

Local Politics
in Rural Malaysia

Local Politics in Rural Malaysia

Patterns of Change
in Sungai Raya

Marvin L. Rogers

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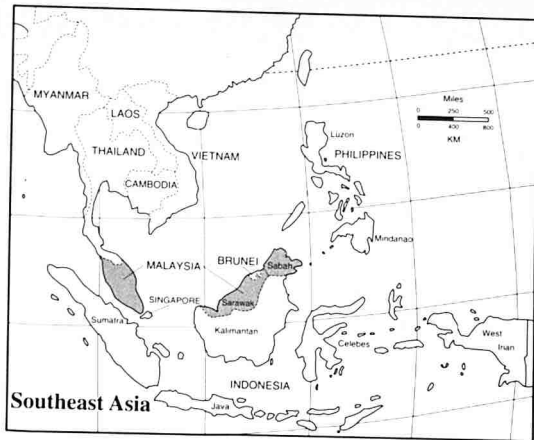
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Preface

Shortly after entering the U. S. Army as an officer in 1957, I was assigned to a psychological warfare unit. With a B.A. in Oriental Affairs and an M.A. in International Relations, I worked with military and civilian personnel trying to determine themes for future propaganda campaigns that would persuade Asians to support the U.S. Armed Forces in limited or major conflicts. Little did we imagine that the Vietnam tragedy would unfold in less than a decade. Although we read endless classified documents and had funds to buy books, scholarly journals, and Asian newspapers, we knew very little about how villagers learned about politics, how much they knew, what they thought of their rulers, or how we might convince them to support our government or their own in a future conflict.

Fascinated and bewildered, I left the army in order to study Southeast Asian politics. I returned to graduate school during the early 1960s, a decade in which area studies were respectable and funds for foreign field work were readily available. Whereas most of my classmates were interested in national leaders, parties, and political contests, I was concerned about the political perceptions and activities of villagers in Southeast Asia. Years later, while living in Malaysian villages, my interests expanded to include all facets of rural development in the Third World.

This longitudinal study of socioeconomic and political change in a Malaysian village began as a doctoral dissertation in political science at the University of California-Berkeley. The initial research examined patterns of political involvement in a Malay village. It focused on the extent of the villagers' political awareness, their key sources of political information, their opinions of the major parties and the federal government, and the character and extent of their participation in national politics. When I arrived in Malaysia in 1965, I had little understanding of the subtle differences among Malay communities throughout the country and little appreciation of the extent to which Malay support for the government varied between states. I did know that Malays in northern Malaysia spoke with a regional accent, and I wanted to study a rural community where villagers spoke with an accent that approximated the national accent heard on Radio Malaysia. I turned to Malay acquaintances for assistance in finding a village to study. A respected Malay teacher advised me to live in Johore, in southern Malaysia. Other Malays helped me gain access to Sungai Raya, a



Malay community six miles outside the city of Muar in northwestern Johore. In theory, ethnographers pick their villages in order to maximize a study's contribution to social science knowledge; Sungai Raya was selected for less grandiose reasons: The villagers' spoken language resembled the pronunciation used in the Malaysian mass media, the community was located midway between remote rural villages and an urban area, and I assumed that it illustrated the patterns of social, economic, and political change that more isolated communities would follow in the future.

The research for this book was conducted during 1965–1967, 1976, 1978, 1982, 1987, and 1988. The initial field work, conducted in the vernacular, combined participant observation, a household census, in-depth interviews, and a survey of random samples of half the Malay men and one-fourth of the Malay women aged seventeen or older. The sample comprised seventy-nine men and fifty-five women. The survey was carried out by seven Malay university students (four men and three women) during the year that my wife and I lived in Sungai Raya. They interviewed 95% of the male sample and 96% of the female sample. During 1976 I spent a week in Sungai Raya gathering data on changes in the community during the previous decade. In 1978 I spent three months collecting additional information on the patterns of change. Detailed census data were collected on every Malay household in Sungai Raya. Key questions from the earlier questionnaire were used in a survey of random samples of half the men and women aged seventeen or older. The samples comprised 101 men and 122 women. The census and survey were undertaken by six Malays with secondary school education (five men and one woman) during a year's research on rural development in Malaysia. They interviewed 92% of the male sample and 77% of the female sample. In 1967 and 1978 Chinese assistants collected census data on the few Chinese households in Sungai Raya. In 1982 I returned to Sungai Raya for several days to obtain data on the women's increasing involvement in national politics. During the summers of 1987 and 1988, I spent five months collecting additional information on social, economic, and political changes in the community. Since then I have periodically checked my field notes by telephoning key informants at their village residences.

Throughout this study the word "villagers" refers only to the Malay inhabitants of Sungai Raya, excluding the Chinese minority. Malay words used more than once are listed in the glossary. In the interest of clarity for non-Malaysian readers, the anglicized plural has been used for certain Malay words that are both singular and plural, such as *kampung* (village), which is written as *kampungs*.

Monetary values are expressed in Malaysian currency. During the past two decades the value of the Malaysian ringgit (M\$) against the U.S. dollar has ranged from M\$3.00 in 1966 to M\$2.20 in 1978 and M\$2.60 in 1988.

Portions of this book appeared earlier in *Asian Survey*, *Comparative Politics*, *Jurnal Antropologi dan Sosiologi*, *The Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, and in a monograph entitled *Sungai Raya: A Sociopolitical Study of a Rural Malay Community*. Permission to use this material is appreciated.

The maps were drawn by a cartographer at the University of Missouri-Columbia, Quinto J. Lotti.

During the past two decades a number of institutions have contributed to this study and their assistance is gratefully acknowledged. The Center for Southeast Asian Studies and the Graduate Division of the University of California-Berkeley partially financed the initial research in Malaysia. The subsequent investigation during 1978 was undertaken while I was investigating rural development in Malaysia on a Fulbright-Hays Senior Faculty Research Abroad Scholarship. Part of this analysis was written while studying Southeast Asian history at Yale University on a postdoctoral fellowship awarded by the American Council of Learned Societies. Another portion was completed during my residency as a research fellow at the Centre for Rural and Regional Studies at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The writing of this book has been aided by grants from California State University-Northridge and the Research Council of the Graduate School, University of Missouri-Columbia.

Numerous friends and colleagues have contributed to this book. Robert A. Scalapino, teacher, mentor, and friend at the University of California-Berkeley, encouraged my interest in political anthropology and supported my desire to study national politics at the village level. Haji Mokhtar bin Md. Dom has been my teacher, advisor, and friend as I have sought to learn about Malaysia. Without his help this study literally could never have been undertaken. Othman bin Haji Dasuki, the headman of Sungai Raya, welcomed my wife and me into the community and has endured my endless questions ever since. Mohamad bin Samin taught us Malay during the initial fieldwork and has continued to offer insights into Malay society during subsequent investigations. Haji Hamdan bin Haji Mohamad has been tireless in his efforts over the years to help me understand the patterns of change in Sungai Raya. Orang Kaya Penghulu Dato Hassan bin Haji Mohd. Sa'at, the former headman of the subdistrict in which Sungai Raya is located, welcomed us into the area and facilitated my initial research. Tan Sri Haji Othman bin Haji Mohd. Sa'at, the former *Menteri Besar* (chief minister) of Johore and the state representative from the Sungai Raya area, graciously answered questions in 1965-1967 and during later visits to Malaysia. Newell Grenfell, of Survey Research Malaysia, taught me the basics of survey research, provided invaluable advice and encouragement during the initial investigation, and persuaded me to replicate my study a decade later. During the past two decades, Musa bin Ahmad has been a

devoted friend, a superb research assistant, and a wonderful teacher. He has contributed immeasurably to my understanding of Malay society and of the patterns of change in Sungai Raya. Shamsul A. B. offered hospitality, encouragement, and advice during the last two years of my fieldwork as well as an opportunity to share my research findings with his colleagues at the National University of Malaysia and help during the final revision of this study. Mohd. Rikhan bin Mohd. Shah, whose late father helped me during 1965–1967, provided invaluable assistance during my research in 1987 and 1988. Finally, a special note of thanks to the villagers of Sungai Raya, who accepted us into their community with generosity, kindness, and patience. Every time I have returned to Sungai Raya I have been welcomed as if I were a son returning home. This study would not have been possible without their help.

I am particularly indebted to four colleagues at the University of Missouri–Columbia who have offered encouragement and valuable suggestions over the years as I have written this study: Alvin Lackey, David Leuthold, Robin Remington, and Paul Wallace.

This book is dedicated to Susan Smith, who participated in the research during 1965–1967 and contributed immeasurably to my understanding of Malay society, and to our sons, John and David, who shared in the investigation during 1978 and who have listened to me talk about Sungai Raya ever since.

Marvin L. Rogers

Introduction

During the past two decades, political scientists have rediscovered the connection between politics and economics, and political economy has become a major subfield in the social sciences, enriching both political science and economics. So far, however, most political scientists do not seem to appreciate the interconnection between political science and anthropology, preferring to study politics at the macro level while ignoring the micro level factors which shape the pattern of politics in any country. The tendency to ignore the cultural and social context of politics is particularly evident in studies of politics in the Third World, where interviewing political and bureaucratic leaders in air-conditioned offices is easier than living in isolated villages, sleeping under a mosquito net, and feeling like a fish in a fishbowl.¹

Political anthropology first emerged as a subdiscipline from the study of preliterate societies. It has since been extended to encompass the study of politics in small urban and rural communities throughout the world, in "developed" as well as "developing" areas. In this study, political anthropology covers both the human and institutional aspects of society that shape politics at the village level and the local community's relationship with the state and national political systems.

While research on national leaders, parties, elections, and coups may explain who gets what, when, where, and how, political anthropology elucidates that crucial interplay of people and institutions at the grass roots level which influences the political context in which leaders and parties struggle. It contributes to our appreciation of the historical and social life behind political behavior. This cultural background, in turn, is influenced by factors such as leadership, political organizations, patron-client ties, electoral mobilization, and political control at the local level.

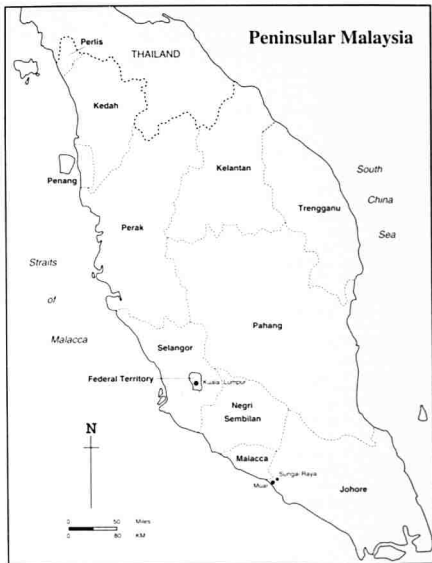
Thus, political anthropology is essential to the study of Malaysian politics. Malays dominate the ethnically divided society. Most Malays live in rural areas, and their average per capita income is much lower than that of the Chinese, the other major ethnic group. The Malay peasantry are the

most important electoral group in the country because of their numbers and because they predominate in the rural areas that are over-represented in the parliament and state assemblies. Historically, no party has been able to govern without their support.

Although specialists in Malaysian politics have long known that the rural Malays provide the bulk of the regime's electoral support, very little has been written about the politicization of the Malay peasantry after World War II, the class and cultural factors influencing political behavior at the grass roots level, the organization of local party branches, or the leadership of village political organizations. We know very little about the ties between village elites and political and bureaucratic leaders outside the community, the role of local branches in the mobilization of electoral support, the use of elections to legitimize the regime symbolically, the politicization of the rural development programs, and the influence of patronage in local politics in rural Malaysia.

The need for political ethnographic studies has become even more apparent since the start of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1971. Initiated following a racial riot in 1969 that revealed the Malays' rising frustration with the slow pace of their economic advancement, the NEP was developed as both a new political manifesto and a new economic policy. While the main thrust of this policy sought to bring Malays into the modern, urban sector of the economy, the government dramatically increased its investment in agricultural programs and rural development. During the past two decades, billions of dollars have been invested in a variety of development programs designed to increase agricultural productivity without changing the class structure in the rural areas, to raise the Malay peasantry's standard of living, to foster support for the dominant Malay party (United Malays National Organization, or UMNO), and to legitimize the UMNO-led ruling coalition. Numerous election studies have documented UMNO's continued electoral strength, but they have not explained the basis of its grass roots support or the role of the local branches in the mobilization of votes. While successive development plans have documented the government's increasing efforts in the rural areas, there are only a few studies of the patterns of change that have actually occurred in Malay villages during the past two decades. The most important are those written by Wan Hashim, Diana Wong, Aihwa Ong, James C. Scott, and Shamsul A. B.

Wan Hashim's monograph examines a rubber- and rice-growing village in a less-developed area of northern Perak.² His analysis focuses on two interrelated concerns: the integration of the community into the national economic, social, and political systems; and the transformation of the community caused by the inevitable impact of the forces of modernization. He describes the change from a traditional subsistence economy based upon rice cultivation to one tied to the world economy and based upon



rubber production. Wan examines the impact of this transformation on the pattern of land ownership and employment, as well as the social structure of the community. He shows how improvements in communication and education modified the villagers' values and attitudes and eroded their support for traditional social institutions. He also explains how the formation of local party branches linked the Malays to the national political system. While Wan's study contributes to our understanding of the processes of integration and transformation that have taken place throughout rural Malaysia, most of his study describes changes before the introduction of the New Economic Policy.

Diana Wong's narrowly focused study analyzes the agricultural transformation of a rice-growing village in the Muda Irrigation Scheme in Kedah after the start of the Green Revolution in 1970.³ She argues that the processes of change induced by the Green Revolution were much more complex than the widely held model of a sudden breakthrough from a subsistence-oriented peasant economy to a capitalist-organized commercial agriculture based upon the introduction of new technology and inputs. After describing the highly complex and differentiated "traditional" society that had evolved by the middle of the twentieth century, Wong examines the transformation occurring between 1970 and 1980. She documents the rise in productivity and profitability that followed the introduction of double-cropping based upon a secure supply of irrigation water, the increase in the laborers' wages, and the subsequent mechanization of land preparation and harvesting processes in response to labor scarcity and high wages.

Wong analyzes a critical change in the tenurial system. With the rise in productivity and profitability, the households that had rented land to tenants began to reclaim their land in order to farm it themselves, to rent it to others who could afford to pay cash at the start of the season, or to lease it on a long-term basis to farmers who could raise the required capital. She argues that by the end of the first decade of the Green Revolution the poorest peasants were faced with declining access to land and wage labor, while the owner-operator households that controlled both land and labor had begun cultivating as self-contained family farms which were integrated into the national market economy. Her painstaking study illustrates the complexity and multidimensionality of the process of agricultural transformation unleashed by the Green Revolution in Malaysia.

Aihwa Ong analyzes the industrial transformation of rural Malay society by looking at the predicament of young village women who have become part of the emerging Malay female proletariat.⁴ Based upon fieldwork during 1979-1980 in a rubber-producing village in coastal Selangor, she examines the traumatic patterns of social change that the peasants experienced when unmarried women began working in Japanese factories in a nearby free

trade zone. Seeking to illuminate cultural change in an industrializing society, Ong explores the Malays' changing beliefs and practices in a rapidly changing world fraught with conflicting cultural demands and increasing forms of control and discipline. Her vivid account captures the disruptions, conflicts, and ambivalences in the lives of Malay women and their families as they undergo rapid proletarianization.

