stay in Malaysia prior to their first venture overseas. Much more needs to be done to investigate the relationship between school streams—as early as the primary school stage in Malaysia's case—and the subsequent migration pathways.

Second, despite being differentially treated as unequal Malaysian citizens, mobile Malaysians continue to nurture strong affiliations to 'Malaysia', which is often conceptualised in terms of their childhood memories and the presence of their family and social networks in Malaysia (Chap. 5). Furthermore, this strong sense of affiliation is encapsulated in their Malaysian citizenship, which is in turn interpreted as their primordial and ethnonational identity. As a result, hopes for a future return to Malaysia are often equated to retention of their Malaysian citizenship at all costs, including acquiring dual citizenship illegally. Mobile Malaysians' conflation of citizenship with nationality and their strong sense of unquestioned national affiliation can be understood in relation to the specific colonial to post-colonial historicity of Malaysia's nation building (Chap. 2). The post-colonial Malaysian state's emphasis on instilling a strong sense of national unity through education and various techniques of governing can be read as a path-dependent response to 'national security' threats—a response that has been carried over from the colonial period. As a result, the post-colonial citizenry has been 'brainwashed'—in the words of S06 (Chap. 5)—into uncritical nationals but discouraged to be critical citizens.

This, however, does not mean that mobile Malaysians cannot, and do not distinguish between 'Malaysia, the government' and 'Malaysia' in their myriad other interpretations. In fact, my respondents are often able to articulate distinct displeasure and disappointments with the Malaysian government. However, the interesting thing is twofold. First, mobile Malaysians paradoxically sustain feelings of perpetual belonging to 'Malaysia' at the same time that they harbour feelings of distrust towards the Malaysian government. Second, despite such feelings towards the Malaysian government, my mobile Malaysian respondents appear to disengage from practising their Malaysian citizenship as civic and political rights that may have the potential to lead to actual socio-political change. This, again, can be understood in the context of the historicity

of race and citizenship in the Malaysian context, where citizenship is *bumiputera*-differentiated and conflated with nationality.

Third, mobile Malaysians' citizenship and migration practices cannot be simplistically interpreted as flexible citizenship strategies. While they may appear to be opportunistically circumventing citizenship and migration policies in Malaysia and elsewhere, their actions must be contextualised to the nature of race, education, and citizenship in post-colonial Malaysia. In other words, mobile Malaysians' culture of migration must be contextualised to the legacies from the British colonial period which have been inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state. Through interventions such as large-scale ethnicised labour immigration, the 'divide-and-rule' policy, the materialisation of race and Malay indigeneity, the techniques of governing during times of emergency and 'war', the British colonial administration had created communities that are racially defined and segregated (physically, socio-economically, and culturally). The post-colonial Malaysian state further exacerbated these existing conditions through the implementation of affirmative action under the New Economic Policy (NEP) and subsequent policies, as well as the introduction of constitutional amendments and legal instruments. It is this domestic landscape that constitutes the push factor for mobile Malaysians' migrating lives.

Fourth, race is an important theme underlying mobile Malaysians' migration pathways, as well as their citizenship and migration practices. As Shamsul and Athi (2015, p. 267) explain,

the origins of ethnic groups lie in the construction of colonial knowledge about Malaysia. This knowledge became applied, institutionalised and embedded into official use, bureaucratic tools and public policy formulations, such as through censuses, land enactments, birth certificates, identity cards, vernacular school systems, and so on. These functions continued largely uninterrupted in the post-colonial period, extending the notion of defining ethnic and racial categories according to physical and cultural markers.

However, as this book shows, while it is important to examine how race has been conceptualised, institutionalised, and socialised into people's beliefs, it is also equally important to investigate how race has been differentially internalised, (re)interpreted, and acted upon. While the collective mobile Malaysian respondents in this book can be seen

to have behaved and reacted in more or less similar ways to race and its manifestations in post-colonial Malaysia, equal attention needs to be paid to variations in individual negotiations and interpretations, however miniscule these may be. In other words, race and its manifestations may not result in exactly similar reactions in all members of a social group. Paying attention to these diversities is important to discover factors and social categories that are beyond what we might perceive or assume to be 'race'. This is crucial to the important task of dismantling the colonial influenced 'normalisation of the invented' (Shamsul, 1998b, p. 51) in social life and social science knowledge production.

Finally, and related to the fourth point, using a postcolonial approach in this case has also highlights the diverse experiences and perspectives of a group which would be conventionally analysed as a more or less homogenous social category. Under normal circumstances, and without careful examination, mobile Malaysians might be conceptualised as transnational skilled migrants, minority migrants, (Chinese/ethnic) diasporas, or flexible citizens. However, this book has shown that underneath the seemingly homogeneous image of the mobile Malaysian migrant is a range of diversities and heterogeneities. Moreover, there are paradoxes and contradictions in their migration pathways, their citizenship and migration practices, as well as their interpretations and understandings about citizenship and migration. While race and school stream are obvious social stratification factors, there are also other factors such as class, geographical place of origin (for instance, whether it is an urban or rural context, the ethnic and demographic composition of the communities there, etc.), and the influence of social networks (including parents and members of extended families). Adopting a postcolonial approach enables the surfacing of this important insight on the diversity amongst mobile Malaysians, which could offer helpful suggestions for policy intervention. As de Haas, Fokkema, and Fihri (2015) highlight and suggest, we should examine the heterogeneity of migrants, and what this means for migration theories.

POSTCOLONIAL APPROACH TO MIGRATION

Beyond the case of mobile Malaysians' culture of migration, adopting a postcolonial approach to contemporary migration phenomena offers various theoretical and methodological insights. Firstly, this enables an examination of the interactions between macro-structural forces

and migrants' interpretations of, and reactions to those forces. This contributes towards the classic issue of structuration, structure, and agency in sociological thought (e.g. Archer, 2003; Bourdieu, 1981; Giddens, 1984). On the one hand, each response is an individual manifestation of the 'internalized structures, disposition, tendencies, habits, ways of acting, that are both individualistic and yet typical of one's social groups, communities, family, and historical position' (Oliver & O'Reilly, 2010, p. 56). On the other hand, each response may also go beyond the expected 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990) and demonstrate distinct individual agency. In other words, adopting a postcolonial approach highlights the messy, paradoxical, and fascinating aspects of social life.

Secondly, this approach offers opportunities to obtain a view to 'the colonial present' (Gregory, 2004) without explicitly engaging in historiography and historical studies. This offers the freedom to highlight 'how the past informs and shapes the present that do not necessarily begin and end in western metropolitan space' (McEwan, 2003, p. 342) through broad conceptual strokes rather than confining the study to a painstaking reconstruction of an 'accurate' historiography from a particular perspective.¹ Thirdly, a postcolonial approach offers a contextualised understanding of key migration concepts (such as citizens, citizenship, migrants, and migration) which depart from, and challenge, Anglo-Western experiences. This grounds migration phenomena to local specificities and materialities rather than continuing to struggle against imported and abstract concepts that may not appropriately apply to the context in question. Finally, this approach highlights the voicing of non-mainstream and bottom-up perspectives. As Nair (2013, p. 2456) puts it, a postcolonial approach to migration highlights 'sociopolitical issues affecting the marginal as seen from their point of view'—although in this case the 'marginal' happens to be transnational skilled migrants who experience differentiated treatment as citizens of their own country.