Ong's study has three parts. The first describes the early settlement of the area by Javanese immigrants during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the peasants' resistance to British agrarian policies that discouraged cash cropping on village lands, the ways in which the Malay cultivators made the transition from subsistence to commodity production, and the ways in which the peasant village households evolved multiple occupational strategies to spread risks and to minimize losses as they were drawn into the unpredictable world market system. The second part analyzes the patterns of change in the daily life of the Malay villagers that occurred after young women began working as factory laborers. Ong examines the changing relations among members of the household, the wage-earning daughters' increasing control over their own lives, the fathers' and brothers' declining moral authority over their cash-earning daughters and sisters, and the families' strategies for coping with the rapid proletarianization of their society. In the third part of her analysis, Ong describes the experiences of the Malay peasant women in the nearby transnational electronic factories and the ways in which the management, supported by the state and village leaders, controls the female labor force and shapes the way the workers see themselves. Ong contends that periodic outbursts of hysterical spirit possession, in which neophyte female workers become violent and scream abuses, reflect the women's resistance to the introduction of industrial capitalist discipline into Malay society.

While Ong's analysis provides numerous fascinating insights into the social consequences of the industrialization of rural Malay society, her study offers little information on the overall patterns of socioeconomic and political change in the community since the onset of the New Economic Policy.

James Scott's brilliant study of a small wet-rice-growing village in the Muda Plain in Kedah examines the social history of the community and the changes in class relations with the introduction of double-cropping in 1972 and the mechanization of paddy harvesting after 1975.⁵ His meticulous analysis documents the economic and social changes that accompanied the Green Revolution. He argues that there were at least two agricultural revolutions: one benefiting the well-to-do villagers and another undermining the poor peasants who have been economically and socially marginalized by the mechanization of rice cultivation and shifts in land tenure. Scott analyzes the changes in land ownership, tenancy, farm size, harvesting

systems, employment, income, and class relations between 1967 and 1979. Drawing upon the evidence, experiences, and descriptions of actions provided by the rich and the poor, he examines the class consciousness of both groups, their perceptions of the processes of change during the 1970s, the ways in which the rich peasants justified their changing economic and social relations with their poorer neighbors, and the everyday forms of resistance used by the poor to resist the changes threatening them economically, socially, and psychologically as they struggled against capitalist agricultural development and its human agents.

Although Scott largely ignores formal party politics at the state and national levels, he explains how class antagonisms predating the establishment of political parties shaped the pattern of partisan competition in the community, how the wealthier villagers dominated the leadership of the local UMNO party branch and other government-sponsored organizations intended to benefit rural Malays, and how the village UMNO leaders blatantly used government assistance as political patronage. He describes how patronage politics has strengthened the ties between the urban UMNO leadership and their allies in the villages upon whom they depend to mobilize electoral support that symbolically legitimizes the party, its leaders, and its policies.

Drawing upon the literature about class relations and class consciousness in the West during the past two centuries, as well as the experiences of several Third World countries, Scott uses his case study to extend our understanding of class resistance, class consciousness, and the ability of elites to impose ideological hegemony over subordinate groups. His monumental work illustrates the ways in which social history and political anthropology can extend our understanding of social change and Third World politics.

Shamsul's social history of four rubber-producing villages in Selangor, thirty miles from the federal capital, analyzes how prewar colonial agricultural policies fostered class divisions and antagonisms among the Malay villagers and between the villages.⁶ He meticulously narrates the evolution of class antagonisms between the subdistrict or *mukim*-level Malay administrative and economic elite and the peasantry in the cluster of villages. His detailed study demonstrates how these multifaceted divisions were subsequently expressed in partisan rivalry after political parties were established in the postwar period. He explains how the formation of local branches of the ruling party enabled the subdistrict and village elites to consolidate their positions in the community. Shamsul examines the politicization of the rural development process since the advent of the New Economic Policy in 1971, which was designed to improve the quality of life of the Malay half of the population. He documents how the state representatives dominate the formulation and implementation of rural develop-

ment programs and how they use development projects as patronage. He analyzes how the politicized implementation of state-level development projects has financially benefited the politicians and their Malay and Chinese cronies in the party, bureaucracy, and private sector.

Shamsul's impressive study provides a wealth of information on the way class antagonisms can be reflected in local politics, on the politicization of the rural development process, and on the relationship between local politics and rural development. His analysis illustrates how social history can contribute to our understanding of how implementation of development policies at the local level is both shaped and influenced by the political context in which the policies are applied. Although his field work was completed in 1981, Shamsul's impressive study does not discuss how the quality of life in the villages changed after the implementation of the New Economic Policy.

While all five studies have contributed to our understanding of the pattern of change in rural Malay villages, they are focused on narrow topics and examine developments during the first decade under the New Economic Policy. None of them describes the interconnected pattern of social, economic, and political change taking place in the communities. Scott's analysis, relying on earlier research in his village, is the only study that provides a longitudinal perspective based upon repeated field work in the community. Although most rural Malays live in rubber-producing communities, most books on Malay villages have examined rice-growing villages, thereby distorting the picture of the Malay peasantry and misrepresenting the pattern of socioeconomic change in rural Malaysia.

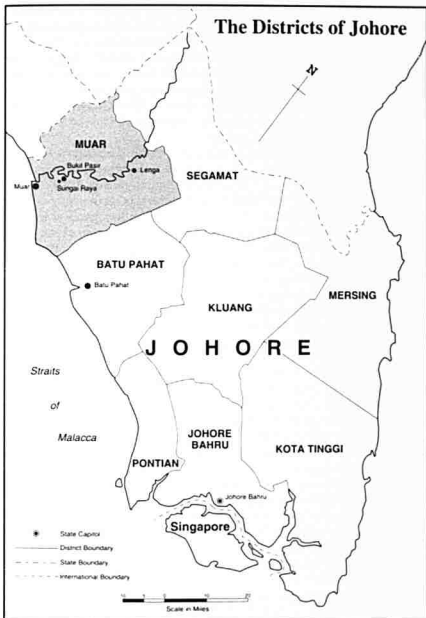
This book is a longitudinal study of the rural Malay community of Sungai Raya in the southwestern part of Peninsular Malaysia between 1895 and 1988. Addressing some of the concerns of political science, rural sociology, political anthropology, and development economics, it describes the critical link between local and national politics and explains the much-neglected, village-based sources of Malaysia's remarkable political stability. It provides fresh insights into the patterns of change in most Malay villages during the post-colonial era. The study describes the social and economic history of the community, the government's increasing influence on the villagers' daily lives, its internationally recognized rural development programs, and the rise in the Malays' standard of living during the past two decades. It examines the historical, social, and political origins of the local UMNO branch, its institutionalization as the community's primary channel for securing government assistance, the local elite's increasing ability to mobilize electoral support based upon political patronage, the rise in the villagers' levels of political awareness and concern, and the Malays' growing vulnerability to pressure by politicians.

Sungai Raya is a predominantly Malay community. In 1987 it had a population of approximately 1,250 inhabitants.⁷ It is about 120 miles south of Kuala Lumpur, the Malaysian capital, and nearly 125 miles north of Singapore. It is six miles inland from Muar, a coastal city on the Straits of Malacca. Officially known as Bandar Maharani, Muar is the capital and commercial center of Muar District, the second most populous district in the state of Johore. Sungai Raya is one of many rural Malay communities in Muar District. On the northeastern edge of Sungai Raya, along the highway from Muar, is the primarily Chinese town of Bukit Pasir, which had an estimated population of 5,100 in 1988. Like most villages in southern Malaysia, Sungai Raya is a rubber-producing community. In addition, some Malays have raised durian, rambutan, and other fruits for generations. During the past decade a few villagers have begun cultivating oil palm, and most have started planting part of their acreage in cocoa.

The community of Sungai Raya comprises three contiguous villages (*kampungs*). The main village extends from the sixth to the seventh milestone on the highway from Muar. It is the social, religious, and political center of the community. It contains a mosque, a small Muslim prayer house (*surau*), three cemeteries, a religious school, an elementary school, and two provision shops. In addition to these familiar *kampung* structures, there are a small Malay factory that packages cooking oil and two Malay stalls selling snacks and drinks. There are also several Chinese businesses: two large building supply stores, a furniture factory, and an automobile repair shop. The two smaller villages in Sungai Raya stretch along both sides of drainage canals perpendicular to the highway. One of these villages is a mile and a half in length, and the other is half a mile long. Paved one-lane roads extend from the highway for a mile through the longest of these *kampungs* and for the full length of the shorter village. All three *kampungs* are under the jurisdiction of a government-appointed village headman (*ketua kampung*).⁸

Sungai Raya exemplifies many aspects of rural Malay society along the west coast of Malaysia, particularly those of rubber-producing villages in the southern half of the Malay Peninsula. The social, economic, and political developments that have taken place in Sungai Raya during the past century illustrate the patterns of change that have occurred in most rubber-producing areas. Whereas before World War II the villagers in Sungai Raya had preserved most of their traditional way of life, the accelerated rate of change since the war has profoundly altered the basic character of their society.

Three decades after independence in 1957, Sungai Raya typifies Malay *kampungs* in Johore and other areas in which the United Malays National Organization, the dominant party in the ruling National Front, is the only effective advocate of Malay communal and political concerns. Whereas the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (Parti Islam Se-Malaysia, or PAS) has retained widespread support in northern Malaysia during the past four decades,

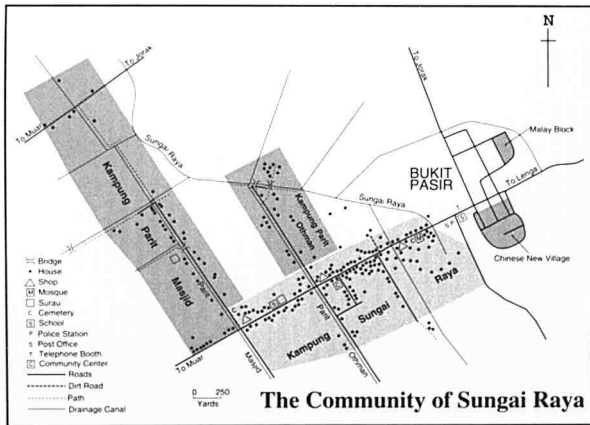


UMNO has always commanded overwhelming allegiance in southern Malaysia, especially in Johore.⁹ The power struggle between UMNO leaders in 1987 and 1988 did not diminish the villagers' support for UMNO. When the High Court declared UMNO an unlawful organization on a legal technicality in February 1988, the prime minister, who was also the former president of UMNO, formed a new party called UMNO Baru, or New UMNO. Although his actions split the Malay community at every level between those who supported the prime minister and those who felt he could have re-registered the old party, virtually all the Malays in Sungai Raya continued to support the concept of UMNO as the party of the Malays and as the champion of their concerns.¹⁰

At the conclusion of the field work in August 1988, the political situation in Sungai Raya was very fluid. The local UMNO branch had been dissolved following the High Court's decision, a few men supported the Malay faction opposing the prime minister, and the headman and other *kampung* UMNO leaders were registering men and women in a recently organized UMNO Baru branch. At that time, the outcome of the split in the national party was uncertain and its impact on politics in Sungai Raya was unclear. Thus, this study only analyzes the pattern of political involvement in Sungai Raya through the end of 1987. It does not attempt to explore the effect of the party split on the villagers' subsequent involvement in national politics, such as the establishment of a local branch of Semangat 46 (Spirit of 46), the party of the dissident UMNO faction.

Socially and economically, Sungai Raya is representative of the Malay *kampungs* that have benefited most under the government's rural development programs. Muar District has received a disproportionate share of the rural development funding in Johore during the past two decades for several reasons. Because the district infrastructure is better developed than those of most other districts, it has been easier for the government to provide assistance at the local level. Furthermore, since most of the *kampungs* in the district are only a few miles from urban areas, the village leaders have had more contact with government officers than have the *kampung* elites in the more remote areas of the state, and they have become more adept at dealing with bureaucratic procedures. Over the years they have been more successful than villagers of other districts in persuading politicians and district administrators to secure development funds for their *kampungs*.

Discussions with Malaysian academics, meetings with state and national political leaders, and interviews with agricultural extension personnel all suggest that Sungai Raya and neighboring *kampungs* have received more assistance than most villages in Malaysia since independence. However, all agree that the social, economic, and political developments in Sungai Raya illustrate the patterns of change that have occurred in most Malay *kampungs*.



in which the majority of the villagers support UMNO and engage in the cultivation of rubber, fruits, oil palm, or cocoa.

This book describes the patterns of change in Sungai Raya during the past century. Chapter 2 briefly surveys Malaysian history in order to provide the historical context of the village-based analysis that follows. Chapter 3 narrates the founding of the community in the late nineteenth century and the pattern of development before the outbreak of World War II. Chapter 4 portrays the trauma of the Second World War, the postwar rise in the villagers' levels of education and exposure to the mass media, and the increase in government services for the community. Chapter 5 examines the growth in Malay political awareness and concern and the establishment of a local party organization shortly after independence. Chapter 6 documents social and economic changes between 1966 and 1988 that improved agricultural productivity, raised family incomes, and increased social mobility. Chapter 7 analyzes the continuity of the villagers' involvement in national politics between 1966 and 1987, the institutionalization of the local UMNO branch as the community's paramount channel for securing government assistance, and the local leaders' mobilization of electoral support for UMNO and the UMNO-led ruling coalitions. Chapter 8 examines the implications of these changes for Sungai Raya and for Malaysia.

Notes

1. The term "Third World," synonymous with developing countries, refers to all the peoples and countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. When writers and statesmen divide the nations of the world into the "South" and the "North," the term "South" refers to the Third World. The "First World" means the industrial democracies of Europe, North America, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, while the "Second World" refers to the communist states. Whereas the distinction between the first and second worlds is political, the paramount characteristic of the Third World is economic: most are very poor. Virtually all nations in the Third World were formerly ruled by western colonial powers. The states of Latin America achieved independence early in the nineteenth century, and most of the other developing nations gained their freedom after World War II. Besides poverty, most Third World states have multiethnic populations, rapid population growth, slow rates of economic development, political instability, and authoritarian governments. Most are searching for viable political institutions and practices that reflect their cultures and can address the challenges they face today.

2. Wan Hashim, *A Malay Peasant Community in Upper Perak* (Bangi, Malaysia: National University of Malaysia Press, 1978).

3. Diana Wong, *Peasants in the Making: Malaysia's Green Revolution* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1987).

4. Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987).

5. James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

6. Shamsul A. B., *From British to Bumiputera Rule: Local Politics and Rural Development in Peninsular Malaysia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986).

7. It was not possible to undertake a census during the fieldwork in 1987 and 1988. Working with a large map made during my 1978 census, in 1987 the headman indicated which families had moved out of the community since 1978, which houses had been destroyed, and where new Malay and Chinese families had settled in the community. In 1978 there were 5.5 residents per Malay household in Sungai Raya and 8.8 inhabitants in each Chinese house. These figures and the headman's data on new households were used to estimate the population in 1987.

8. Officially there are two other *kampungs* under the headman's jurisdiction, but they are physically separate from the three contiguous villages referred to as Sungai Raya in this study. One comprises the designated Malay area (*blok Melayu*) in neighboring Bukit Pasir; another is half a mile north of Bukit Pasir on the road to Jorak. The village development and security committee and the mosque in the main *kampung* are the only institutions or organizations that encompass all five of these villages. There are few social or economic ties between these two *kampungs* and the three other villages. The UMNO branch in Sungai Raya does not include Malays in these *kampungs*. They live in the Bukit Pasir polling area, which has its own local UMNO organization. At the start of this longitudinal study, these two villages were excluded from the investigation of Sungai Raya in order to make the research more manageable.

9. PAS's official name is seldom used in writings on Malaysian politics. It is almost always referred to as the Islamic Party (Parti Islam) or PAS.