Specifically, this book contributes towards postcolonial geography, migration, and citizenship studies by highlighting, firstly, how legacies of colonialism initiate, facilitate, and propagate migration; secondly, how certain colonial institutionalised beliefs—of race, the value and mileage of education, and citizenship as state-citizen relationship—are carried into migration; and thirdly, how these beliefs are subsequently translated into migrants' citizenship and migration practices. By examining the link between British colonial legacies and contemporary individual and collective citizenship and migration practices, I draw attention to

the following points for migration and citizenship research generally, and skilled migration specifically.

Race

First, there is a need to examine how race matters to migration. This goes beyond well documented discussions on immigrant integration and assimilation, or discrimination and unequal treatments experienced by minority immigrants (e.g. Das Gupta, 2013; Dwyer, 2000; Marranci, 2011). Instead, I wish to highlight the role race plays in circumscribing *migration flows* (not just of immigration but also of emigration, education-migration, return migration, etc.) and *migration experiences* before, during, and after acts of migration. This book has shown explicitly how race matters to mobile Malaysians' culture of migration: firstly, in initiating and perpetuating specific migration pathways and geographies and, secondly, in influencing migrants' citizenship and migration practices, with consequences for geographical mobilities and state-citizen relationships.

As Winders (2009, p. 56) notes, 'geographical scholarship tends to "document" racial patterns ... or "analyze" race's meanings ... with little interaction across this divide'. Thus, it is important to integrate the descriptions and meanings of race by examining how '[r]ace works geographically' (p. 54). Given the long history of geography's engagement with race (Bonnett, 1996), I argue that geographers are well placed to interrogate and map out the workings of race vis-à-vis migration geographies. King (2012) has previously identified geographer's existing and potential contributions to migration studies, particularly through examining cultural geography, gender, and mobilities. Building upon this, I argue that by focusing on race, geographers have much to contribute towards challenging existing understandings of migration and the implicit discourses, including 'the ways in which migrant bodies ... become the nexus points for spatial practices across many scales' (Mains et al., 2013, p. 132).

Historicity

Second, there is a need to extend the temporal lens historically in order to gain a fuller picture of how and why migrants carry out certain citizenship and migration practices in the contemporary period. This includes practices that might appear to be flexible citizenship strategies but which, upon scrutiny, may not be entirely so. This is particularly crucial in understanding

migration phenomena in post-colonial, multi-ethnic contexts. For example, through a historically informed analytical lens, we can better understand ‘family migration capital’ beyond the mere ‘pass-through of parents’ and grandparents’ past migration experiences onto their descendants’ attitudes towards emigration’ (Ivlevs & King, 2012, p. 119) and/or household capital accumulation. Instead, ‘family migration capital’ can be clearly seen as migrants’ internalised practices and reaction to historically developed structural constraints. This also enables an understanding of how and why a particular culture of migration exists in a specific context.

Historically contextualising a culture of migration which *makes* transnational skilled migrants is important because this challenges the divisive categorisation of migrants and typologies of migrants (e.g. student, skilled, marriage, return). On the one hand, this coincides with recent studies showing the link between student migration and skilled migration (Baas, 2010; Liu-Farrer, 2009, 2011). On the other hand, and more importantly, this advances skilled migration studies by highlighting the need to integrate internal and international migration (see King & Skeldon, 2010) in relation to migrants’ whole life trajectories. This book has shown how internal and international migration are intertwined in the pursuit of education and social mobility, and how this subsequently contributes towards the making of mobile Malaysians. Crucially, this culture of education-led migration can be better understood when it is contextualised to the colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship.

Contextualised Meanings

Third, and relatedly, migration and citizenship studies must interrogate the concepts of ‘citizenship’ and ‘migration’, with particular attention to their meanings in specific emigration contexts, and not to assume *a priori* that these concepts take the same meaning and significance as in the Western liberal context. In the Malaysian case, this book has shown, firstly, how and why ‘citizenship’ has been conflated with nationality and national loyalty in colonial Malaya and post-colonial Malaysia and, secondly, how and why ‘migration’ is understood as mobility that is a normal part of mobile Malaysians’ lives and their family histories. Thus, migration is circular, flexible in type and duration; while ‘Malaysia’—symbolised by their Malaysian citizenship—is the perpetual home grounding their ‘primordial’ loyalties and migration geographies. More importantly, race is a significant stratifying factor in this respect, affecting the

varied and differentiated ways mobile Malaysians interpret and practice their citizenship(s) as identity, membership, and rights.

My point here builds upon Miller's (2011b, p. 801) call for scholars to consider 'particular localised conditions and circumstances ... in navigating [ethnic minorities'] relationship with nationality and citizenship'. While her observation refers specifically to theorisations of 'citizenship', I argue that equal attention must also be given to the contextualised meanings of 'migration' as this sheds light on how migrants from particular contexts interpret, carry out, and rationalise their migration geographies. One way would be to interrogate the meaning(s) of migration in local language and epistemologies. For example, Wang (1985, p. 84) suggests that the Malay word *merantau* ('wandering') captures the spirit of migratory mobility which 'pervades ... modern manifestations of elite and professional mobility across national boundaries'. More needs to be done in examining how local language and epistemologies inform and shape migration.

In sum, 'citizenship' and 'migration' are intertwined in complex and racialised ways—not just in Malaysia or other post-colonial contexts—and must be analysed contextually as such. Abstracting this to a broader theoretical level, this means that contextualised understandings of 'citizenship' and 'migration' need to be interrogated *together* in order to comprehend how and why migrations occur in certain ways in particular contexts. While my point here relates specifically to migration-related concepts and knowledge, my purpose is to highlight a broader concern with the politics of knowledge production in the social sciences, which continues to be dominated by Anglo-Western-centric ideas and experiences and delimited by colonial legacies (see for example, Alatas, 2006; Clayton, 2003; Cohn, 1996; Day & Reynolds, 2000; Jazeel, 2016; Jazeel & McFarlane, 2010; King, 2003; Mignolo, 2009; van Schendel, 2002).

Methodological Nationalism?

This leads to my fourth point: contrary to Wimmer and Glick Schiller's (2003) criticism of methodological nationalism for 'naturalising the nation-state' (p. 580) and uncritically perpetuating 'territorial limitation' (p. 578) in research strategies, we need to acknowledge that it is sometimes appropriate to take the nation-state as a starting point of analysis in understanding migration, especially in post-colonial contexts. This is because the concepts of citizenship, national identity, and loyalty are made pertinent in these contexts—as a result of post-colonial nation-state

formations—in relation to migration. Here, the ‘national’ circumscribes post-colonial migration mobilities: firstly, through citizenship and immigration policies with implicit notions of national loyalty and, secondly, through a particular socialised disposition about citizenship that migrants carry into a culture of migration.

In putting forth this suggestion, I concur with Brubaker’s (2004b) use of ‘nation’ as a *tool* rather than an object of analysis. This is not a case of taking the nation-state as a default unit of analysis, or limiting the study of migration within a nation-state boundary. Rather, my suggested approach acknowledge the continued salience of the ‘nation’ as a source of power in circumscribing how migration and mobility pans out—transnationally, regionally, or locally. Crucially, this approach does not discount the importance of developing a ‘global perspective on migration’ which highlights unequal power relations across various geographical scales that produce unequal development conditions and the reliance on migrant labour in the first place (see Glick Schiller, 2007). Adopting a ‘global perspective’ or a postcolonial perspective is a matter of priorities: whether the intention is to highlight the contradictions of global capitalism, for which an emphasis *beyond* the nation is necessary, or to highlight the long-lasting legacies of colonialism, for which an emphasis on *the nation-state* and its techniques of governing is important. As Hansen and Stepputat (2005, p. 1) note, underlying the important contributions of works focused on global transformations is the ‘unbroken link between state power, sovereignty, and territory’.