10. The power struggle in UMNO, the 1987 UMNO election, and the party crisis in 1988 are analyzed in Philip Bowring, "Power to the Centre," *Far Eastern Economic Review* 140, no. 15 (14 April 1988): 22-26; Ranjit Gill, *The UMNO Crisis* (Singapore: Sterling Corporate Services, 1988); Diane K. Mauzy, "Malaysia in 1987: Decline of 'The Malay Way'," *Asian Survey* 28, no. 2 (February 1988): 213-22; Shamsul A. B. "The 'Battle Royal': The UMNO Elections of 1987," in *Southeast Asian Affairs 1988*, edited by Mohammed Ayoob and Ng Chee Yuen (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1988), 170-88; Shamsul A. B. "Malaysia's New Economic Policy and the Transformation of Malay Politics: The UMNO Saga," (Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Washington, D. C., 17-19 March, 1989); Fan Yew Teng, *The UMNO Drama: Power Struggles in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Egret Publications, 1989); and Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics: The Second Generation* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991).

Malaysia: An Historical Perspective

Malaysia illustrates many of the characteristics of Third World countries and the challenges facing them as they seek to achieve national unity, establish political stability, and promote social and economic development. The colonial legacy continues to affect the society profoundly, and the multiethnic character of the population influences the pattern of socioeconomic development and the accommodation of communal groups in the political system. The rise of nationalism in Malaysia typifies that found in Asian and African states during the twentieth century. Other similarities include the growth of political parties, the retention of colonial administrative institutions and practices after independence, the establishment of patron-client ties as parties mobilize electoral support, and the significant impact of communalism on the political process. As in many developing countries, the range of government services reaching the people has increased since independence, and there have been dramatic changes in political awareness, expectations of the government, and participation in politics.

Malaysia, like most Third World states, is an artificial creation of western colonialism. Its formation reflected the policies of leaders in Europe and officials in the colonies, who often acted with little knowledge of or regard for the peoples they ruled. British rule in Malaya, or Peninsular Malaysia as it is called today, began in 1785 when the British acquired the island of Penang. By 1914 they had established control throughout Malaya and the island of Singapore at the tip of the Malay Peninsula. Four states in northern Malaya were linked together in a nominal federation called the Federated Malay States. Five other states retaining greater authority were known as the Unfederated Malay States. Malacca and the islands of Penang and Singapore were administered separately as the Straits Settlements. In the wake of World War II, Britain began to create a unified administrative system throughout the peninsula. The Federation of Malaya was established in 1948, and it achieved independence in 1957. The predominately

Chinese island of Singapore remained a British colony. In 1963 Malaya joined with Singapore and the two British colonies in Borneo to establish the Federation of Malaysia. Sabah (formerly known as British North Borneo) and Sarawak, with their very diverse ethnic groups, were brought into the federation in order to counterbalance Singapore's Chinese population. In 1965 Singapore was expelled from Malaysia because the national leaders feared that Singapore's politicians were promoting policies that threatened the long-established pattern of ethnic accommodation in Malaya, an arrangement through which the indigenous Malays dominated the government and under which they enjoyed special rights and privileges.¹

The ethnic and economic divisions in Malaysian society profoundly affect the pattern of politics and nearly all government policies. While Peninsular Malaysia comprises only 39 percent of the country, it has 82 percent of the population. Malaysia had an estimated population of 17.9 million in 1990. The population of Peninsular Malaysia was 14.6 million. Sabah had an estimated population of 1.5 million, and Sarawak had about 1.8 million. In Peninsular Malaysia the Malays and other *Bumiputera* (sons of the soil or indigenous residents) comprised an estimated 58 percent of the population in 1990, while the Chinese were 31 percent and the Indians 10 percent. Europeans, Eurasians, Thais, and other minorities comprised the remaining 1 percent.² Most of the Malays live in the relatively underdeveloped Malay Belt, comprising the northern states of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu, and Pahang. With the exception of Trengganu, which has oil revenue, the per capita income of these states is lower than that of the other states in the peninsula. Although there has been considerable outward migration since the attainment of independence, most Malays still live in rural areas; most non-Malays, especially the Chinese, live in towns and metropolitan centers. Whereas 82 percent of the Malays and other *Bumiputera* in Peninsular Malaysia lived in rural areas in 1975, only 49 percent of the Chinese and 62 percent of the Indians did so.³

The ethnic divisions are paralleled by equally dramatic economic divisions. In 1979 the mean Malay household income was about 52 percent of that of the Chinese households and about 65 percent of that of the Indian households when measured in constant 1970 prices.⁴ There is also a striking imbalance between rural and urban incomes. In 1979 the mean monthly rural household income was only 56 percent of the urban household income, measured in constant 1970 prices.⁵ The greatest income disparity is within each of the major ethnic groups. The income disparity between wealthy and poor Malays is much greater than the imbalance between Malays and non-Malays. This pattern of intraethnic imbalance also exists among the Chinese and Indians.

Peninsular Malaysia is considerably more advanced socially, economically, and politically than the states of Sabah and Sarawak. The Peninsular

Malaysian political system, autonomous within the larger federation, is far more politically developed than that of the states in eastern Malaysia. The most important Malaysian political leaders are from Malaya. A few thousand westernized, urbanized Malays dominate the ruling party and the civil service. The major issues in national politics focus upon preserving the ruling elite's power and increasing Malay participation in the modern, urban sector of the economy.

Malaysia's colonial legacy began when Britain established trading posts in Penang in 1786 and in Singapore in 1819. Initially the British were only interested in trade and avoided intervention in disputes between the local rulers. As imperialistic fervor swept the major colonial powers in the late nineteenth century, Britain increased its influence in Malaya. Between 1874 and 1914 the sultans of the nine Malay states on the peninsula signed treaties with Britain in which they agreed to accept an advisor and to follow his advice in all matters except Malay custom and the Islamic religion. In return for accepting *de facto* British rule, the British guaranteed the permanence of the rulers' dynasties, preserved their prestige, and provided an assured income which was much higher than they could otherwise have enjoyed. This system of indirect rule changed very little between 1914 and the outbreak of World War II. It preserved the traditional Malay political and administrative systems, stopped fighting between Malay rulers, and facilitated British and Chinese investments.

Under the British the economy of Peninsular Malaysia developed rapidly. Tin mining was the mainstay of the expanding economy between 1874 and 1900. The British built roads and railroads to link the mines with the seaports, while Chinese entrepreneurs provided almost all the capital to develop the mines. From about 1900 until the world depression of 1932, there was extensive British and other foreign investment in tin mining and rubber cultivation. About 1910 Malay peasants began planting rubber in place of traditional, less profitable crops, such as rice and fruit. By 1932 millions of acres of dense jungle had been planted in rubber, about half of which was cultivated on estates of one hundred or more acres. The rest of the cultivated land consisted of smaller Malay, Chinese, and Indian holdings. Individual Malays generally owned less than ten acres, while Chinese and Indian holdings were usually between ten and one hundred acres. By the outbreak of World War II, Malaya was the world's leading producer of tin and rubber.

Under the British a dual economy developed in which a modern, colonial economy flourished next to the traditional peasant sector. The Straits Settlements, the Federated States, and the state of Johore at the tip of the peninsula concentrated on trade, tin mining, and rubber production. This economy, based upon urban and foreign markets, utilized managerial and organizational skills from urban centers and depended upon urban resources

and organizations for its capital mobilization.⁶ It was controlled by British and foreign firms and depended primarily upon immigrant Chinese and Indian laborers. In the smaller cities and towns, commercial activity was largely dominated by immigrant Chinese.

The traditional peasant sector of the economy prevailed in the Unfederated Malay States of northern and eastern Malaya, the areas where Malays were concentrated. Basically unaffected by the British intervention, the traditional sector was oriented around subsistence wet-rice farming and fishing. Rubber cultivation provided the one significant area of overlap between the modern and the traditional sectors. In the northern and eastern states, Malay peasants raised both rice and rubber. In the southern half of the peninsula, many Malay villages raised only rubber.

With the exception of the introduction of rubber, the pattern of economic development under the British had remarkably little impact on the lives of the Malays. Centered along the west coast, it hardly touched the overwhelmingly Malay areas in the northern and eastern parts of the peninsula. Furthermore, the most significant socioeconomic changes occurred in the cities, such as Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, and Ipoh, which grew under the colonial government. They became centers of business, commerce, administration, and education, yet had little effect on the lives of Malays. The urban population in colonial Malaya was overwhelmingly Chinese, Indian, and European. The few Malays that migrated to the cities tended to live in Malay enclaves, where they retained their traditional village-based pattern of life.

Under the British Malaya became a classic example of a plural society in which distinct ethnic communities live side by side but pursue different occupations and have little social interaction.⁷ When the British found that Malays refused to work in tin mines and on rubber estates, they encouraged the immigration of Chinese and Indian laborers. Most of the Chinese immigrants in the twentieth century came as indentured laborers or as poor peasants in search of greater economic opportunities. Most who came before the Second World War intended to return to China, and most did. Indians did not begin to migrate to Malaya in large numbers until after the development of rubber estates. Nearly all the Indian immigrants were Tamils from Sri Lanka or southern India.⁸ In 1800 the Malays constituted 90 percent of the population of Malaya. By 1880 they still constituted two-thirds of the population, but by 1931 they comprised only half.

There had always been a movement of peoples between the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian Archipelago. A large part of the Malay population in the states of Johore, Negri Sembilan, Selangor, and Perak were the descendants of Indonesians who came in response to the rubber boom early in the twentieth century.⁹ The Javanese were the most numerous ethnic group among these immigrants. The largest group of

Indonesians settled in Johore, which was easily accessible from Singapore, the major port of entry from Indonesia. In 1911 Indonesian immigrants constituted 43 percent of the Malay population in Johore. By 1931 the figure had risen to 52 percent, but by the time of independence in 1957 it had fallen to only 26 percent.¹⁰ In contrast to Chinese and Indian immigrants, the Indonesians followed a pattern of life similar to that of the Malays and were easily assimilated into the Malay community.

Before the Second World War, the existence of three separate ethnic communities in Malaya with conflicting interests and viewpoints and with different languages, cultures, and religions, prevented the emergence of a unified nationalist movement. Political agitation during the 1920s and 1930s was limited to Chinese and Indian support of political developments in their respective homelands. On the eve of the war, the Malays were the most politically apathetic community in the country. In the 1930s some members of the Malay aristocracy and intelligentsia had, however, formed a nationalist Malay association in Singapore that reflected their gradual political awakening and their realization of the Malays' adverse economic condition in comparison to the immigrant communities. This political awareness spread from Singapore to the peninsula, and in the late 1930s several branches of the nationalist movement were established in Malaya. But these groups lacked widespread support, and Malay nationalism did not transcend the individual states.¹¹

The trauma of the Japanese occupation during World War II aroused the political concerns of all communal groups in Peninsular Malaysia and began an era of profound political change. Britain's immediate postwar plans to establish a new political system in which all ethnic groups would be treated equally aroused Malay fears and encouraged the formation of numerous Malay nationalist organizations. These organizations joined together in 1946 to establish the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) which quickly became the recognized champion of Malay communal interests and the dominant Malay political party. An Indian party, the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC), was established in 1946, and a similar Chinese party, the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA), was formed in 1949.¹²

During the 1950s the leaders of the three ethnic communities in Peninsular Malaysia devised a remarkably successful mechanism for accommodating communal demands. Prior to the election of the Kuala Lumpur City Council in 1952, local UMNO and MCA leaders formed an alliance in which they agreed to work together against a common opposition party. The strategy worked so well that it was repeated in successive city council elections throughout the peninsula. In 1953 UMNO and the MCA established an Alliance Party. The MIC joined the Alliance before the first national elections in 1955. The Alliance was a coalition of the three major communal

parties in Malaya led by conservative, English-educated, upper-class elements of the Malay, Chinese, and Indian communities. UMNO was the acknowledged senior member of the Alliance. It was better organized than MCA and MIC, and it had greater support among Malays than MCA and MIC had among Chinese and Indians. The Alliance was essentially a partnership in which Malay political power was balanced against Chinese economic power. It was committed to the maintenance of communal harmony, the growth of a multiethnic national identity, accelerated economic development, and eradication of the imbalance in living standards of the three ethnic groups. Leaders of the three parties met behind closed doors, where they discussed communal needs, accommodated ethnic demands, and formulated policies which were supported by all three component parties in the Alliance. Although the Alliance contested elections as a single party under the Alliance symbol, its component parties functioned as communal organizations and were responsible to their own members.

Malaya enjoyed a decade of remarkable political stability and economic growth after gaining independence. The president of UMNO became the prime minister, and UMNO's domination of the intercommunal Alliance was institutionalized. In 1959 the government began a major program of mosque and prayer house building after the Islamic Party captured control of the state governments in Kelantan and Trengganu, the two predominately Malay states along the east coast of the peninsula. Conscious that the Malays were the most economically disadvantaged community in the country and that they provided the bulk of the regime's electoral support, in October 1959 the UMNO-led government launched a major rural development program designed to increase agricultural productivity, raise rural incomes, and promote support for the UMNO-led government.¹³

As noted earlier, in 1963 Malaya joined with Singapore and the two British colonies in Borneo to establish the Federation of Malaysia. Indonesia, which regarded itself as the leader of Southeast Asia, opposed the formation of Malaysia because it allegedly perpetuated European colonial influence in the region. From 1963 to 1966 Indonesia pursued a policy of confrontation with Malaysia that entailed low-level military harassment along the Indonesian-Malaysian border in Borneo and occasional military infiltration in the peninsula. Indonesia's diplomatic and military confrontation strengthened the Alliance government's position during the 1964 election and increased its level of electoral support.

A decade after independence Malaysia's political system began to lose popular support. Malays argued that they were not getting their share of the prosperity which had been achieved after 1957. Non-Malays, especially Chinese, insisted that all ethnic groups should be treated equally. During the campaign preceding the 1969 general election, the Islamic Party charged that UMNO had not done enough to promote Malay interests and to foster

Islam in Malaysia. The Democratic Action Party (DAP), reflecting urban Chinese and Indian opposition to the government's pro-Malay policies, advocated a "Malaysian Malaysia" in which all ethnic communities would be treated equally. Support for the Alliance Party in Malaya fell from 58.5 percent in 1964 to 49.1 percent; it won control of only seven state governments in the peninsula.

Two days after the election, jubilant opposition party supporters held victory parades in Kuala Lumpur. Followers of these predominately Chinese parties taunted Malays. In turn, Malay resentment, fear of declining Malay political power, and concern about the opposition's threat to Malay rights and privileges prompted a counter UMNO rally the following day. This erupted on May 13 into four days of rioting, arson, and looting by Malays and Chinese. The official reports listed 196 deaths and 9,143 arrests. Following these disorders, a state of emergency was proclaimed, Parliament was not reconvened, and elections were postponed indefinitely in Sabah and Sarawak. A Malay-dominated National Operations Council was established and ran the country by decree for twenty-one months.

Convinced that the May 13 tragedy was caused by growing Malay discontent because of the persistent economic imbalances between ethnic groups, in 1971 the Malaysian government announced a bold New Economic Policy (NEP) to promote national unity. The NEP was developed as both a new political manifesto and a new economic policy. It had two aims: to reduce and eventually eliminate poverty among all ethnic communities and to restructure society in order to correct the economic imbalance among communal groups and eventually to eliminate the "identification of race with economic function." The key objectives of the NEP were to be achieved between 1970 and 1990 and were embodied in successive five-year plans. While the main thrust of this radical affirmative action program sought to bring Malays into the modern, urban sector of the economy, the government dramatically increased its investment in agricultural programs and rural development. Whereas a total of M\$1.8 billion was invested in agriculture between 1971 and 1975, under the Fourth Malaysian Plan (1981-1985) M\$7.8 billion was spent on agriculture and rural development programs. An additional M\$11.8 billion was allocated for agriculture and rural development under the Fifth Malaysian Plan (1986-1990).¹⁴

In the wake of the rioting in May 1969, UMNO's leaders were determined to increase the party's support and to depoliticize the political process. In the early 1970s a new multiparty coalition was formed to replace the Alliance Party. The National Front (*Barisan Nasional*) included nearly all the parties in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak. The Islamic Party joined in 1972, but was later expelled in 1977. During the 1980s the UMNO-led National Front comprised eleven to thirteen component parties and completely dominated the national government, as well as the state govern-

ments throughout the country. The key opposition parties were the Islamic Party in northern Malaysia and the Democratic Action Party, which commanded widespread Chinese and Indian support in the urban areas in Peninsular Malaysia and in Sabah.

In Malaysia, as in most developing countries, communalism is the paramount factor shaping the pattern of politics. It affects virtually every facet of society. Communalism is a sense of loyalty to an ethnic, religious, linguistic, or regional group, or any combination thereof, rather than to the nation as a whole. It emphasizes the primacy and exclusiveness of the communal group and demands solidarity of its members in political and social action.¹⁵ Whereas communalism in many multiethnic states is geographically based, in Malaysia it is essentially a social and cultural phenomenon.

The Malay half of the population believes that Malaysia is a Malay country and that it ought to be ruled by Malays for the advantage of the Malay community. Their primary loyalty is to their ethnoreligious community rather than to the state. Malays resent the fact that they are an economically disadvantaged community in what they perceive to be their country.¹⁶ They believe the government should pursue special policies to raise their standard of living and that they ought to receive privileges and assistance so that they can compete effectively with Chinese and Indians. They insist that the Malays and the indigenous peoples of East Malaysia are entitled to special rights and privileges that will ensure that Malaysia remains a Malay country.

The non-Malays, especially the Chinese, on the other hand, feel that they are the descendants of pioneers who came as laborers and who through sheer hard work and persistence managed to achieve a livelihood and prosper. They contend that they built Kuala Lumpur and other urban centers out of the jungle, that they created a new society for themselves and their children, and that Malaysia is now their homeland.¹⁷ They feel that they are treated as second-class citizens by the government and by Malays. They bitterly resent the favoritism shown Malays in recruitment and promotion in the civil service, in the award of government contracts and business licenses, and in the allocation of scholarships. They fear that the government's pro-Malay policies will deny their children educational and employment opportunities and that eventually it will become impossible to preserve their language and culture.

Communalism determines the political attitudes, expectations, and loyalties of all the ethnic communities, as well as the nature of participation in the political process. Communal concerns affect family planning programs, grading of university examinations, allocation of taxi licenses, and issuance of tickets at police checkpoints. They influence the selection of party candidates, appointment of cabinet members, promotion of civil servants,

and awarding of government contracts. Communal considerations, often called "racial arithmetic," dictate government priorities and determine how policies are administered.

Whereas many Third World states have been plagued by communal violence since gaining independence after World War II, Malaysia has successfully accommodated ethnic demands and promoted socioeconomic development. Many developing countries have neglected their agricultural sectors in order to foster industrialization or to cater to the needs of rising urban populations, but Malaysia has vigorously promoted agricultural and rural development. Political development has combined significant socioeconomic growth, slow mobilization of villagers into politics, and continued political institutionalization while maintaining an equilibrium between Malay political hegemony and Chinese economic dominance.

Just as Malaysia typifies many factors which have shaped the character of most Third World societies, many villages in Malaysia illustrate the processes of change which have influenced the character of Malaysian society today. Socioeconomic and political changes during the past century have influenced the villagers' communal concerns, level of education, and exposure to the mass media, as well as their agricultural productivity, income, and social mobility. These developments have also profoundly altered the villagers' political awareness, concern about politics, opinions and expectations of the government, and participation in the political process. Although numerous books have been written about Malaysian history, economics, and politics since independence, there are few longitudinal studies of the patterns of change at the village level that analyze the socioeconomic and political developments shaping peoples' lives and influencing contemporary Malaysian society.

Notes

1. In common usage "Malaya" means the territory of the former Federation of Malaya (1948-1963), comprising the Malay Peninsula and the adjacent island of Penang. "Malay" refers to the indigenous peoples of the Malay Peninsula and to the Malay language which they speak. Malay is the official language of Malaysia and is called Bahasa Malaysia, or the Malaysian language. "Malayan" refers to anything associated with the peninsula and has no ethnic connotations. "Malaysia" designates the Federation of Malaysia, which was established in 1963. At one time the two parts of the country were referred to as West Malaysia and East Malaysia, but those terms were dropped in favor of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak. "Malaysian" refers to any person or thing associated with Malaysia, without ethnic connotations.

2. Government of Malaysia, *Fifth Malaysian Plan, 1986-1990* (Kuala Lumpur: National Printing Department, 1986), 129.

3. Government of Malaysia, *Third Malaysian Plan, 1976-1980* (Kuala Lumpur: The Government Press, 1976), 150.
4. Government of Malaysia, *Fifth Malaysian Plan*, 99.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Gayl D. Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development in Malaysia: A Study of Complex Organizations in Stimulating Economic Development in New States*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 28.
7. Maurice Freedman, "The Growth of a Plural Society in Malaya," *Pacific Affairs* 33, no. 2 (June 1960): 158-68.
8. K. Singh Sandhu has estimated that about 16 million Chinese and Indian immigrants entered Malaya between 1900 and 1940. Eventually most of them returned to China and India. ("Some Preliminary Observations on the Origins and Characteristics of Indian Migration to Malaya, 1786-1957," cited in J. M. Gullick, *Malaysia* [New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969], 74, n. 2).
9. Tunku Shamsul Bahrin, "The Growth and Distribution of the Indonesian Population in Malaya," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 123, no. 2 (July 1967): 267-86; "Indonesian Labour in Malaya," *Kajian Ekonomi Malaysia* 2, no. 1 (June 1965): 53-70; and R. N. Jackson, *Immigrant Labour and the Development of Malaya, 1786-1920* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1961), 127-31.
10. Tunku Shamsul Bahrin, "The Growth and Distribution of the Indonesian Population in Malaya," 286.
11. William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); Thomas H. Silcock and Ungku Abdul Aziz, "Nationalism in Malaya" in *Asian Nationalism and the West*, edited by William L. Holland (New York: Macmillan, 1953), 269-345; and Radin Soenarno, "Malay Nationalism, 1896-1941," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 1, no. 1 (March 1960): 1-33.
12. The MCA, established in February 1949 as the Malayan Chinese Association, changed its name in November 1963 to the Malaysian Chinese Association. Similarly, the MIC, founded in August 1946 as the Malayan Indian Congress, changed its name in November 1962 to the Malaysian Indian Congress.
13. Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development in Malaysia*.
14. Investment in rural development other than just agriculture was much greater than these figures suggest, since they do not include expenditures for education, health, social and community services, and other sectors related to rural development. (Government of Malaysia, *Fourth Malaysian Plan, 1981-1985* [Kuala Lumpur: National Printing Department, 1981], 290-91; and *Fifth Malaysian Plan, 1986-1990*, 329). The value of the Malaysian ringgit (M\$) per U.S. dollar has ranged from M\$3.00 in 1966 to M\$2.20 in 1978 and M\$2.60 in 1988.
15. Robert N. Kearney, *Communalism and Language in the Politics of Ceylon* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1967), 5.
16. Kernial Singh Sandhu, "Communalism: The Primary Threat to Malayan Unity," *Asian Survey* 2, no. 2 (August 1962), 5.
17. Alex Lee, "The Chinese and Malay Dilemmas in Malaysia," *Pacific Community* 3, no. 3 (April 1972): 563.

Early Settlement

Sungai Raya was originally settled about 1895 by men who had earlier immigrated to Johore from Central Java.¹ The Javanese pioneers in Sungai Raya and other areas of Peninsular Malaysia migrated in search of farmland and an opportunity to accumulate sufficient funds to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, one of the Five Pillars of Islam. At the turn of the century, the pilgrimage, or *Haj*, conferred greater social status among the Javanese immigrants in Malaysia than among other Indonesian immigrants and the Malays.² Most of the early pioneers in Sungai Raya who went to Mecca returned to Malaysia after the *Haj*, especially those who had married local women. In the mid-1960s a few of the children of the first settlers were still living, and two of them reported that when Sungai Raya was founded the area between Muar and Sungai Raya was already settled by Malays and Javanese.³

Within a few years of their arrival, some of the first immigrants to Sungai Raya went to Indonesia and returned with family members. Other Javanese followed in response to accounts of the opportunities in Sungai Raya. Some of the early settlers paid for the passage of relatives. They were free to clear and cultivate their own lands when they had worked off the cost of the voyage. Most of the Javanese immigrants settled in Sungai Raya between 1905 and 1910. They maintained ties with Indonesia until the outbreak of World War II, when travel and communication virtually ceased. Some contact was resumed after the war, but the last links with relatives in Java were severed by Indonesia's confrontation with Malaysia between 1963 and 1966.

Many single Javanese immigrants married Malay women from Johore and the neighboring state of Malacca. This practice, typical of much of Malaysia, contributed to the rapid assimilation of the Indonesian settlers into Malay society. Although the Javanese and Malays spoke different languages, they shared a common religion and a similar cultural heritage. The children of the original settlers spoke both Javanese and Malay, but their grandchildren and great grandchildren speak only Malay (Bahasa

Malaysia).⁴ The descendants of the original pioneers adopted the Malay custom of using Muslim names, such as Mahmud and Fatimah, rather than Javanese names, such as Sumitro and Sawitri.

Sungai Raya was settled along a path running parallel to a pipeline from the interior of the state that supplied water to Muar. The pioneers were led by Haji Abdul Manan bin Haji Alias, a dynamic Javanese who had immigrated to Johore a few years before. He named the area Sungai Raya after the hibiscus (*bunga raya*) which grew along the banks of the nearby creek (*sungai*). Faced with common necessity, the pioneers led by Haji Abdul Manan worked on the basis of mutual assistance (*gotong royong*), building temporary houses of bark and palm leaf thatch (*atap*), clearing the jungle, and driving away wild animals. Several early settlers were killed by tigers. Haji Abdul Manan gave each man as much land as he could clear. Older informants reported that most early villagers cleared ten to fifteen acres. As the area along the water pipe was settled, the Malays widened the path to make a dirt road, which was gradually improved. The settlement along the road became known as Kampung Sungai Raya.

As they cleared the jungle, Haji Abdul Manan organized digging of canals (*parits*) to drain the flat, swampy land. *Parits* were essential to the development of the community, because Sungai Raya, at an elevation of ten feet, had an average rainfall of 99 inches. Two drainage canals were dug perpendicular to the road: Parit Othman was finished about 1897 and Parit Masjid two or three years later.⁵ These canals flow into larger streams that drain into the Muar River. They are part of an extensive network of drainage canals dug along the northwestern coast of Johore during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to facilitate agriculture. As Javanese and Malays moved into the Sungai Raya area, two adjoining villages were established along these *parits*. Kampung Parit Masjid was settled about 1906; Kampung Parit Othman about 1912.

The first settlers established a subsistence economy. As the jungle was cleared they cultivated rice, tapioca, yams, and other vegetables such as legumes, squash, and gourds. Fruit trees were planted: banana, rambutan, mangosteen, durian, duku, langsats, and coconut. Surplus produce was sold in Muar. After three or four years the rice yields declined, the paddy fields were replanted with betel nut palm (*buah penang*) and coffee, and the villagers began to enter a cash economy.

The demography and economy of Sungai Raya changed when Chinese peasants settled in the *kampungs* about 1900. As betel nuts became a major cash crop, the Chinese entered the village economy. The first Chinese were single men from Muar. Malays employed some as laborers; others worked as small entrepreneurs, buying the villagers' crops and selling them salt, sugar, cloth, and other commodities. In 1966 a Malay born in Sungai Raya about 1895 recalled:

The Chinese begged to be given permission to build their small huts at one corner of the Malay land. The Malays, being very kindhearted, permitted them. So they assumed the position of middlemen and took the villagers' produce to Muar and the betel nuts to Singapore. Soon the Chinese became rich. They bought land from Malays, who moved to open up new land elsewhere.

Many Malays in Sungai Raya welcomed the Chinese middlemen. At that time the only way that villagers could transport produce to Muar was to carry it or take it by boat along a small river a mile from Sungai Raya. They were happy to let the industrious Chinese do the work. In 1966 one elderly woman observed, "The Chinese didn't have a God; all they were interested in was making money. They didn't know there will be a next world, so they worked for money as hard as they could."

Whereas the original Javanese immigrants had readily intermarried with Malays, the Chinese did not marry Malays because of religious and cultural differences. When the first Chinese settlers had acquired some land and a house, most returned to Fukien province in South China to visit their families or to marry. As in the case of early Javanese immigrants, they often returned with relatives, who worked for them until they had paid for the passage and could obtain land.

About 1917 the small town of Bukit Pasir was founded at the northern end of Kampung Sungai Raya. Located on the road from Muar, it grew as a rubber-buying center for the surrounding *kampungs* and as a source of provisions for laborers on Chinese and British rubber estates a few miles further inland. The founder of Sungai Raya built a row of shops at a road junction in Bukit Pasir. These he rented to Chinese and Indian shopkeepers. A few years later a Chinese businessman built a row of shops on the other side of the road. At about this time a police station and post office were built. Keenly aware of the importance of education as a means of preserving their cultural identity and of achieving economic success, the Chinese in Bukit Pasir donated funds to establish a Chinese school in the mid-1920s. The road through Sungai Raya was paved in the late 1920s. Whereas Sungai Raya was predominately Javanese-Malay, Bukit Pasir was overwhelmingly Chinese. The growth of a Chinese community with its distinctive characteristics at the edge of Sungai Raya sharpened the Malays' awareness of their own communal identity.

One of the most significant social changes in Sungai Raya during the first four decades after its establishment was the gradual shift in the villagers' attitude toward education. The original hardworking, self-reliant pioneers considered secular education irrelevant to their way of life. Between 1900 and 1910 a Malay primary school was begun in Sungai Terap, a *kampung* one mile from Sungai Raya. Few parents sent their sons to school and then only

long enough to learn to read and write. Boys unwilling to attend were not forced to do so. Girls had no opportunity for formal education until just before World War II. None of the original settlers sent their sons to the Government English School in Muar, which was founded about 1903. Until about 1920 most villagers associated English-medium schools with attempts to convert Muslims to Christianity.⁶

During the 1920s the villagers' opinion of education began to change. As in *kampungs* throughout the state, a growing number of Malays began to appreciate the importance of education for their sons. In Sungai Raya more parents sent their sons to school, and a few village youths attended the English School in Muar after completing a four-year course of study in a Malay-medium primary school. The first elementary school in Sungai Raya was built in 1930. Like most Malay-medium schools in Johore at that time, it offered four years of instruction, "the traditional minimum course for literacy in the mother tongue."⁷ In the 1930s Malay elementary schools in Johore sought to provide a sound primary education for boys between five and fourteen years of age. The schools' emphasis on gardening and local crafts reflected British colonial officials' paternalistic attitudes as set forth in the state educational policy of 1928.⁸ Whereas in the early 1920s only a minority of the boys in Sungai Raya had gone to school, a decade later almost all went to school for a few years. In 1936, in accordance with a statewide directive, girls were admitted to the Sungai Raya primary school. Although a few girls entered, most parents were not interested in educating their daughters.⁹

Before the war Malays in Sungai Raya felt that religious instruction was more important than secular education because Islamic observances were an integral part of their daily lives. The first formal religious instruction in Sungai Raya was begun about 1925 in response to requests by the villagers. The *imam* (prayer leader or custodian of the mosque) taught weekly in the mosque and in the prayer house (*surau*) in Kampung Sungai Raya. Another man taught in his home six days a week. These men were not paid by the villagers or the government, but they received a portion of the *zakat fitrah*, an obligatory charity-tax collected annually to mark the end of *Ramadan*, the Muslim fasting month. Prior to the existence of these classes, a few villagers had studied in Muar with men esteemed for their knowledge of Islam.