Furthermore, although this approach starts with ‘the nation’, it ultimately interrogates and deconstructs ‘the nation’ by critically examining its constitution and construction. In other words, this approach does not take ‘the nation’ for granted. This approach thus contributes towards a nuanced understanding of what ‘the nation’ means to the peoples who constitute ‘the nation’, as well as the implications for migration and citizenship studies. Shamsul and Athi (2015, p. 271) note that in the context of post-colonial Malaysia,

the ‘nation-state’ has become dependent on colonial knowledge and its ways of determining, codifying, controlling and representing the past as well as documenting and standardising the information that has formed the basis of government. Modern Malaysians have become familiar with ‘facts’ that appear in reports and statistical data ...; these facts and their accumulation, conducted in the modalities designed to shape colonial knowledge, lie at the foundation of the modern, post-colonial nation-state of Malaysia.

The point here is that Malaysians have been socialised into ‘facts’ that have built upon the colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship. These ‘facts’ in turn influenced them to have a worldview that is oftentimes predicated upon ‘the nation’ at the first instance.

Taking a particular ‘nation’ as a starting point for analysis does not neglect other factors beyond the ‘national’ that come into play.² Instead, this approach recognises the significance of the ‘nation’ as a relatively and subjectively more significant force vis-à-vis other forces such as the global economy, as well as citizenship and immigration regimes of other nation-states—seen from the perspectives of citizens/migrants. For example, my research suggests that mobile Malaysians accord more emotional significance to ‘Malaysia’ and their ‘Malaysian citizenship’ compared to their other citizenship and permanent resident statuses. Contextualising this to a postcolonial reading of the British colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship offers an understanding of how and why the ‘nation’ continues to matter to mobile Malaysians’ citizenship and migration practices.

My suggestion to use the ‘nation’ as a tool of analysis is complemented by a multisited transnational migration research methodology which entails following and mapping (see Marcus, 1995) migrants and their migration geographies. This focuses the study on migrants as social agents by ‘disclos[ing] the ways in which spatial frameworks and boundaries are formed by actors’ (Amelina & Faist, 2012, p. 1715). In doing so, the ‘nation’ is shown to be complexly intertwined with migrants and their migration geographies.

Methodology: The Historical and the Contemporary

My methodological strategy for this research is to use history (through archival research) as a lens to understand contemporary migration phenomena (through interview-conversations and my personal reflections). My usage of primary archival sources, as opposed to complete reliance on secondary historical research, is methodologically important. This is because reading archival documents first-hand accords a more intimate understanding of history. It is important to note that I returned to archival research a second time after completing interview-conversations and some preliminary analysis. My methodological journey has been one that traversed the historical and the contemporary. Through this back-and-forth travel through time and space—on the one hand real, present, and experienced; and on the other hand archived, historical,

and imagined—I gained a reflexive perspective that enabled me to be in a better position to understand and interpret the research data.

This reflexive reading of colonial Malayan and post-colonial Malaysian history has been instrumental in developing the theoretical and empirical interpretations of this research. For example, my reading of British colonial officers' reports in the archives inspired feelings of anger and injustice about the long-lasting effects of colonialism on Malaysia's contemporary social, economic, and political situation in general and its migration phenomena in particular. This steered me to interpret my respondents' culture of migration in relation to the British colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship that have been inherited and exacerbated by the post-colonial Malaysian state. More importantly, the feelings of injustice gained through this methodological process compelled me to theorise mobile Malaysians' culture of migration through a postcolonial analysis, which enabled me to speak to the literatures on colonialism, race, and migration. Crucially, mine was not an individual and subjective motivation, but one which coincides with others before me (e.g. Mains et al., 2013).

I have yet to come across literature discussing the use of archival research and qualitative interviews as a research methodology for migration and citizenship studies.³ An exception is Fitzgerald's (2006) suggestion to use local archival work and ethnography through the extended case method as a way to theorise migration ethnography. As he suggests, '[f]ollowing migrants through their trajectory ... in an ethnographically and historically sensitive way is the best means to untangle the dynamics of ethnic genesis, retention, and dissolution' (p. 18). However, while our methodological suggestions are similar, there is a key difference in our purpose: Fitzgerald is concerned with a methodological problem for migration ethnography, while I am primarily concerned with a theoretical problem for migration research. Thus, my suggestion for interweaving the historical and the contemporary *methodologically* serves a broader purpose, which is to advance the understanding of migration *theoretically*.

What I mean here is not just to contextualise ethnographic data with archival or historical data in migration and citizenship research with the aim of interpreting migrant narratives sensitively, as Fitzgerald suggests. Instead, I am advocating for research that goes beyond this, with the aim of deconstructing and challenging existing migration and citizenship theories. In the case of mobile Malaysians, for example, reading their narratives vis-à-vis archival data accorded me a more reflexive and historically informed understanding of how and why they narrate the way they do, as well as

why they remain silent on certain issues. More importantly, adopting a postcolonial approach on mobile Malaysians' culture of migration enabled me to critically question the suitability of applying existing migration and citizenship theories to the Malaysian context, which in turn contributes towards the process of theory building and theory tweaking. In other words, this is done with the aim of contributing towards theory, instead of stopping short at interpreting empirical data.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Return Migration and Bumiputera-Differentiated Citizenship

My research has shown that mobile Malaysians' culture of migration must be discussed together with Malaysia's *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship and pro-*bumiputera* affirmative action policies that have their roots in the British colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship. In particular, I have gone beyond existing academic literature and policy interventions which have often stopped short at linking the New Economic Policy (NEP) to Malaysians' emigration. Instead, I have extended the temporal lens backwards and forwards by looking at what happens before and after emigration. My research thus draws attention to the following questions. First, how do migration experiences (including education-migration) of those who migrated (as direct and/or indirect consequences of the NEP) affect their subsequent citizenship and migration geographies? Second, what does this mean for Malaysia's return migration policies?

Malaysia is now focusing on developing itself as a talent destination. However, without addressing its *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship policies and structural constraints in education, employment, immigration, and integration/settlement (of returnee Malaysians as well as their foreign spouses and children), it would be naive to think that isolated policies such as the Returning Expert Programme (REP) can result in significant reversals of the culture of migration. As it currently stands, the REP is catered to a select target group of overseas Malaysians and excludes those who are qualified but may not meet the REP's eligibility criteria. Moreover, the REP is *not* the obstacle preventing return migration of mobile Malaysians. It is the accumulated perceptions of distrust and lack of confidence in the future of the country under the direction of the Malaysian government that is preventing mobile Malaysians from even considering the idea of return.

This highlights three points for return migration policies generally, and for Malaysia's return migration project specifically. First, return migration policies should ideally be designed bearing in mind the policies which have led to the initiation of emigration in the first place. This includes citizenship and education policies, as well as issues of race and minority rights. In the Malaysian context, this means interrogating the relationships between *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship rights, affirmative action policies, and the migration geographies of people who eventually *become* mobile Malaysians.

Second, policymakers must be aware of the historicity of state-citizen relationships, and how that impacts upon emigrants' perceptions of return migration policies. My findings suggest that mobile Malaysians tend to view the Malaysian government and its policies with distrust. Furthermore, they often automatically assumed that it is undesirable to return because they expect that they will experience racial discrimination, although such perceptions are mostly uncritically reflected upon. Exceptions are those who have experienced working and/or adult life in Malaysia, which seems to have facilitated their return migration. This highlights a preliminary observation with potential to inform return migration policies: the significance of emigrants' duration of stay in the origin context prior to emigration in influencing their propensity to return.