The villagers started a religious school in Sungai Raya in 1935. They built a small school and a house for the teacher, who came from a nearby community. Three years later the state government assumed financial responsibility for the school, which offered three years of instruction in the afternoon. Boys and girls came from Sungai Raya and other *kampungs* as far as five miles away. Before 1940 more boys attended the religious school than the secular elementary school.

Whereas the pattern of education changed slowly, the economy of Sungai Raya changed dramatically after the introduction of rubber cultivation. With seeds provided by the government, a few Malays began cultivating rubber about 1915, planting the trees between rows of betel nut palm. By the time the trees had matured and could be tapped, some of the Chinese in Muar were already established as rubber buyers. An elderly villager narrated the origin of rubber cultivation in the *kampung*:

At first many people did not want to plant rubber because they said it was a wild tree. But there were those who planted rubber. . . . But when the trees grew old we didn't know what to do with them. So my younger brother went to a rubber estate . . . to learn how to tap. That was in 1920. When my younger brother came back to the *kampung*, he told the villagers about the profit that rubber would bring. Only then did the *kampung* people rush to buy rubber seeds. . . . Rubber was tapped. After that the latex was mixed with tamarind juice [a form of acid] and left for about half an hour to coagulate. Then it was rolled thin with a bottle and dried in the sun. When it was dry, it was taken to Muar by bicycle. The Chinese in Muar all rushed to buy it. At that time the price of rubber was high, up to four dollars a *kati*. Maybe the Chinese sold it for six dollars a *kati*.¹⁰

During the 1920s the planting of rubber spread rapidly throughout Johore, and by 1926 three-fourths of the cultivated land in the state was in rubber.¹¹ By the end of the decade, most Malays and Chinese in Sungai Raya had replanted their betel nut palm and coffee lands with rubber. When the trees matured, the villagers enjoyed unprecedented prosperity. Rubber commanded a high price, work was easy to find, and basic necessities were inexpensive. At that time most of the original Malay holdings had not been fragmented in accordance with Islamic inheritance law.

Although the Malays had engaged in a cash economy since the turn of the century, their values and way of life prevented them from maximizing the opportunities for long-term economic advancement that arose after the introduction of rubber cultivation. During the 1920s and 1930s, the *kampung* Malays' social and economic values focused on immediate gain rather than long-term advancement. In contrast, the local Chinese, who had migrated from China because of economic desperation, were driven with a passion to accumulate wealth and were willing to do almost anything to get ahead financially.

When the Malays' rubber holdings brought unexpected prosperity during the 1920s, most villagers used their increased income for immediate gratification. Many sold land in order to liquidate debts, make pilgrimages to Mecca, build larger houses, or pay for elaborate weddings and feasts. A

few purchased automobiles. A number leased their rubber holdings to Chinese at a fixed price for several years at a time. Although leasing freed the owners from the work of tapping the trees, curing the latex, and selling the rubber, they were usually paid so little for the right to tap their trees that the Chinese derived most of the income from the land. In 1966 older villagers charged that their parents had lived very extravagantly and had not given any thought to the financial welfare of their heirs. Villagers recalled that most Malays in Sungai Raya about 1920 had owned approximately ten acres of land, but that by 1940 they possessed an average of only five or six acres. At one time the founder of Sungai Raya owned more than 100 acres in the area, a row of shops in Bukit Pasir, and blocks of land in the heart of Muar. His children squandered his fortune; in 1966 they had only one or two acres apiece.

The Malays' naivete in commercial matters was another factor retarding their economic advancement before World War II. In Sungai Raya and elsewhere, the local Chinese shopkeepers frequently took advantage of the villagers, most of whom did not know how to read the complex steelyard scales that the Chinese used to weigh goods.¹² Their dishonesty was prompted in part by the Malays' casual attitude toward precise payment of debts. When villagers entered a shop to buy or sell, their attention was diverted with a free cigarette or flattering conversation while the proprietor fraudulently weighed their goods. In 1966 both urban and rural Chinese readily admitted that Chinese merchants had cheated Malays before the war. An elderly Chinese in Sungai Raya explained: "We thought they were fools. It was easy to do business with them, like cheating them with the scales. They were very timid and didn't bargain. They always said, if you think it is a fair price, it's fine with me."

The villagers also suffered economically because of certain traditional Malay socioeconomic values. The minor importance accorded thrift and repayment of debts and the great emphasis placed upon harmonious personal relations made it almost impossible for Malays to compete with Chinese entrepreneurs. During the prewar period Malays in Sungai Raya occasionally opened businesses, and their failure was most often caused by reluctance to insist upon payment of debts and by mores which inhibited bargaining between Malays. An elderly villager expressed it this way:

When Malays [in Sungai Raya] opened up shops they were not successful. From what they said, it seemed that the villagers wanted to support the Malays. But . . . the villagers did not give them support. . . . Although they believed that the Chinese cheated them in their weighing, they still went to Chinese shops. Once people started taking things on credit, the Malays closed their shops. But the Chinese could stand vulgar words; they

didn't care as long as their business prospered. The Malays were
• very sensitive and thus could not be good businessmen.

Politically, there were very few changes in Sungai Raya between the founding of the community and the outbreak of World War II. The traditional administrative system was retained, the *kampung* residents had only limited, indirect contact with the government, the villagers were neither politically aware nor concerned, and only a few men shared the sense of nationalism that was beginning to stir in some urban Malay circles.

Shortly after Sungai Raya was established, the sultan of Johore appointed the leader of the original settlers as headman (*penghulu*) of Sungai Raya and the surrounding area. He was the villagers' only link with the government; for many he was the government. According to his nephew, he ruled as a mini-sultan whose word was law. As the sultan's personal representative, he gave land to Javanese and Malay settlers who wanted to clear it, arranged marriages, divorces, and funerals, settled disputes between villagers, and tried and punished petty thieves. Responsible for the welfare of the villagers, who were called his *anak buah*, or children, he organized the Malays in maintaining the canals and the road. As immigrants established villages along Parit Masjid and Parit Othman, he appointed a headman (*ketua kampung*) in each village. When the state government introduced land taxes in Sungai Raya about 1912, the *penghulu* was responsible for their collection. He served until 1923. Between his retirement and the outbreak of the war, three other men served successively as *penghulu* of the subdistrict (*mukim*). None lived in Sungai Raya.

About 1930 the *penghulu* appointed a retired policeman living in Sungai Raya as the *ketua kampung* for the three *kampungs* in the community. He was the *penghulu's* representative in the community. He often went to Muar as the villagers' representative to pay their land taxes. In accordance with the Malays' traditional respect for authority, his requests and advice were never questioned.

The level of political consciousness in Sungai Raya before the war was extremely low. Most villagers were illiterate; only two or three men regularly read newspapers. The Malays' lives and concerns focused upon religion, family, and work. Most of the *kampung* residents were only dimly aware that Britain controlled the state government, since the British exercised no influence over religious matters. Although the sultan was supposed to look after his "children," the villagers expected very little governmental assistance. The Malays who were more politically aware perceived themselves as subjects of the sultan of Johore rather than as members of a national group. The Chinese were regarded as foreigners without a religion. Although as early as 1931 Chinese and Indians outnumbered Malays in Johore, the villagers did not consider the Chinese a threat to Malay rule.

Before World War II very few villagers had any sense of Malay nationalism. Older informants recalled only two men who had been interested in independence. One was an exceptional villager who had served briefly as headman in another subdistrict and had worked as a clerk in Muar. At various times he had subscribed to religious publications with nationalist overtones—periodicals from Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Egypt. Contact with Indonesians during a pilgrimage to Mecca in the 1930s had increased his nationalism. He said that before the war he had become deeply concerned by the influx of Chinese into Malaysia and by their economic dominance. The second nationalist had spent many years in Singapore, where he resented the fact that the Malays had been overtaken by the Chinese. Furthermore, he was angered that the Chinese in Sungai Raya were prospering much faster than the Malays. This concern about the socioeconomic position of the Malays in relation to that of the Chinese was a common theme in the Malay press after about 1920.

On the eve of World War II, forty-five years after Sungai Raya was founded, nearly all the descendants of the original settlers were engaged in the cultivation of rubber and fruits. While most had become convinced that secular education was important for their sons, few were interested in education for their daughters. The *kampung* residents felt that religious instruction was more important than secular schooling. Ten years after the opening of the first primary school in Sungai Raya, most of the men were still illiterate and none of the women could read. No villager owned a radio; virtually none ever read a newspaper. Twenty-five years after the introduction of rubber, few of the Malays could compete with the industrious Chinese. Few, in fact, wanted to work as hard as the Chinese, who seemed to put accumulation of wealth ahead of all other considerations.

Unaware of Britain's political and administrative domination in Malaya and growing Chinese economic superiority, the villagers were not concerned about events and issues outside their *kampungs*. They thought of themselves as the sultan's children. While they hoped that the sultan and his personal representatives, the *penghulu* and *ketua kampung*, would rule benevolently, they expected little from the government in terms of services or assistance. Virtually all were unaware of the winds of Malay nationalism that had begun to stir among educated Malays in Singapore and in urban centers in Malaysia.

Notes

1. The Javanese migration to the Malay Peninsula in the nineteenth and early twentieth century is discussed by Tunku Shamsul Bahrin in "Indonesian Labour in Malaya," *Kajian Ekonomi Malaysia* 3, no. 1 (June 1965): 53-70; "The Growth and

Distribution of the Indonesian Population in Malaya," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 132 (June 1967): 267-86; and "The Pattern of Indonesian Migration and Settlement in Malaya," *Asian Studies* 5, no. 2 (August 1967): 223-257.

2. A. B. Ramsey, "Indonesians in Malaya," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch, Royal Asiatic Society* 29, pt. I (May 1965): 112. Muslims who have made the *Haj* add a prestigious title before their names: *Haji* (masculine) or *Hajah* (feminine).

3. The following account of the history of the community before World War II is based largely upon interviews during 1966 with two villagers: the octogenarian nephew of the founder of Sungai Raya and the septuagenarian leader of the mosque, who was born in Sungai Raya.

4. For centuries the language of the indigenous Malays in the Malay Peninsula has been called Malay in English and Bahasa Melayu (language of the Malays) by the Malays. For the Malays, the terms Malay and Bahasa Melayu have very definite ethnic, religious, and cultural connotations and are used to distinguish them from the Chinese and Indian half of the population that does not share their religion and culture. After independence the Malaysian government changed the name of the national language from Malay (Bahasa Melayu) to Bahasa Kebangsaan or national language. This term has since been abandoned in favor of Bahasa Malaysia or the Malaysian language. Whereas Bahasa Melayu has very explicit ethnoreligious connotations that exclude the non-Malays, Bahasa Malaysia has political implications that embrace all ethnic groups in the country. Since the villagers in Sungai Raya, as well as most Malays in Malaysia, still refer to their language as Malay (Bahasa Melayu), the term Malay has been used throughout this study rather than Bahasa Malaysia.

5. Parit Othman was named for the founder's brother, Haji Othman bin Haji Alias, whose house was built along the *parit*. Parit Masjid was named for Sungai Raya's first mosque (*masjid*), built along the *parit* about 1905.

6. S. Husin Ali reported a similar attitude at this time among the original Javanese immigrants in a Malay *kampung* about thirty miles southwest of Sungai Raya (*Social Stratification in Kampong Bagan: A Study of Class, Status, Conflict and Mobility in a Rural Malay Community* [Singapore: Malaysian Branch, Royal Asiatic Society, 1964], 32-33). In 1965-1966 Heather Strange found that the more conservative Malays in a village in Trengganu held this same attitude, referring to English-medium schools as "infidel schools" (Interview with Heather Strange, April 1968).

7. H. R. Cheeseman, "Education in Malaya, 1900-1941," *The Malayan Historical Journal* 2, no. 1 (July 1955): 36.

8. These goals were set forth in T. P. Coe, *State of Johore (Unfederated Malay State) Report for 1929* (Singapore: Government Printing Office, 1930), 14.

9. H. R. Cheeseman, a superintendent of education in Johore before World War II, has observed that the "Malays had not welcomed education for the boys; they were bitterly opposed to it for the girls. They thought that the girls should help in the home and observe the traditional Muslim seclusion." "Education in Malaya," 41.

10. A *kati* is a weight measure equivalent to one and one-third pounds.

11. S. W. Kirby, "Johore in 1926," *Geographical Journal* 41, no. 3 (March 1928): 257.

12. The steelyard scales used by the Chinese vary in size depending on the objects being weighed. Those used in provision shops consist of a pole a half an

inch in diameter and three feet in length, at the end of which hangs a string with a metal weight and at the other end a string with a hook or pan to hold the object to be weighed. It is a fulcrum scale and is operated by suspending the pole from a string that is moved toward or away from the metal weight until balance is achieved. The point of balance is determined when a small needle attached to the pole points straight down, not when the pole is perfectly level. The pole is calibrated on three sides to show the weight. The weight of the object is shown where the string intersects the calibrated pole as it balances the needle in a vertical position.

Social and Economic Development

In Sungai Raya, as in *kampungs* elsewhere in the peninsula, the Malays' perceptions, attitudes, and way of life changed dramatically during the first two decades after the outbreak of World War II. Japan's rapid defeat of the British in Malaysia early in 1942 and the subsequent Japanese occupation until August 1945 began a process of social and economic development that gained further momentum after Malaya gained independence in 1957. The range of government services and assistance in the *kampungs* broadened, the level of education among the Malays and their knowledge of Islam increased, and their exposure to the news media became more common. As the economy of postwar Malaya improved, the pattern of employment in the *kampungs* shifted, agricultural productivity rose, and the villagers' purchase of consumer goods increased.

Social Changes

Following World War II, the British colonial government in Peninsular Malaysia began a number of programs to promote social and economic development. After independence the new Malay-dominated government accelerated its efforts at rural development, and since then it has pursued top-down rural development strategies that have had both economic and political goals.¹ Designed to raise rural incomes and increase agricultural production, these efforts have had the further goals of strengthening Malay support for UMNO and legitimizing the UMNO-led government in the eyes of *kampung* residents.

During the first two decades after the war, Sungai Raya benefited from numerous efforts to assist the rural Malays. Accelerated during the decade after independence, these programs increased agricultural productivity, quickened the rate of social change in the community, raised family incomes, and improved the quality of life in the *kampungs*. Immediately after the war the British responded to the nationwide Malay demand for improved

educational opportunities by increasing the number of Malay-medium elementary schools and by extending the length of primary education to six years. Convinced that education was necessary for economic advancement, especially in competition with the Chinese, Malays in Sungai Raya eagerly enrolled their children. By 1947 all boys and girls were attending school. That year the villagers built a second primary school for girls with materials provided by the government. A few years later it was expanded with government financial support and labor supplied by the *kampung* men. In 1957 a coeducational English-medium elementary school was built in Kampung Sungai Raya.