Third, policymakers should consider actively engaging potential returnees by providing updated information and reliable communication channels. My findings suggest that mobile Malaysians who have left Malaysia at a young age often do not consider return migration due to a lack of job market information. This is also compounded by their lack of working experience in Malaysia. Under such circumstances, 'returning' to Malaysia would be perceived in a similar way to 'immigration' to a foreign context. Policymakers could, for example, conceptualise these potential 'returnees' in the same way as 'foreign talents' and provide similar support to facilitate their integration into working and social life in Malaysia.

Looking Beyond 'Race': Education Reform?

In 1946, Professor Silcock, who was Chair in Economics at the University of Malaya in Singapore from 1938 to 1959, made a strong argument against the institutionalisation of race in Malaya. As he argues (Silcock, 1961, p. 12):

It should not be possible for any resident in Malaya to pass through a year without at least once being reminded, by filling in a form, voting, registering, making a report, or in one of the other numerous ways in which every individual comes in contact with government, that he either is or is not a citizen, an actual member of the community. On the other hand he should never, unless it is a matter of really vital urgency, be required to state his race on any form or application. Every effort should be made to impress on people continuously that race is a purely private, cultural matter, and political unimportant, and that the important thing politically is citizenship.

Unfortunately, his warning had not been able to influence policies as the newly independent Malaysian state grappled with ethnopolitics, threats of communism, and electoral politics. Race, originally institutionalised during the British colonial period, and subsequently encapsulated in Malaysia's *bumiputera*-differentiated citizenship and race-based affirmative action policies, has become the differentiating factor in the social stratification of the Malaysian society. Race defines, divides, and differentiates Malaysians of all walks of life.

More importantly, race has also been translated into education streams, which further stratify the Malaysian population in terms of their access to resources and opportunities for social mobility. As Hirschman (1995, p. 34) noted, '[o]nce racism is institutionalised, it can be perpetuated even after the conditions that created it have changed'. This begs a question: would it be possible to reverse the accumulated effects of race (and its various manifestations) in Malaysia? If it is indeed possible, how can this be achieved?

My research has suggested that education might be the first place to begin. As this book has shown, education is a significant factor in perpetuating two interrelated processes: firstly, race-based social stratification and, secondly, migration pathways and geographies amongst mobile Malaysians. This suggests that one way to tackle the issue of the entrenchment of race and racial stratification in the Malaysian context is through reforms of the education system. A first step, for example, could be the recognition of the UEC and the integration of MICSS graduates into Malaysian public universities. However, past efforts to do so have shown us that unification of the education system based on one national language or culture—by default the Malay language and culture—has not been satisfactory as non-Malay cultural communities fought to maintain their respective cultural heritage. Thus, education reform is a long process that must also be completed by better inter- and intra-ethnic or cultural communication and understanding.

FUTURE RESEARCH AREAS

My research findings highlight some areas requiring further examination. These include the relationships between migration and the stratifying factors of education streams, sub-national geographies of origin, temporalities of migration, as well as class and other axes of intersectionality (in addition to, and beyond race). While my suggestions for future research arise from, and relates specifically to Malaysian migration, they can be similarly extended to other migration contexts. A final suggestion is to compare post-colonial experiences with regard to citizenship and migration.

Education Streams

My research suggests that the education stream seems to influence individual and collective mobile Malaysians' migration geographies, as well as their relative acceptance of *bumiputera* differentiation. Future research could look into how education streams stratify specific migration trajectories for higher education, as well as mapping out the subsequent migration pathways and geographies. This enables an understanding of how education systems matter to migration geographies.

Possible methods include comparative or longitudinal research. Case study method could also be used, for example, in tracing the migration pathways of a cohort of students from a specific education stream a decade or two after their graduation. As King and Raghuram (2013, p. 135) suggest, there is a need for 'detailed ethnographic research with [various] types of student-migrants ... to document their complex lives in the academic, social, cultural, and economic realms'.

Sub-National Geographies of Origin

My research has also suggested that people from certain sub-national geographies of origin partake in specific migration geographies within and beyond Malaysia. For example, those who were from the state of Johor tend to migrate to Singapore for education at the primary or secondary levels, while those who were from the state of Selangor tend to complete their pre-university education in Malaysia and then leave for overseas education in Australia, the USA, and the UK. For those who were from the states of Sabah and Sarawak in East Malaysia, 'internal' migration to

West Malaysia could actually be perceived in the same manner as ‘international’ migration to Singapore.

In this research, I have not explicitly examined the significance of other place-specific factors associated with these geographies of origin, such as the scale and degree of urban or rural development, racial and demographic composition of the population, access and proximity to various types of schools and tertiary institutions, and the nature of socio-economic life. Using data from the 2010 Malaysian census, Aihara (2009) found that Malaysian students originating from more developed areas (such as KL and the states of Selangor, Penang, Perak, and Johor) are more likely to go on to higher education, and especially private education, irrespective of ethnic backgrounds. Future research could look into how these sub-national geographies of origin shape specific migration pathways and trajectories with respect to the type, duration, and nature of transnational and/or internal migration. This could also advance our understanding of how geographical places of origin and destination are interlinked in a ‘system of migration places’. While my suggestion here stems from the Malaysian context, similar approaches could also be explored in other contexts where internal and international migration flows intertwine.

Temporalities of Migration

My research has suggested that returnees left Malaysia at an older age compared to non-returnees, some of whom have left as young children. This suggests that the duration of stay in the origin context prior to emigration, and the significance of that temporal experience vis-à-vis migrants’ life stage, may be one of the factors influencing their propensity to return. Future research could examine the extent to which this observation is true in the Malaysian context or elsewhere.

Another possible focus is the specific temporal period in which migration occurs. In this study, I have examined mobile Malaysians who have left Malaysia in the 1980s and 1990s. This is a different cohort from those who have left in earlier and later decades. Migration flows ebb and shift as migrants respond to the fluidity of national and international socio-economic and political environments. Historical conjunctures necessarily predicate upon people’s capacities and motivations to go into their migration lives. Future research could compare the experiences of migrants from different temporal periods, in order to examine continuities and ruptures in cultures of migration.

Beyond Race: Class and Other Axes of Intersectionality

Another strand for future research is to examine how class stratifies Malaysians' migration geographies, instead of the tendency to focus on race. Indeed, various authors have highlighted the need to look beyond race in the Malaysian context. For example, Choi (2010, p. 38) observes that the 'racialization of class inequalities in Malaysia makes it difficult to study class issues' especially in the aftermath of social restructuring projects during the post-colonial period. Similarly, Ooi (2003, pp. 174–175) points out the following:

At least two implications are involved when ethnicity is placed below class in discursive importance. First, a 'false consciousness' of ethnicity encouraged by the dominant bourgeois class inhibits class unity among peasants and workers, and second, a point very obvious in the Malaysian case, where colonial policies have created a coincidence of class and ethnicity, appeals to ethnic solidarity masks class privilege.

Indeed, class is intimately linked to mobile Malaysians' access to their preferred choice of education streams. As my research suggests, the choice of education stream subsequently leads to specific migration pathways, geographies, and certain citizenship practices. Deconstructing race to examine social class as an explanatory factor in migration could advance our understanding how the *class*-stratified (not just *race*-stratified) education system pre-selects certain potential migrants into certain migration pathways and geographies—even *before* the actual migratory movement takes place. This approach also challenges existing social science research and policies, where race has become a red herring that obscures class.

In addition to class, there is also potential to investigate other axes of intersectionality such as gender, age, religion, and sexuality. More importantly, it is crucial to go beyond naming social categories, in order to examine the broader processes and structural forces that give rise to social categorisations. As Mandal (2003, pp. 56–57) highlights, existing literature on race relations in Malaysia 'attributes a false stability to race by affirming its apparently primordial character' which obscures 'the social, cultural and political dynamics that give shape to the social category in the first place'.

Postcolonial Comparisons

My more ambitious suggestion pertains to comparative analyses of different post-colonial contexts. Such an approach offers the possibility of identifying similarities and divergences in different colonial and post-colonial experiences, and how these subsequently influence education, citizenship, and migration. An example would be to compare post-colonial countries previously under British colonial intervention. Another possibility would be to compare post-colonial countries under different colonial regimes (e.g. British, Dutch, French, Japanese, etc.). This has the potential to contribute substantially to postcolonial theorisations of migration and citizenship.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this book, I have argued and shown the longevity of the British colonial legacies of race, education, and citizenship in the Malaysian context, particularly in regard to their influences on mobile Malaysians' culture of migration. This book thus challenges existing literature on skilled migration and flexible citizenship by, firstly, showing how such migration may be racially induced (with an equal postcolonial attention to the processes that have led to this outcome) and, secondly, highlighting the need to conceptualise migration and citizenship practices historically. More broadly, this book also contributes towards a renewed interest for geographers to engage critically with postcolonial interpretations of migration.

By showing the long-lasting effects of colonialism and colonial legacies on contemporary migration phenomena, this book also raises the urgent need for scholars to carefully produce knowledge that is context driven, empirically grounded, and appropriate to each specific geographical context. In sum, the longevity of colonialism lies not in its material manifestations but in the immaterial continuities of internalised ideas, beliefs, practices, and ways of knowing.

NOTES

1. Whether or not it is possible to construct an 'accurate' historiography is also a matter of debate.
2. For example, Byrnes (2009, p. 128) highlights that the nation 'is not an overriding or dominant factor', which should be 'understood alongside class,

gender, race, community, iwi, family, ethnicities and so on', all of which 'operate across [and] against the nation'.

3. There is, however, disciplinary literature, particularly in anthropology. Examples include Brettell's (1992) discussion of how archival work and ethnographic fieldwork can complement each other during research design and analysis, as well as Abercrombie's (1998) work on ethnohistory.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: MOBILE MALAYSIANS IN SINGAPORE

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Age group (in 2011)</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Citizenship status</i>	<i>Bumiputera</i>	<i>Reason for first departure from Malaysia</i>
S01	Late twenties	F	Married	MC + SPR (D)	X	Follow spouse
S02	Late twenties	M	Single	MC + SPR	X	Born in Singapore
S03	Early thirties	M	Single	SC	X	University
S04	Late forties	M	Single	MC + SPR	X	Pre-university
S05	Late twenties	F	Single	MC + SPR	X	Follow partner
S06	Mid-thirties	M	Married	SC	X	Postgraduate employment
S07	Late forties	M	Married	MC + SPR	X	Postgraduate employment
S08	Late forties	M	Married	MC + SPR	X	University
S09	Late twenties	F	Engaged	MC + SPR	X	Daily-commute
S10	Late twenties	F	Single	MC + SPR	X	Postgraduate employment
S11	Late fifties	F	Married	MC	X	Follow spouse
S12	Late thirties	F	Married	SC	X	Daily-commute
S13	Mid-twenties	M	Single	MC	X	University

(continued)

(continued)

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Age group (in 2011)</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Citizenship status</i>	<i>Bumiputera</i>	<i>Reason for first departure from Malaysia</i>
S14	Late thirties	M	Married	MC + SPR	X	University
S15	Late thirties	M	Married	MC + SPR	X	University
S16	Early sixties	F	Married	SC	X	Pre-university
S17	Mid- twenties	F	Single	MC + (A) SPR	X	University
S18	Mid-thirties	F	Married	MC + SPR (D)	X	Secondary school
S19	Early thirties	M	Married	MC + SPR	X	Pre-university
S20	Late twenties	M	Single	MC	X	Further education
S21	Mid-thirties	M	Married	MC + SPR	X	Follow family
S22	Early thirties	M	Married	MC + SPR	X	Pre-university
S23	Late twenties	M	Single	MC	X	Postgraduate employment
S24	Late thirties	M	Single	SC	X	Born in Singapore
S25	Early thirties	F	Single	MC + APR	X	University
S26	Late twenties	F	Single	MC + SPR	X	University
S27	Late twenties	M	Engaged	MC	X	University

MC Malaysian citizen; *SC* Singapore citizen; *SPR* Singapore permanent resident; *(A) SPR* Applying for Singapore permanent residence; *SPR (D)* Singapore permanent resident as a dependent; *APR* Australian permanent resident

APPENDIX II: MOBILE MALAYSIANS IN LONDON/UK

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Age group (in 2011)</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Citizenship status</i>	<i>Bumiputera</i>	<i>Reason for first departure from Malaysia</i>
L01	Late fifties	F	Married	MC + ILR	√	Further education
L02	Early thirties	M	Single	BC	X	Pre-university
L03	Late twenties	F	Single	MC	X	University (twinning)
L04	Late thirties	F	Married	MC + ILR	X	Pre-university
L05	Mid- twenties	F	Single	MC	X	Pre-university
L06	Late thirties	F	Single	MC	X	University
L07	Late twenties	M	Single	MC	X	University (twinning)
L08	Late twenties	M	Single	MC	X	University (twinning)
L09	Mid- twenties	F	Single	MC	X	University
L10	Late twenties	F	Single	MC	X	University (twinning)
L11	Late twenties	F	Single	MC + BC	X	Secondary school

(continued)

(continued)

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Age group (in 2011)</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Citizenship status</i>	<i>Bumiputera</i>	<i>Reason for first departure from Malaysia</i>
L12	Late twenties	F	Single	MC + EPR	✓	Follow family
L13	Mid-thirties	F	Married	MC + ILR	✓	Pre-university
L14	Early thirties	F	Married	MC + BC (<1983)	X	Born in UK
L15	Mid-thirties	F	Married	MC + BC (<1983)	✓	Born in UK
L16	Early forties	F	Married	MC + ILR	X	Pre-university

MC Malaysian citizen; *BC* British citizen; *BC (<1983)* British citizen by birth in the United Kingdom, before 1 January 1983; *EPR* European Country permanent resident; *ILR* Indefinite Leave to Remain

APPENDIX III: MOBILE MALAYSIANS IN OTHER GLOBAL LOCATIONS

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Age group (in 2011)</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Citizenship status</i>	<i>Current location</i>	<i>Bumiputera</i>	<i>Reason for first departure from Malaysia</i>
G01	Early thirties	M	Married	MC	Middle East city	X	Further education
G02	Late thirties	M	Single	MC	French city	√	University
G03	Late twenties	F	Single	MC	French city	X	University
G04	Early thirties	M	Single	MC	US city	X	Follow family
G05	Early thirties	M	Single	MC + SPR	Swiss city	X	Pre-university
G06	Mid-thirties	M	Single	MC + SPR	Indonesian city	X	University