The first Malay-medium secondary schools in Malaya were established in 1963. Earlier the only secondary education available to Malays had been in English-medium schools or in special classes, which were begun in 1958 and were attached to Malay primary schools and to English secondary schools. Prior to 1958 Malays admitted to secondary schools were graduates of English-medium primary schools or were Malay elementary school graduates with a year of intensive training in English.² Responding to widespread Malay demand for greater educational opportunities, in 1964 the Malaysian government discontinued the competitive secondary school entrance examination that limited secondary school education to approximately 30 percent of primary school graduates. This policy of restricting enrollment resulted from the insufficiency of teachers and schools.

The expansion of educational opportunities in Sungai Raya included adults as well. Classes for men were started in 1961 as one aspect of the government's rural development program. These classes were part of a nationwide effort to break the psychological isolation of the *kampungs*, improve the villagers' skills, and increase support for the new Malay-dominated government.³ The classes in Sungai Raya were later discontinued because the men insisted that they did not have time to attend. Classes for women were held between 1962 and 1964. They met for one hour three times a week and included instruction in cooking, arithmetic, and reading in *Jawi* (an adaption of Arabic script) and *Rumi* (Roman letters). As in other areas of Peninsular Malaysia, most teachers in Sungai Raya were villagers with low qualifications.

Immediately after the war most families in Sungai Raya were satisfied if their children completed six years of primary education, but by 1966 there was widespread interest in secondary schooling for both boys and girls, and some parents wanted their children to go to the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. Many parents hoped that secondary schooling would enable their children to obtain employment in urban areas, thereby raising their standard of living. In 1966 a few boys and girls from Sungai Raya were enrolled in the fourth and fifth years of the English and Malay secondary schools in Muar. At that time, however, no Malay from Sungai Raya had

ever passed the examination at the end of Form V (eleventh grade) that is a prerequisite for further formal education.

Whereas education had been completely free for Malays before the war, the rapid postwar expansion of primary and secondary schooling forced the colonial government to institute school fees and to require that parents purchase their children's texts. These expenses were a heavy burden in Sungai Raya and other *kampungs*. Five years after independence, the government discontinued all elementary school fees. In 1966, Malay secondary schools were free, but English secondary schools continued to charge a M\$5 monthly fee. Parents still had to purchase texts and notebooks, expenses which posed a serious burden for many households. In Sungai Raya, as in other *kampungs*, parents complained that the schools often changed textbooks, thereby preventing families from reusing books as children took the places of older siblings.

The cost of education, especially secondary schooling, was a major problem for many families in Sungai Raya during the 1960s. Some families sent sons to English-medium schools and daughters to the less expensive Malay-medium schools. A few could not afford to send all their children to secondary schools. Others simply terminated their children's education for lack of funds. In some instances, conservative families sacrificed secular education in order to pay for traditional cultural or religious activities. In 1966, for example, a family that could not afford to send a daughter to secondary school put on a feast for everyone in the *kampung* to celebrate their son's learning to read twenty chapters of the Koran in Arabic. The government was aware of the financial burden that education posed for most rural Malays. After independence, the Social Welfare Department provided school fees and textbooks for a few impoverished families in Sungai Raya. Several schoolchildren, usually girls, also received bus fare.

As educational opportunities increased and as Malay concern about schooling grew, the rate of literacy and the level of education rose in Sungai Raya. In 1966, 70 percent of the men aged twenty-one and above were literate, as were 21 percent of the women in that age group.⁴ All literate villagers read *Jawi*; nearly three-fourths of the literate men could also read *Rumi*. This alphabet had been introduced in the Malay-medium schools in Johore in 1926. Nearly all literate women could only read *Jawi*. The level of education was correlated with sex and age. In 1966, 54 percent of the men aged twenty-one to forty had attended school for more than four years. In contrast, only 4 percent of the men over forty had studied that long. Similarly, 10 percent of the women aged twenty-one to forty had received more than four years of education, but none of the older women had done so. Whereas most adults had only limited opportunities for schooling, the dramatic rise in education during the postwar period was very evident among the *kampung* youth. Seventy-nine percent of the young men aged

seventeen to twenty and 70 percent of the young women in this age group had more than four years of education.

The increase in educational opportunities and the rise in the average level of education were paralleled by a slow but significant rise in the villagers' access to the mass media and in their exposure to the news media. In 1960 a joint Chinese-Malay shop in Sungai Raya began subscribing to a Malay daily as a means of attracting customers. It was delivered by a long-distance taxi passing through the *kampung* on the road from Muar. In 1966 the men read Malay dailies in two shops in Sungai Raya and in a Muslim Indian coffee shop in Bukit Pasir. The teachers living in Sungai Raya read a variety of newspapers in their schools, and other civil servants, such as a policeman and a hospital attendant, read them at work. Before the war virtually none of the villagers ever read a newspaper; in 1966 half of the men and one tenth of the women aged twenty-one and older read a newspaper at least weekly. Readership was higher among the *kampung* youth.

The growth in newspaper readership was paralleled by a similar rise in the Malays' access to radio and an increase in their listening to newscasts. A few villagers began buying battery radios when their income rose during the early 1950s because the Korean War caused a dramatic increase in the price of rubber on the world market. With the advent of inexpensive transistor radios, the number of sets in the *kampungs* went up quickly. In 1966, 37 percent of the Malay households owned an operating radio. Nearly two-thirds of the men and a fifth of the women listened to radio newscasts at least weekly. More than two-thirds of the young men aged seventeen to twenty listened weekly, as did one-third of the young women.

Exposure to television began later and grew much more slowly. The first television broadcasts were begun in the early 1960s. Electricity became available in 1965 to the houses living along the road through Sungai Raya. Several months later a few villagers began buying television sets on installment. In 1966, 4 percent of Malay families owned a set. That year nearly a quarter of the men watched television newscasts at least weekly; virtually none of the women did so. Two-thirds of the young men and one-third of the young women watched newscasts weekly. At that time Television Malaysia telecast in English, Malay, Chinese, and Indian languages on a single channel. Most of the broadcasts were British and American programs. In Sungai Raya the men's favorite programs were Malay movies, newscasts, and religious programs. One night each week thirty to ninety villagers gathered in three homes to watch Malay films.

Although the marked rise in the villagers' exposure to the mass media represented a significant increase in their access to information about developments beyond the *kampungs*, the efficacy of the media in Sungai Raya at that time can easily be exaggerated. In 1966, nearly 50 percent of the newspaper readers estimated that they understood no more than half of the

news, and more than 50 percent of those who listened to radio newscasts estimated that they understood no more than half of the discussion. At that time most of the men had only a primary school education. Both media frequently used Malay words and English terms unfamiliar to this audience and often referred to unknown events, places, and individuals.

In addition to increasing educational opportunities in the early 1960s, the government provided a number of other services designed to improve the quality of life in the *kampungs*. It widened and extended the creek flowing north of Sungai Raya into the Muar River in 1961. This improved drainage, ended periodic flooding, and turned many previously swampy areas into valuable, arable land. About this time the government began to provide annual truck loads of crushed laterite rock to resurface the dirt roads parallel to the *parits* that ran through the two *kampungs* perpendicular to the highway in Sungai Raya. The laterite was provided on the condition that the villagers worked together on the basis of *gotong royong* (mutual assistance) to spread it over the roads. Two bridges were built over the *parits* as part of the regime's rural development program. In 1960 a free bimonthly health clinic was started in Bukit Pasir for the people in the small town and in the surrounding *kampungs*. Several years later a government midwife center was built several miles from Sungai Raya. In 1965 the local state assemblyman arranged to have electricity installed along the highway running through the community. A year later 45 percent of the Malay households in Sungai Raya had electricity. Those that did not have access to this service or could not afford the cost of installation continued to rely on kerosene lamps or kerosene-burning pressure lanterns.

In addition to these basic amenities, the government provided other smaller forms of assistance. In 1962, for example, the Ministry of Rural Development gave the community a small library which was housed in the headman's house. This consisted of about 150 volumes of simple fiction and books on Islam which were to be rotated annually with other rural libraries. The collection, which was maintained for only a few years, was used primarily by villagers between fifteen and thirty years of age.

In the mid-1960s the Department of Public Works, unable to extend the water pipe into the two smaller *kampungs* perpendicular to the highway, began delivering eight gallons of water daily during the dry season to each household along the *parits* in these two villages. This augmented the water in wells behind the houses. If additional water was needed, it had to be carried from the standpipes along the highway running through the main *kampung*.

The government's efforts to improve the quality of life in the *kampungs* and to strengthen support for UMNO also included additional support of Islam. Shaken by the Islamic Party's capture of the state governments in Kelantan and Trengganu early in 1959, the national government increased

its support of Islam in an effort to demonstrate UMNO's support for Islam, to strengthen allegiance to UMNO, and to legitimize the UMNO-led regime. Sungai Raya benefited from the government's politically inspired program of building mosques and *suraus* throughout the country. In about 1961 the villagers' member of Parliament secured M\$1,000 to replace one of the old prayer houses in the community. The official opening of the new *surau* was attended by the member of Parliament, the local state assemblyman, and the *penghulu*. Several years later the local assemblyman secured M\$12,000 to renovate and expand the mosque which the villagers had financed and built before the war. Funds that the villagers had collected among themselves were used to buy mats and other furnishings for the mosque.

The afternoon religious instruction for *kampung* children, started before the war, was expanded in the postwar period. In the mid-1960s Johore was the only state in Malaysia with a comprehensive state-supported program of religious instruction. In 1966 virtually all Malay children in Sungai Raya attended the religious classes for a few years. These were held in the Malay-medium elementary school. The five teachers, employees of the state Religious Department, estimated that 80 percent of the pupils completed the six-year course, which met five days a week during the secular school year. During the first three years, classes lasted an hour and a half; in the fourth and fifth years they lasted two hours; in the sixth year they lasted four and one-half hours. The teachers estimated that about half the students in Sungai Raya entered the special two-year religious class in Muar upon completion of their religious studies in the *kampung*. After passing the state-administered examination at the end of that course, the graduates could work as an *imam*, muezzin (*bilal*), state religious teacher, or religious inspector in the state Religious Department.

State-supported religious instruction for *kampung* women was begun in Sungai Raya in 1964. The classes were taught in the mosque and in the Malay-medium school. Since women did not attend midday Friday services in the mosque, these classes were their only opportunity for formal religious instruction. However, most were illiterate and some could not follow everything that they were taught. While they were free to ask questions, most were too shy to do so.

In the mid-1960s the villagers claimed that they knew more about Islam than they had two decades earlier. They explained that there were more opportunities for religious instruction, that there were more teachers, and that the teachers were better trained. The *kampung* residents felt that their interest in Islam had risen as they had learned more about their faith. In addition to the afternoon religious classes, everyone received some religious instruction at home about praying, fasting, and other formal expressions of faith. Some boys and girls also studied Koran reading and Arabic chants several evenings a week with villagers admired for their ability to read the

Koran. Students learned to read the Koran aloud phonetically without knowing what most of the Arabic passages meant. A few young men also attended weekly classes in the homes of two men who taught in the state religious schools. Many villagers listened to religious programs and Koran reading on the radio, and some watched similar programs on television. During the last three nights of the annual, government-sponsored, international Koran reading competition in Kuala Lumpur, the contest could be heard from one end of Kampung Sungai Raya to the other.

During these two decades of government-sponsored social change, there was both migration in and out of Sungai Raya. Although there had been enough work for those who wanted it before the war, many men had difficulty finding employment after the conflict. Many men between twenty and forty years of age moved to Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Malacca and elsewhere in search of work as unskilled laborers, policemen, drivers, or soldiers. A few young women worked as domestics in urban Malay homes. These were the only urban jobs open to *kampung* Malays because they lacked skills and education and because Chinese dominated commerce. In 1966, 37 percent of the families in Sungai Raya had one or more sons living outside the *kampung*; 25 percent of the households had a daughter residing outside the community. Presumably a number of these villagers possessed above-average education, initiative, and motivation. Their exodus undoubtedly deprived the community of some potential leaders who might have promoted socioeconomic change and development. However, this loss was partially offset by six teachers who moved to Sungai Raya after independence. These men and other newcomers settled in the community because of its easy accessibility to Muar by bus and taxi and because of the availability of piped water along the highway. Some of the families moved to Sungai Raya in order to be closer to the secondary schools in Muar.

Economic Changes

The economy of Sungai Raya began to change gradually as the country recovered from the deprivation of World War II and as the price of rubber rose dramatically during the Korean War. This development accelerated after independence and laid the foundation for even more significant improvements in the 1970s, when the levels of education and social mobility rose in the community. A growing number of villagers were unable to find employment because of the rise in the number of residents in the area. As noted earlier, many men left the *kampungs* in search of unskilled employment in urban areas. An increasing number of both men and women began working for Chinese as rubber tappers or as grass cutters who cut vegetation around rubber trees. Malays who tapped for Chinese or for other Malays

received half the value of the latex which they collected. Those working for Chinese invariably were assigned old, low-yielding trees, while the more productive trees were reserved for Chinese.

During the first two decades after the war, a few Malays opened small provisions shops in Sungai Raya, which competed with the Chinese stores in Bukit Pasir. At one time about twenty villagers pooled their resources and started a cooperative store. By the mid-1960s all but one of these endeavors had failed because of inexperience, insufficient capital, and lack of patronage. As they had before the war, the *kampung* residents preferred to patronize the better-stocked Chinese shops where credit was readily available and where they could bargain without offending a fellow Malay. The great emphasis on harmonious personal relations in Malay culture made it very difficult for Malay proprietors to insist on the payment of debts. It also inhibited bargaining between Malay shopkeepers and Malay customers.

In 1966 there were four provision shops in Sungai Raya. The largest, a Chinese-Malay shop along the highway, had been in existence ten years. Three other very small shops were located along the dirt roads perpendicular to the highway and had pathetically meager supplies of staples and household items. One of these shops closed in 1966. That same year a retired policeman opened a provision shop in front of his house in competition with the Chinese-Malay shop a few hundred feet away. In addition to basic foodstuffs and household necessities, he sold coffee, soft drinks, and cakes that his wife and daughter baked daily. He, like his competition, subscribed to a daily Malay newspaper, which his customers read while drinking coffee and chatting with others in the shop.

During the decade after independence the villagers in Sungai Raya benefited from a variety of programs designed to increase the rural Malays' agricultural productivity, improve their occupational skills, and raise their incomes. In the mid-1950s a few households began replanting their old, low-yielding rubber trees under the Rubber Replanting Board's subsidized program. Replanting increased dramatically in the early 1960s, and by 1966 two-thirds of the families cultivating rubber had begun replacing their aged trees with improved, high-yielding varieties. When they matured in seven years and could be tapped, the new trees were expected to produce three or four times as much latex as the older trees. In 1966 the government provided advice to rubber cultivators, as well as free fertilizer and a M\$750 subsidy per acre. This money was paid over seven years if the smallholders met specified standards in the planting and maintenance of their new trees. In the mid-1960s a few families were also replanting fruit trees under a similar program, which paid a maximum of M\$100 per acre. While the *kampung* residents understood the need to rehabilitate their old trees, a few families

thought that they could not afford to enter these programs even though the yield of their rubber or fruit trees was declining.

A few families were also assisted under the government's highly publicized resettlement program, in which the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) resettled landless villagers. Each settler was given ten acres, eight of which were planted in rubber or oil palm. The remaining two acres were for his house and for raising fruit and vegetables. In addition to clearing the land, FELDA planted the trees, built the house, and provided a monthly subsidy until the trees matured. At that time the settlers began repaying the cost of their resettlement.⁵ Many men in Sungai Raya applied for admission to the FELDA resettlement schemes; in the early 1960s seven families left Sungai Raya to begin life anew as FELDA settlers.