MC Malaysian citizen; *SPR* Singapore permanent resident

APPENDIX IV: MOBILE MALAYSIANS WHO RETURNED
TO MALAYSIA

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Age group (in 2011)</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Citizenship status</i>	<i>Bumiputera</i>	<i>Reason for first departure from Malaysia</i>
M01	Early forties	F	Married	MC	X	Further education
M02	Mid-thirties	M	Married	MC + SPR	X	Postgraduate employment
M03	Early thirties	M	Single	MC	X	Employment
M04	Early forties	M	Single	MC + US	X	University
M05	Late forties	F	Married	MC	√	University
M06	Early thirties	F	Married	MC	X	Employment
M07	Late fifties	M	Married	MC	X	Further studies
M08	Late thirties	M	Married	MC	X	University (twinning)
M09	Early thirties	F	Single	MC	X	Professional training
M10	Late sixties	M	Single	MPR + US	X	Employment
M11	Early thirties	F	Married	MC	X	University (twinning)
M12	Mid-thirties	M	Single	MC	X	University
M13	Early forties	M	Married	MC + SPR	X	University (twinning)
M14	Late forties	F	Married	MC	√	Further studies
M15	Early forties	M	Married	MC + SPR	X	Follow partner

(continued)

(continued)

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Age group (in 2011)</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Citizenship status</i>	<i>Bumiputera</i>	<i>Reason for first departure from Malaysia</i>
M16	Early forties	F	Married	MC + USPR	X	Pre-university
M17	Mid-thirties	M	Married	MC	X	Secondary school
M18	Early thirties	F	Single	MC	X	University

MC Malaysian citizen; *MPR* Malaysian permanent resident; *SPR* Singapore permanent resident; *US* United States citizen; *USPR* United States green card holder

INDEX¹

A

affirmative action policies , 6, 72,
88–90, 165, 194, 199–200, 208–9,
211, 215, 255, 266–8. *See also*
New Economic Policy (NEP)
'A' Levels, 78, 135, 167, 168, 170–3,
178, 181, 229. *See also* Australian
Matriculation
Alliance Party, 64–7, 73, 74, 208
Anglo-Malay
education, prioritisation of,
75–9, 137, 148–9
education, transition to civil service,
75, 77, 82–4
Working Committee, 60, 62, 77
apolitical, 93n17, 196, 214
archival research, 28, 31–2, 264–5,
273n3
ASEAN scholars, 169–71, 183,
186n5. *See also* ASEAN
Scholarship

ASEAN Scholarship, 8, 136, 162,
166, 169, 170, 186n6, 228.
See also ASEAN scholars
Australia, 6, 120, 122, 132, 135–6,
138–9, 144, 149, 170–1, 175,
182, 184, 185n2, 196, 198,
237, 269
Australian Matriculation,
135, 171–2, 229. *See also*
'A' Levels

B

bangsa, 25. *See also* Malay,
'indigeneity'; race
Barisan Nasional (BN), 66–7, 204,
208, 216
Bersih, 203, 216
BGM. *See* Brain Gain Malaysia (BGM)
blog, 1, 28
BN. *See* *Barisan Nasional* (BN)

¹Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' denote endnotes.

brain drain, 12, 21, 26, 137, 138,
224–6, 233, 237. *See also* reverse
brain drain policies
vs. brain gain, 224, 240
Brain Gain Malaysia, 202, 249n5
Briggs Plan, 68, 148. *See also* Malayan
Emergency
British citizenship, 129–31, 143, 148,
194, 198, 206, 245, 279
British colonial legacies, 2, 3, 12, 19,
23, 27, 32, 49, 88–91, 91n1,
195, 259, 264, 266, 272. *See also*
colonialism; colonial legacies;
postcolonialism
inherited and exacerbated by the
post-colonial Malaysian state,
2, 12, 31, 33–4, 88, 147, 159,
183, 185, 205, 223, 227, 231,
236, 255, 257, 265
perpetuation of, 75, 149, 162, 163,
169, 176, 183–5, 218
British colonial rule, 3, 14, 52–5, 75,
90, 108. *See also* colonialism,
effects of
Brunei, 52, 64, 122
bumiputera, 1, 5–6, 20–2, 74, 78,
84–5, 180. *See also* Malay,
'indigeneity'; sons of soil
Malay special rights, 62, 65, 74, 75,
79, 93n19, 178, 205
prioritisation of, 6, 65, 74, 76–9,
85, 87, 161, 167, 170, 205,
209, 235–6
privileges, 21, 74, 85, 108
quotas, 64, 84, 85, 92n13, 132,
136, 165, 169, 173, 177, 178
residential school, 77, 84, 144, 162,
179–81 (*see also* (Malay,
residential school))
bumiputera-differentiated citizenship,
1, 3, 22, 59, 72, 79, 191, 195,
199–201, 207, 209, 212, 266–8.
See also citizenship, racialised

C

citizenship
conflation with ethnonational
identity, 185, 199–200, 207,
212, 213, 215, 256 (*see also*
(ethnonational identity,
essentialised))
conflation with nationality,
10, 62–4, 191–4,
196, 200, 203, 256,
257, 261
historicity of, 214, 217, 256, 267
jus soli, 61, 64, 66, 214
and loyalty, 8, 9, 10, 62–5,
108, 191–5, 201–5, 207,
212–15, 261
meanings of, 2, 11, 65, 89, 190,
196, 212, 213, 260–2
and migration practices, 1–3,
10, 22, 23, 75, 199,
257–60, 264 (*see also*
(citizenship practices))
racialised, 34, 55, 59, 65, 213, 262
(*see also* (*bumiputera*-
differentiated citizenship))
second-class, 6, 11, 208, 210
as state-citizen relationship, 62, 91,
190, 259, 260, 267
understandings of, 33, 49, 81,
185, 190, 195, 206, 211,
216, 258, 259
citizenship practices, 10, 33, 34, 64,
190, 200, 205, 207, 217, 271,
272. *See also* citizenship, and
migration practices
class, 11, 12, 23, 269–71. *See also*
intersectionalities; middle-class
colonialism. *See also* colonial legacies;
postcolonialism
effects of, 3, 53, 54, 89, 90, 92n8
colonial legacies, 255. *See also* British
colonial legacies
and citizenship, 14, 194

and education, 20–1, 183–5, 212
 longevity of, 22, 33, 160, 180, 190,
 212, 217, 218, 233, 272
 and migration, 2, 3, 12, 23–5, 132,
 147, 159, 180, 183, 218, 244,
 246, 255, 261
 colonial to post-colonial, 3–6, 20,
 63, 88, 90, 91n4, 107, 108, 110,
 147, 178, 223, 256
 Commonwealth, 127, 132, 135,
 149, 150n6, 185n2, 194
 communism, 55, 68, 71, 72, 76,
 92n11, 268. *See also* Malayan
 Emergency; racism
 culture of migration, 2, 3, 17–19,
 26–7, 262
 mobile Malaysians', 33, 136–7,
 141–9, 166–85, 239, 255–8,
 265–6 (*see also* (migration,
 normalcy of))
 perpetuation of, 218, 239,
 240, 260
 postcolonialising, 23–5, 258
 (*see also* (migration,
 postcolonial approach to))
 racialised, 161, 171, 183
 (*see also* (migration, racialised;
 race, and migration))

D
 diaspora, 7, 9–10, 15–16, 22–4, 26,
 35n9, 159–60, 201, 224–5, 241,
 258
 diaspora strategies, 111
 discrimination
 gender, 234
 racial, 7, 10, 11, 163–5, 176–8,
 207–9, 212–14, 216, 243, 247,
 248, 267 (*see also* (racism))
 'divide-and-rule', 4, 56, 161, 257.
See also indirect rule