Other men were helped by courses designed to raise the rural Malays' occupational skills. About 1960 some villagers attended one- and two-day agricultural courses taught in Muar and other urban centers. At least two men took month-long courses in Kuala Lumpur, one for auto repairmen and another for small-scale contractors. The first man never used his training, but in the mid-1960s the other worked in the Sungai Raya area as a small-scale contractor. In 1966 the headman and a few other men also benefited financially as members of the reserve Territorial Army. They received a small allowance for their weekly afternoon drills in Bukit Pasir.

By the mid-1960s the economic changes in Sungai Raya were evident in the changing occupational pattern in the *kampungs*, the rising family incomes, the growing gap between the "haves" and "have-nots," the increasing Malay desire for consumer goods, and the rising purchase of material possessions. In 1966 two-thirds of the 161 men in Sungai Raya aged seventeen and above were unskilled laborers. Most were rubber tappers, who tapped their own trees or worked for others. Some cut grass around rubber trees in Sungai Raya or nearby estates, and several felled old rubber trees to be replaced. Others worked as thatch (*atap*) weavers, shop assistants, or in other manual occupations. Nearly half of the 208 women aged seventeen and above worked as rubber tappers or at other unskilled employment. One woman who grew up in Sungai Raya taught in the local Malay elementary school, and three girls over sixteen were still in school. The proportion of women working outside the home was higher than before the war, when rubber yields were higher, family landholdings were usually larger, and fewer consumer goods were desired by the villagers.⁶

By 1966 one-third of the men were engaged in nonagricultural occupations, a reflection of the postwar socioeconomic changes in the *kampungs*. Some men were "skilled laborers," working as barbers, carpenters, and taxi drivers. Other were employed in "semiprofessional occupations," such as a policeman, a hospital clerk in Muar, a provision shop proprietor, and the state religious teachers. Seven men were teachers; all but one taught in other

communities. Another seven men were landowners, owning more than fifteen acres. Still others were retired or unemployed, and a number of young men over sixteen were still in school.

The changes in occupational patterns were reflected in the rise in family incomes in the *kampungs*. Although no data is available on prewar incomes or earnings in the immediate postwar period, the villagers' comments and observations clearly indicated that household incomes had risen by the mid-1960s. In 1966 the median monthly Malay family income was between M\$61 and M\$100, about average for west coast Malays.⁷ In contrast, the median Chinese family income in Sungai Raya fell between M\$151 and M\$200.⁸

Landholdings and incomes in Sungai Raya showed a significant gap between poor and prosperous Malays and reflected the nationwide economic disparity among ethnic groups. Sixty percent of the Malay households owned at least two acres of land; 11 percent owned more than ten acres. Twenty-eight percent did not own any farm land. Excluding a school gardener who had won the national lottery twice, 11 percent of the families owned 50 percent of the Malay land.⁹ The median landholding per Malay family was two acres, one-third of the Chinese acreage in Sungai Raya. There was an equally evident income disparity among the Malays. The median monthly income of unskilled laborers was between M\$61 and M\$100; that of skilled laborers and white collar workers was M\$200. The male secular teachers, supplementing their salaries by teaching adult education classes or by investments, had a median income of M\$350 per month.

During the first two decades after World War II there was a significant rise in the Malays' consumer consciousness. In the mid-1960s elderly villagers often remarked that before the war there was very little that the Malays wanted to buy. During the postwar period, and especially after independence, the *kampung* residents became increasingly interested in consumer goods. Young mothers wanted canned baby food and some dreamed of owning a kerosene stove or an electric iron. The men who did not already own a transistor radio wanted to buy one so that they could listen to newscasts, Koran reading, and other religious programs. Some of the more affluent men aspired to own motorcycles, motor scooters, or automobiles.

The villagers' material possessions in 1966 clearly indicated a significant increase in the purchase of consumer goods after the war. Eighty percent of the 136 Malay households owned one or more bicycles, almost 60 percent had a sewing machine, and 35 percent had a radio in working order. Most luxury items were owned by teachers, the lottery winner, and a retired policeman. Seven families owned manual typewriters, six had television sets, six rode motor scooters or motorcycles, four owned electric refrigerators,

three drove automobiles, and two had tape recorders. The lottery winner and one teacher had purchased the 1965 edition of the *Encyclopedia Americana* for their children. Six teachers had built large new homes, each costing between M\$4,000 and M\$5,000. Three had large lawns cut with power mowers. Although a number of families purchased consumer items, expensive in terms of their incomes, only four families had water-sealed toilets.¹⁰ The rest of the Malay and Chinese families used a secluded hole in the ground some distance behind their houses.

In conclusion, the outbreak of World War II began a period of social and economic change in Sungai Raya which accelerated after the attainment of independence. Government programs to promote rural development and encourage support for UMNO raised the level of education in the *kampung*s, increased the villagers' exposure to the mass media, demonstrated UMNO's support for Islam, and improved the quality of life in the community. Government efforts to improve agricultural productivity raised household incomes and enabled the Malays to purchase a wide range of consumer goods. Social and economic improvements during the decade after 1957 laid the foundation for greater change and increased social mobility in the years to come.

Notes

1. Malaysia's rural development efforts during the first decade after independence are described in Gayl D. Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development in Malaysia: A Study of Complex Organizations in Stimulating Economic Development in New States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

2. Federation of Malaysia, Ministry of Education, *Education in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka, 1968) and Frances Wong Hoy Kee and Gwee Yee Hean, *Perspectives: The Development of Education in Malaysia and Singapore* (Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Educational Books, 1972).

3. Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development*, 201.

4. During the initial survey in Sungai Raya in 1966, literacy was measured by asking respondents to read aloud two simple statements on a card and to indicate which statement applied to them. In a comparable study of a Malay village about thirty miles southwest of Sungai Raya during 1959-1960, S. Husin Ali found that 75 percent of the household heads were literate. (*Social Stratification in Kampong Bagan: A Study of Class, Status, Conflict, and Mobility in a Rural Malay Community* [Singapore: Malaysian Branch, Royal Asiatic Society, 1964], 63). S. Husin Ali did not indicate how literacy was determined in his study.

5. Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development*, 136-39 and 176-85.

6. Florence A. Thompson reported a similar increase in the proportion of women working in a Malay village in Perak. (*Child Nutrition: A Survey in the Parit District of Perak, Federation of Malaya* [Bulletin No. 10, Institute of Medical Research] Kuala Lumpur: Federation of Malaya, The Government Press, 1960), 10.

7. See Ali, *Social Stratification in Kampong Bagan*, 73; E. K. Fisk, "Features of Rural Economy" in *The Political Economy of Independent Malaya*, edited by T. H. Silcock and E. K. Fisk (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 166-67; and Peter J. Wilson, *A Malay Village and Malaysia* (New Haven: HRAF Press, 1967), 80. In 1967 Professor Ungku Abdul Aziz, who was then chairman of the Department of Economics of the University of Malaya, estimated that the average rural Malay family's income was between M\$60 and M\$90 (Interview, January 1967).

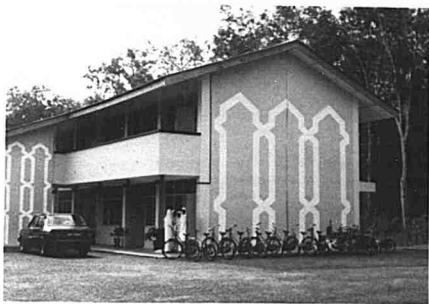
8. Surveys in the mid-1960s suggested that in Peninsular Malaysia, the mean income of non-Malays was twice that of Malays; that of the Chinese was 2.25 times as great. Donald R. Snodgrass, *The Fiscal System as an Income Redistributor in West Malaysia* (Cambridge: Economic Development Report No. 224, Development Research Group, Center of International Affairs, Harvard University, 1972), 5.

9. S. Husin found that 12 percent of the heads of households in Kampong Bagan owned 75 percent of the land. See S. Husin Ali, *Social Stratification in Kampong Bagan*, 36. Swift found a similar concentration of land ownership in Jelevu in the state of Negri Sembilan. See M.G. Smith, *Malay Peasant Society in Jelevu* (London: Athlone Press, 1965), 168-69. In the village Ong studied in Selangor, the Malay households owned an average of 3.5 acres. However, almost 24 percent of the families either owned no land or only a house lot. Only 27 percent of the households owned two to five acres, enough to sustain a family of six. Twelve percent of the families controlled 55 percent of the total acreage. Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 44.

10. A water-sealed toilet is made with a concrete or porcelain bowl set in the ground and connected to an air-tight septic tank, a covered hole.



The community hall (*balai raya*), built in 1968 in response to repeated requests by the local UMNO branch and the village development and security committee.



Part of the ten-room, state-supported afternoon religious school in Sungai Raya.



One of the most popular places for men to gather to chat is in front of a provision shop in the main village.



The village headman's house.



A typical Malay village house, built off the ground with a corrugated iron roof. Badminton is very popular with young Malaysians.



Men cooking rice in preparation for a wedding feast.



A typical rural Chinese house.



A well-to-do Chinese school teacher's home in Sungai Raya.



Malaysian children on their way home from school. Malay, Chinese, and Indian youngsters attend the Malay-medium elementary schools in Sungai Raya and neighboring Bukit Pasir.



Malay girls on their way to the state-supported afternoon religious school in Sungai Raya.



Malay boys riding past a surau (prayer house) on their way to afternoon religious classes. The sign gives the name of the local UMNO branch.



Part of the government's big health center in neighboring Bukit Pasir. The center, which has a resident physician, provides an impressive range of medical services for the residents of Bukit Pasir and villagers in Sungai Raya and surrounding villages.

Political Awakening

The social and economic changes in Sungai Raya during the first two decades after the war were paralleled by even more dramatic political developments. As in *kampungs* throughout the peninsula, the political awakening which began under the Japanese increased in the immediate postwar period and accelerated after independence. During these two decades the villagers became more acutely aware of their communal identity, their political perceptions and loyalties changed, the criteria for exercising leadership in the community increased, and new men became community leaders. After independence the roles and responsibilities of the village headman expanded, the community established new ties with the government, the Malays' perceptions of the government changed, and the *kampung* residents began to participate in the political process.

Rising Communal Concerns

Between the onset of the Japanese occupation in 1942 and the attainment of independence in 1957, a number of developments increased the Sungai Raya villagers' sense of ethnic identity and communal concern. The most significant were the deterioration of Malay-Chinese relations during the war, the eruption of intercommunal violence in the immediate postwar period, the mobilization of Malay opposition to Britain's initial efforts to establish a unified government throughout the peninsula, and the outbreak of the communist insurrection in 1948.

The Japanese occupation was a traumatic experience which intensified communal antagonism. The comfortable life which Malays had previously enjoyed ended abruptly; everyone was forced to work in order to survive. Very few children went to school because most had to look after younger siblings or help their parents raise tapioca or yams. When asked about the war in 1966, villagers invariably mentioned the shortage of food, especially rice, the staple of their diet. About half the Malay families in Sungai Raya

moved elsewhere in search of work or more fertile areas for raising food. The villagers' failure to maintain the drainage canals caused considerable flooding, which destroyed many rubber and fruit trees. In order to survive, some Malays in Sungai Raya sold land to Chinese; others even sold the metal roofing of their homes. Chinese informants in 1966 noted that a few desperate Malays stole from the Chinese. Severe inflation, plus an acute shortage of textiles and other basic necessities, compounded the hardships endured by the villagers. By 1945 few families possessed even one complete set of clothes.

The Chinese suffered even more than the Malays during this period.¹ The Japanese invasion of China in the late 1930s had aroused the patriotism of the Chinese in Malaya. In Sungai Raya and Bukit Pasir they sent money to China to support the Kuomintang government, and a few young men even went to China to serve in the army. When the Japanese invaded northern Malaya early in 1942, a number of young Chinese in Bukit Pasir and Muar joined an anti-Japanese movement. In Muar District, as elsewhere in the peninsula, the Japanese killed hundreds of Chinese who they felt were communists or Kuomintang agents. About forty Chinese were massacred three miles from Sungai Raya. Several days before the Japanese army reached Sungai Raya and Bukit Pasir, many of the Chinese fled a few miles into the interior. During the occupation most of them lived as squatters at the edge of the jungle, raising vegetables and tuberous roots. Some sold their land in order to buy food, pay taxes, or pay the tribute that the Japanese levied on the Chinese community in Malaya.

Before the war Malays and Chinese in Sungai Raya maintained superficially harmonious relations because the Chinese provided convenient economic services and were not perceived as a threat to the Malays' privileged position under British rule. During the Japanese occupation the disruption of society and the competition between Malays and Chinese for necessities aroused bitterness and distrust. Wartime deprivation and insecurity intensified the villagers' sense of ethnic identity, increased their concern regarding the Malays' adverse economic position, and aroused their initial interest in politics. This political awakening was accelerated by disillusionment stemming from Britain's failure to protect the Malays from the Japanese, surprise at the speed and apparent ease with which the British were humiliatingly defeated, anger caused by the arrogance and brutality of the invaders, and anxiety aroused by the existence of Chinese communist guerrillas in the nearby jungle. One Malay informant, for example, recalled the panic she experienced during the occupation when a truckload of Japanese troops searching for Chinese guerrillas stopped in front of her house. Some local Chinese support of the guerrillas troubled a few men in Sungai Raya. They began to realize for the first time the potential political power of the Chinese community.²

In the wake of the traumatic Japanese occupation, the villagers' ideas and attitudes began to change. In the mid-1960s the more sophisticated Malays in Sungai Raya said that the Malays "woke up" after the war. Quoting a Malay proverb about a frog that lived contentedly under a coconut shell, they explained that once the frog came out from under the shell and looked at the world about him, he could never return to his shell. The *kampung* residents insisted that before the war they had been unaware of the socioeconomic changes taking place around them. Forced by the cataclysmic events of the war to confront reality, the Malays, like the frog, were no longer contented with their traditional way of life.

Before the war most villagers were unaware of the growing income disparity between the Malay and Chinese communities. The struggle for survival during the war aroused the Malays' concern about their adverse economic position and stimulated an unprecedented desire for economic advancement. After the war the Malay press and aspiring politicians repeatedly stressed that the Malays were "backward" and that they could not compete with the Chinese because the British had coddled them before the war and retarded their development. Villagers in Sungai Raya soon realized they lacked the education, experience, and capital to compete in the changing postwar world. Many recognized the need to improve the education of *kampung* youth. Some acknowledged that certain traditional Malay beliefs and values had retarded the Malays' development and that these would have to be modified if the villagers were to advance.

Communalism increased significantly during the brief interregnum between Japanese capitulation and reestablishment of effective British rule. During the period between Japan's surrender on 15 August 1945 and the arrival of Lord Mountbatten's troops in Singapore on 5 September, about 7,000 Chinese communist guerrillas emerged from the jungle and established control over parts of the peninsula.³ The Malay police force, which the Japanese had used to suppress Chinese guerrillas, was demoralized and unable to maintain law and order. For about three months the communists terrorized both Malays and Chinese in the regions where the guerrillas exercised power. Local People's Councils, established by the guerrillas, began a "Dog Extermination Campaign," in which many individuals, chiefly Malays, were killed for allegedly collaborating with the Japanese or committing "crimes against the people."⁴ Violence and acts of religious desecration provoked Malay retaliation against the Chinese in some rural areas. In several states Malays indiscriminately murdered Chinese men, women, and children. In Batu Pahat District, a few miles from Sungai Raya, Penghulu Salleh stirred Malay religious and political sentiment to a rage and led his followers on several massacres of Chinese villagers. Only swift action by the British and some responsible Malay leaders, such as Dato Onn bin Ja'afar, the district officer, prevented a communal civil war.