E
 education
 aspirations for overseas/Western, 33,
 75, 81–4, 132, 133, 170–3, 183
 children's, 234, 237–9, 248
 internalised preference for
 overseas/Western, 55, 81–4,
 132–6, 147, 173
 meanings of overseas/Western,
 2, 81–4, 133
 and national unity, 79–81, 185,
 212, 256
 quality of, 133, 167, 173, 183,
 228, 239, 243
 education-migration. *See also* student
 migrants
 geographies, 229
 pathways, 33, 34, 132–6, 149,
 159–85
 strategising for, 181, 182
 trajectories, 162, 181, 182
 education streams, 31, 78, 79, 82, 83,
 146, 162, 164, 166, 184, 268–9,
 271. *See also* school streams
 emigration and disloyalty, 8, 9, 30, 198
 emotional citizenship, 10, 11, 214, 217
 ethnicisation, 192
 ethnicity. *See also* race
 and class, 271
 racialised, 108, 215, 257
 shared, 31, 196
 ethnonational identity, essentialised,
 184, 185, 200, 215
 ethnopolitics, 230, 268. *See also*
 race-based politics; racial politics
 expatriate life, 239, 247

F
 federalism, 90, 91
 Federated Malay States (FMS),
 4, 52–4, 76, 77, 87, 94n23

Federation of Malaya, 4, 54, 60, 61, 72, 93n18, 93n19
 agreement, 61–3, 69
 citizenship, 60–5, 67
 constitution, 60
 Federation of Malaysia, 4, 5, 61–4, 110, 148
 flexible citizenship, 10, 206, 207, 214, 257, 260, 272
 FMS. *See* Federated Malay States (FMS)
 foreign spouse, 130, 223, 232–7, 241, 246, 266
 foreign talents, 124–5, 226, 267

G

governing, techniques of, 31, 79, 203, 205, 208, 256, 257, 263
 government scholarships, 30, 64, 74, 75, 82, 83, 85, 87, 132, 133, 161, 167, 170, 178, 179, 203, 204, 240

H

habitus, 110, 146, 184, 259

I

I/C. *See* Identity Card (I/C)
 identity card (I/C), 25, 35n2, 69, 70, 210, 257
 ILR. *See* Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)
 imagined community, 196, 199–200, 212, 215. *See also* ethnicity, shared; ethnonational identity, essentialised
 Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), 128, 280
 indirect rule, 53. *See also* ‘divide-and-rule’

Internal Security Act (ISA), 7, 35n10, 71, 72, 74, 90, 93n18, 93–4n21.
See also Security Offences (Special Measures) Act (SOSMA);
 Sedition Act
 intersectionalities, 23, 35n18, 269, 271
 interviews, 28, 31, 264–5
 ISA. *See* Internal Security Act (ISA)

J

JB-Singapore commuters, 166–9, 183

K

KBSM. *See* *Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah* (KBSM)
 KBSR. *See* *Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah* (KBSR)
kerajaan, 51
Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah (KBSM), 78
Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah (KBSR), 78

L

Long-Term Social Visit Pass (LTSVP), 234, 248n2
 loyalty, 9–11, 60, 62–5, 80–1, 198, 201–5, 213–15, 262. *See also* citizenship, and loyalty; emigration and disloyalty; patriotism
 in Malay ruler-subject relations, 50–1
 LTSVP. *See* Long-Term Social Visit Pass (LTSVP)

M

Malay
 aristocracy, 73, 77
 definition of, 62

- ‘indigeneity’, 2, 5, 33, 55–9, 62, 76, 89, 90, 108, 147, 195, 257
 residential school (or bumiputera residential school), 77, 84, 144, 162, 179–81
 Malayan Civil Service (MCS), 77, 92n13
 Malayan Emergency, 61, 65, 67–72, 76, 93n16, 93n17, 148.
See also Briggs Plan
 Malayan Union (MU), 4, 53–5, 59, 90, 233
 citizenship, 5, 59–65, 92n10, 205, 216, 233
 Malay College Kuala Kangsar (MCKK), 77, 179
 Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H), 245, 246, 249n7
 Malaysian-Chinese, 1, 6–8, 34n2, 93n17, 122, 123, 146, 159, 161, 164, 166, 176–8, 185, 185n1, 186n4, 200, 207–10, 213, 215–17, 218n3, 230, 235, 239.
See also Malaysian-Indians; Malaysian-Malays
 Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), 65–8, 87, 92n12. *See also* Alliance Party; Barisan Nasional; Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC)
 Malaysian government
 disappointment with, 210–12, 214, 256
 distrust of, 8, 10, 199, 204, 207–10, 212, 215–17, 244, 246, 248, 256, 266, 267
 Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools (MICSS), 87, 161, 229. *See also* United Examination Certificate (UEC)
 students, 136, 137, 149, 162, 164, 168–9, 174–6, 183, 229, 268
 Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). *See* Alliance Party; Barisan Nasional; Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA)
 Malaysian-Indians, 1, 34n2, 185n1.
See also Malaysian-Chinese; Malaysian-Malays
 Malaysian-Malays, 5, 34n2, 166, 177, 178, 215. *See also* bumiputera; Malaysian-Chinese; Malaysian-Indians
 Malaysian Matriculation Programme, 85. *See also* race-stratified education system; Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia
 Malaysians
 in London/UK, 127–31
 in Singapore, 122–7
 Malaysian studies, 19–23, 191
 May 1969 riots, 65, 72–5, 90, 93n19, 207, 216. *See also* Internal Security Act (ISA)
 MCA. *See* Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA)
 MCKK. *See* Malay College Kuala Kangsar (MCKK)
 methodological nationalism, 262–4
 MIC. *See* Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC)
 MICSS. *See* Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools (MICSS)
 middle-class, 1, 20, 24, 77, 167, 173, 210. *See also* class
 migration
 internal, 109–20, 147–8
 internal and international, intertwining of, 143, 144, 148, 261, 270
 lifestyle, 224, 226–7, 230, 245, 246
 normalcy of, 33, 49, 109–22, 141–7, 149, 261 (*see also* (culture of migration, mobile Malaysians’; migration mentality; migration, propensity for))
 postcolonial approach to, 3, 19–23, 255–72 (*see also* (culture of migration, postcolonialising))

migration (*cont.*)
 propensity for, 109, 120, 148
 (*see also* ((migration mentality;
 migration, normalcy of))
 racialised, 1, 6–8, 10, 11, 24, 26,
 34, 108, 261 (*see also* (culture
 of migration, racialised; race,
 and migration))
 retirement, 110, 226, 245–7
 temporalities of, 270
 migration mentality, 146–7
 MM2H. *See* Malaysia My Second Home
 mobile Malaysians, 26
 money politics, 8
 MU. *See* Malayan Union (MU)
 MyOverseasVote, 216

N

Najib Razak, 93n21, 241
 National Harmony Act, 93n21
 National Language Act, 78, 90
 National Operations Council (NOC),
 73–4, 79
 National Security Council Bill (NSC),
 93n21
 national-type schools, 78, 79, 85, 86,
 164, 166, 184, 186n8, 230. *See also*
vernacular schools
 National Unity Consultative Council
 (NUCC), 93n21
 NEM. *See* New Economic Model
 (NEM)
 NEP. *See* New Economic Policy (NEP)
 New Economic Model (NEM),
 94n22, 241
 New Economic Policy (NEP), 6,
 72–5, 84, 90, 107, 109, 111,
 113, 132, 133, 137, 148, 161,
 179, 257, 266
 New Zealand, 7, 120–2, 132, 135–6,
 138–9, 144, 149, 185n2

NOC. *See* National Operations
 Council (NOC)

O

‘O’ Levels, 60, 78, 167, 170, 179,
 181. *See also* Sijil Pelajaran
 Malaysia
orang asli, 50

P

patriotism, 81, 191, 201, 207. *See also*
 citizenship, and loyalty; loyalty
 Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR),
 186n7. *See also* Sijil Rendah
 Pelajaran
 permanent resident (PR) status
 in Australia, 138, 144, 278
 in Europe, 196, 280
 in Malaysia, 110, 233–6, 241, 247,
 248n1
 meanings of, 214, 234
 in Singapore, 122–7, 168, 171, 210,
 236, 277–8, 281, 283
 in the UK, 127–31, 161, 196, 237
 (*see also* (Indefinite Leave to
 Remain; Right of Abode))
 in the USA, 283–4
 PMR. *See* Penilaian Menengah Rendah
 (PMR)
 postcolonialism. *See also* colonialism;
 colonial legacies
 and Malaysian studies, 19–23
 and migration, 12–17, 23–4
 Post-Study Work Visa (PSW), 128
 primordial belonging, 9, 11, 35n12,
 196–9, 212–15, 218n2, 256, 261
 Private Higher Education Institutions
 Act, 88, 134–5, 171. *See also*
 twinning programmes
 PSW. *See* Post-Study Work (PSW)

R

race. *See also* ethnicity

- construction of, 2, 195
- essentialised, 164, 184
- and ethnicity, 25–6, 35n13
- materialisation of, 33, 55–9, 67, 68, 257
- and migration, 260
- perpetuation of, 2, 22, 75, 162–4, 183–5, 268
- securitisation of, 30, 33, 67, 71–2
- race-based politics, 65–7, 108. *See also* ethnopolitics; racial politics
- race-stratified education system, 20, 33, 34, 55, 75–9, 108, 137, 147, 149, 160–1, 177, 183–5, 255. *See also* education streams; Malay, residential school; Malaysian Independent Chinese Secondary Schools (MICSS)
- racial hierarchy, 4, 13, 26, 55, 59, 60, 148, 235. *See also* racial ideology; racial stereotype; racism
- racial ideology, 4, 13, 56, 59, 163, 164, 179, 183, 200, 213. *See also* racial hierarchy; racial stereotype; racism
- racial paradigm, 49
- racial politics, 8, 20, 22, 33, 79, 199, 203, 236. *See also* ethnopolitics; race-based politics and brain drain, 12 institutionalisation of, 55
- racial segregation, 69, 108, 148, 161, 163–6, 180
- racial stereotype, 13, 55, 147, 148, 163, 178–9, 183, 184. *See also* racial hierarchy; racial ideology; racism
- racism, 7, 25, 268. *See also* discrimination, racial; racial hierarchy; racial ideology; racial stereotype

Rahman Talib Report, 78

Razak Report, 77, 78

Reid Commission, 61, 63–4

Remove Class, 85, 86. *See also* race-stratified education system

REP. *See* Returning Expert Programme (REP)

Returning Expert Programme (REP), 224, 240–4, 246, 247, 266

return migration policies, 223, 244, 266–7. *See also* Returning Expert Programme (REP); reverse brain drain policies

return migration, propensity for, 163, 224, 227–39, 246, 247, 267, 270

reverse brain drain policies, 34, 237, 239–46. *See also* Returning Expert Programme; return migration policies

Right of Abode (ROA), 127, 161

RMC. *See* Royal Military College (RMC)

ROA. *See* Right of Abode (ROA)

Royal Military College (RMC), 165, 186n3

Rukunegara, 79–81

S

Saya Anak Bangsa Malaysia, 216

school streams, 76, 229–31, 246, 256, 258. *See also* education streams

Security Offenses (Special Measures) Act (SOSMA), 94n21. *See also* Internal Security Act (ISA)

Sedition Act, 74, 75, 90, 93n21. *See also* Internal Security Act (ISA)

Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM), 78, 85, 167, 170–2, 175, 177.

See also 'O' Levels; Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia (STPM); United Examination Certificate (UEC)

- Sijil Rendah Pelajaran* (SRP), 170, 186n7. *See also* Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR)
- Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia* (STPM), 78, 85, 167, 172, 173, 175, 177, 186n8, 229. *See also* 'A' Levels; Australian Matriculation; Malaysian Matriculation Programme; Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia; United Examination Certificate (UEC)
- Singapore citizenship, 110, 123, 124, 168, 210, 211, 236, 239, 277–8
- skilled migration, 1, 11, 24, 26, 27, 36n19, 159, 160, 183, 224, 225, 231, 246, 255, 259, 261. *See also* brain drain; brain gain
- social change, 13, 91, 108, 216, 244
- social mobility
 assistance of bumiputeras', 84
 children's, 238
 differential access to, 74, 88, 91, 238
 migration as means for, 149, 161, 180, 210, 225, 261
 overseas education as means for, 132, 138, 149, 167, 182, 210, 261
 race stratified, 90, 180, 268
 strategy, 27, 182
- sons of soil, 1. *See also* bumiputera; Malay, 'indigeneity'
- SOSMA. *See* Security Offenses (Special Measures) Act
- SPM. *See* *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM)
- SRP. *See* *Sijil Rendah Pelajaran* (SRP)
- SS. *See* Straits Settlements (SS)
- STPM. *See* *Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia* (STPM)
- Straits Settlements (SS), 3, 52–4, 58–60, 62, 76
- student migrants, 111, 131–9, 226
- sub-national geographies of origin, 23, 269–70
- T**
- Taiwan, 136–7, 149, 162, 174–5, 183, 229
- TalentCorp. *See* Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad (TalentCorp)
- Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad (TalentCorp), 241, 242
- Tun Abdul Razak, 71
- Tunku Abdul Rahman, 63
- twinning programmes, 135, 162, 171–4, 183–4, 228, 229.
See also Private Higher Education Institutions Act
- U**
- UCSCAM. *See* United Chinese School Committees' Association of Malaysia (UCSCAM)
- UCSTA. *See* United Chinese School Teachers' Association (UCSTA)
- UEC. *See* United Examination Certificate (UEC)
- UK. *See* United Kingdom (UK)
- UMNO. *See* United Malays National Organisation (UMNO)
- UMS. *See* Unfederated Malay States (UMS)
- Unfederated Malay States (UMS), 4, 52–4
- United Chinese School Committees' Association of Malaysia (UCSCAM), 87, 136, 162
- United Chinese School Teachers' Association (UCSTA), 87, 162
- United Examination Certificate (UEC), 87, 136, 149, 162, 175, 268
- United Kingdom (UK), 6, 33, 83, 120, 127–31, 135–6, 138–40, 142–5, 149, 150n6, 150n8, 161, 163, 171–3, 178–82, 184, 185n2, 196, 198, 206, 209, 228–30, 232–3, 237–8, 247, 269

United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), 54, 63–7, 73–5, 77, 90, 91, 92n12, 92n15, 93n21, 204, 208, 216. *See also* Alliance Party; *Barisan Nasional* (BN)

United States of America (USA), 6, 92n11, 120, 122, 135–9, 149, 150n6, 162, 170, 175, 183, 185n2, 203, 206, 224, 229, 269

USA. *See* United States of America (USA)

V

vernacular schools, 76, 79, 82, 137, 161, 186n8, 257. *See also* national-type schools

visa, 128–31, 148, 150n6, 232–3, 237. *See also* Indefinite Leave to Remain; Long-Term Social Visit Pass (LTSVP); Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H); Post-Study Work Visa (PSW); permanent resident (PR) status ; Right of Abode (ROA)

voting, 25, 32, 59, 127, 202, 204–5, 207, 212, 216–17, 268

W

World War II, 19, 52, 53, 93n20