In Sungai Raya during the interregnum, local events aggravated communal tension. Following Japan's surrender, members of the communist-led Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) marched into Bukit Pasir. A Chinese observer recalled in 1966, "As they marched they sang the Chinese communist national anthem, and most of the Chinese welcomed them." The guerrillas killed several Chinese who they considered had been "running dogs" (spies, collaborators, or sympathizers) of the Japanese. Although there were no fatalities in Sungai Raya, both Malays and Chinese were murdered in nearby *kampungs*.⁵

The political significance of the unprecedented intercommunal strife in late 1945 is generally ignored in the literature on Malaysian politics. Although detailed facts regarding the killings by Chinese and Malays are unobtainable, the effect on national and local politics cannot be overemphasized. The horrors of those few weeks awakened moderate leaders of the Malay and Chinese communities to the importance of intercommunal cooperation and helped to prepare the way for the multiethnic Alliance government established in the mid-1950s. The political impact of the violence was less the result of what actually occurred than the consequence of what people thought happened at the time. Throughout Peninsular Malaysia the guerrillas' attempt to seize power and their deliberate assault upon Islam were regarded as a threat to the Malays' political future.⁶ These events were perceived as outrageous and shattered the political apathy of many men in Sungai Raya. They and countless other villagers began to believe that political power was the only means of preserving Malaya as a Malay country.

Communal concerns were further aroused in Sungai Raya as a result of the nationwide Malay response to Britain's immediate postwar policies. Determined to replace Malaya's fragmented political system with a more efficient centralized administration, in October 1945 the British announced plans to merge the nine Malay states and the two Straits Settlements of Penang and Malacca into a unitary Malayan Union which would exclude the predominantly Chinese Straits Settlement of Singapore.⁷ The proposed Union had been planned by the Colonial Office in London while most British experts on Malaya were in Japanese concentration camps. The plans rejected Britain's prewar conception of the Malay rulers (sultans) as the embodiment of sovereignty and the Malays as a privileged indigenous community in favor of a system of equal rights for all ethnic groups under a colonial regime headed toward self-government.⁸ The sultans were to surrender their nominal sovereignty; a common citizenship was to be established under which the immigrant Chinese and Indian communities might eventually gain control of the government. In late 1945 Sir Harold MacMichael, a special British envoy, compelled the sultans to sign treaties agreeing to Britain's exercise of full power and jurisdiction in their states.

The Malays' immediate, nationwide reaction astonished the British. Leaders of the Malay community were outraged that the sultans had been stripped of their traditional powers, including their authority as heads of the Islamic faith in their states. Malays feared that the "prolific" Chinese would acquire political supremacy and jeopardize the Malays' traditional rights as the indigenous community. A sense of insecurity aroused and united Malays of all classes and stimulated an unprecedented rise in Malay nationalism. Within weeks after the signing of the MacMichael Treaties, prewar Malay associations were revived and others were established. One of the most important was the Peninsular Malay Movement of Johore, organized in January 1946 by Dato Onn, the district officer of Batu Pahat. On 1 March 1946 representatives from forty-one Malay associations met in Kuala Lumpur to consider formation of a central organization to unify their opposition to the Malayan Union and to prevent what Dato Onn termed "the ignominy of racial extinction."⁹ Dato Onn's firm stand against the MacMichael Treaties and his deep conviction that Malaya belonged to the Malays led to his unanimous election as president of a Pan-Malayan Malay Congress, the first nationwide Malay nationalist movement. On 11 May 1946, the Congress was reconstituted as the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) with Dato Onn as president. The party's new name was intended to indicate that the Malays were not only a race but also a nation.

Malay nationalism, aroused by fear of the economic power of the immigrant communities, was seeking to restore the prewar pro-Malay pattern of government administration and policy. UMNO's initial support was drawn largely from the Malay aristocracy and from bureaucratic and intellectual circles. Soon after the party was organized, UMNO leaders began to transform the traditional power structure of Malay society into a mass political party.¹⁰ Malay government leaders used the administrative structure of the Malay states to politically mobilize Malays working in the district offices, and they, in turn, worked with the *penghulus* to recruit and propagandize for UMNO in the *kampungs*. Dato Onn traveled throughout the peninsula, organizing mass support for UMNO and for its rejection of the Union. Malays were urged to rally behind the sultans, who had been duped and denied their rights, and were told that the proposed citizenship rules would endanger Malay culture and identity.

UMNO's efforts to arouse mass opposition against the Malayan Union prompted a communal response in Sungai Raya. An increasing number of men began to identify with Malays throughout the peninsula and to worry about the future of their religion and the sultans. Early in 1946 a few men joined the local branch of the Peninsular Malay Movement of Johore in neighboring Bukit Pasir. In an unprecedented move in May 1946, a dozen men from Sungai Raya participated in an UMNO demonstration in Muar, one of a series throughout the country designed to impress a two-man

British Royal Commission studying Malay opposition to the Union. L. D. Gammons, who had lived in Malaya for fourteen years before the war, later told the House of Commons that he would not have believed the extent of Malay opposition to the MacMichael Treaties had he not seen it himself. He reported that "at, literally, every village" he encountered banners across the road with the slogans "Down with the MacMichael Treaties" and "Up with the Malays" and that in the towns he confronted demonstrations of 5,000 to 10,000 people.¹¹

Communal consciousness and antagonism in Sungai Raya were further exacerbated by a communist insurrection, which erupted in June 1948 and cost 11,000 lives. This occurred four months after the aborted Malayan Union had been replaced by the Federation of Malaya, reestablishing the Malays' prewar position as the privileged indigenous community.¹² The rebellion, known as the Emergency, was crushed in 1955 and ended officially in 1960. Largely led and financed by Chinese, it amounted to a communal war between Chinese guerrillas on the one hand and Malay policemen and soldiers supported by British and Commonwealth troops on the other. In Sungai Raya a few men who had joined the Special Constabulary, formed within weeks after the Emergency was declared, served for several years in different states as guards and auxiliary policemen. This experience greatly increased their political awareness and communal concerns.

During the height of the Emergency, social and religious life in Sungai Raya was disrupted by the government's counterinsurgency measures. In about 1952 Chinese and Malays living in the more isolated areas were resettled near the highway running through Sungai Raya or in Bukit Pasir.¹³ Bukit Pasir was surrounded by a double barbed-wire fence patrolled by armed guards. Everyone entering or leaving the town was checked at one of the two gates. Food was rationed; rice and other basic commodities were sold only on designated days of the week. The Malays' social and religious life was disrupted by a curfew imposed upon the Sungai Raya area from about 1952 to 1956. At one time the curfew extended from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Men could not pray in the mosque at night nor could they gather in the mosque and *suraus* to converse with friends. Furthermore, the neighborhood *tahlil* groups could not meet on Thursday evenings to chant praises to God.

Malays in Sungai Raya considered the Emergency an essentially Chinese revolt supported by most Chinese in Malaya. Many saw it as a direct threat to the Malays' privileged position. The rebellion not only increased communal cleavages, it aroused a lasting distrust of Chinese political loyalties. The upheaval reinforced the Malays' belief that the primary loyalty of the Chinese was to their own communal group rather than to the nation. After the insurrection Malays felt they could not trust the Chinese, regardless of what the latter did or said.

Achievement of independence (*merdeka*) in 1957 further increased communal expectations in Sungai Raya. The villagers, like hundreds of thousands of other Malays, had felt a deep emotional desire for *merdeka*. Independence under Malay leadership was perceived to guarantee perpetuation of the Malays' special rights and privileges: preservation of the sultanates; designation of Islam as the state religion and Malay as the national language; retention of reservations in which land ownership would be restricted to Malays; and continuation of preferential quotas for Malays in recruitment for the public services, allocation of scholarships, and issuance of business permits and licenses.¹⁴ Furthermore, many men believed that independence would result in a significant rise in the Malays' standard of living.

Although the appeal of *merdeka* was essentially communal rather than political, attainment of independence had a marked effect upon Sungai Raya's leaders. They realized that politics, especially the activities of UMNO, had dissolved the Malayan Union, preserved the Malays' special privileges, and achieved independence under Malay leadership. When the Malays regained control of their country, these leaders ceased to feel that they were inferior, oppressed, and held in low esteem by foreigners. In 1966 an UMNO branch officer explained, "When independence was declared, I felt proud. . . . We were no longer second-class people, we were first class." Another *kampung* leader discussing *merdeka* observed, "Every person has the right to independence and self-rule. . . . I was proud because the country had begun to have self-government and this meant that our race gained its sovereignty and was equal to the other races of the world."

The growth of communal concerns increased the saliency of politics in Sungai Raya. In 1966 both men and women perceived only two possible types of government in Malaysia: a Malay-dominated government favoring Malays or a Chinese-led regime primarily concerned with Chinese welfare. Villagers contended that if the Chinese ruled, Malays would be threatened. As a young rubber tapper put it, "We have a king to rule in peace and safeguard our arts. The Malay language would disappear if the Chinese were to rule, and our culture would be destroyed." The communal concerns and fears underlying Malayan politics were voiced by an older woman: "We wouldn't want the Chinese to rule. What's the use of staying under the Chinese? It would be a Chinese country then. . . . It would be difficult to live if the Chinese were ruling; we would be humiliated. . . . Malays would be even poorer; the Chinese would be richer." Men and more politically aware women believed that if Malaysia was to remain a Malay country, Malays must dominate the government and bureaucracy, the government must safeguard and preserve the sultanates, Islam must remain the state religion, and Malay must become the sole official language.

Changing Political Perceptions and Loyalties

During the first two decades after the war, the villagers' perception of their personal identity and sense of political loyalty changed because of their rising communal concerns, their increasing exposure to the mass media, the formation of Malay political parties, and the attainment of independence under a Malay-dominated government. Before the war most of the villagers thought of themselves as subjects of the Sultan of Johore. Few had a strong sense of identity with other Malays throughout the peninsula. By 1966 all perceived themselves as members of the Malay race, living in *Tanah Melayu* (the Malays' Homeland) and sharing a common identity with other Malays who adhered to their religion, spoke their language, and followed their culture. Whereas earlier they had thought of themselves as the Sultan of Johore's "children," a decade after independence their political loyalty was to the nation's king and the Malay-dominated government in Kuala Lumpur. One Malay of Javanese descent, expressing the sentiments of many *kampung* residents, said, "This is our country; we have no place to go. The Chinese can always go back to China." The villagers believed that Malays should dominate the government and that Malay interests should be safeguarded by special religious, political, and economic privileges. The villagers' concept of their communal identity included Muslims in Indonesia to some degree, but excluded Malaysians of Chinese and Indian descent because they were non-Muslims with different customs and values. The Malays' ultimate loyalty was to the ethnoreligious community rather than to the nation.

New Criteria for Community Leadership

After the war the criteria for leadership in Sungai Raya changed significantly as the villagers' level of education and exposure to the mass media rose, their contact with modern sectors of society expanded, UMNO's mobilization of mass support increased, and the government's penetration of the *kampungs* deepened. Before the war the primary requisites for status and influence in Sungai Raya were age, kinship, piety, and knowledge of Islam. The three key leaders were the *imam*, who led the congregation in the mosque, the *muezzin* (*bilal*) who called the faithful to prayers, and the *ketua kampung*. In the mid-1960s elderly informants contended that before the war the headman's requests and advice were never questioned. Although he was the villagers' link with the government, he reportedly had less status and influence than the two religious leaders. His position reflected the great importance that the Malays attached to their religion, the villagers' lack of

involvement in developments outside the community, and the government's limited penetration into the *kampung*s.

After the war, especially during the decade after independence, community leadership in Sungai Raya was based upon a combination of traditional and modern criteria of influence. The *kampung* residents still expected leaders to exemplify piety, to perpetuate Malay customs (*adat*), to participate in traditional religious and social events, and to maintain social harmony. The criteria for leadership were more demanding, however, and included sufficient education, experience, and diligence to lead the community in a rapidly changing world. As the *kampung* leaders were called upon to perform new administrative and political roles beyond the ability of older villagers, age declined in importance as a basis of status. During the decade after independence, younger men of intelligence, industry, and decorum exercised far more leadership than before the war.¹⁵ Status, however, did not assure influence or leadership in the community. One teacher, for example, whose father had been a *kampung* teacher, had been educated in English-medium schools before the war. Although accorded status due to his education and high salary, he had virtually no influence because he was a newcomer. He remained aloof from other residents and shared few of their concerns.

New Community Leaders

After the war many of the teachers in the expanding *kampung* schools became community leaders. In villages throughout the country, teachers possessed the education, experience, contacts, and motivation to organize and lead the socioeconomic and political organizations established in the postwar era. In most cases those in Sungai Raya were newcomers who had settled there because of marriage ties or because of its proximity to Muar. Teachers enjoyed considerable status and respect because of their education and income, because of their understanding of the intricacies of modern bureaucracy, and because of their ability to deal with the nonresident urban elite. Moreover, their occupation required no manual labor and their comparatively high salaries enabled them to imitate the lifestyle of middle-class, urban Malays, thereby enhancing their social prominence. However, teachers and minor civil servants exercised influence only if they retained the villagers' basic values and interests.¹⁶ In Sungai Raya, as elsewhere, teachers exerted great influence on the postwar politicization of the community. Being the most nationalistic men in the villages, they helped organize the local branches of the political party, mobilized electoral support, and stimulated the villagers' increasing political involvement.

In the mid-1960s former members of the police and armed forces also began to assume positions of leadership in Sungai Raya. They, like the teachers, were part of the new rural elite. Many Malays retired from the police, military, and lower ranks of the civil service in their mid-forties. Although they had worked for years in cities, upon retirement they usually preferred to live in their home villages or their wife's *kampung*, where they could care for parents and enjoy the solitude of rural life. Because of their above-average level of education and income, and their familiarity with modern ways, some of these men exerted considerable influence in the *kampungs*.

During the first two decades of the postwar period, the organization of local UMNO branches was the most important factor encouraging men to assume new positions of leadership in their *kampungs*. The first UMNO branch in the Sungai Raya area was established in 1953 in an adjoining subdistrict by a former teacher and ex-soldier, assisted by several teachers and a young shopkeeper from Sungai Raya. A few months before the national election in 1959, the most active UMNO members in Sungai Raya organized their own local branch. These party stalwarts were led by the young shopkeeper, the son of the prewar muezzin. Three teachers, the incumbent *bilal*, and several friends worked with him. The *ketua kampung* and *imam*, who had been active in the earlier organization of the subdistrict party organization, did not participate in the establishment of the Sungai Raya branch because of their advanced age. The leader of the branch was a key figure in the subdistrict organization, as well as an active supporter of religious and social activities in the community.

Three years later the UMNO chairman in Sungai Raya was appointed village headman. At that time the state sought to accelerate rural development by replacing most *ketua kampungs* with more progressive individuals. A deliberate effort was made to appoint only active UMNO supporters. In Sungai Raya the septuagenarian headman did not ask to be reappointed, and the local state assemblyman personally asked the chairman of the Sungai Raya UMNO branch to apply for the position. Once the branch leader had submitted his name, no one else applied. He was a logical choice for *ketua kampung*. His relatives included teachers and key leaders in religious, social, and political activities. He was pious, reserved, conservative, methodical, unaggressive, and a good public speaker. He had completed five years of Malay primary school and the six-year afternoon course in religious instruction. In addition to owning and operating a small shop selling newspapers, radios, and ready-made shirts in Bukit Pasir, he worked in adult education, teaching Malay to Chinese in the area.

The new *ketua kampung* was a member of an administrative hierarchy which extended from the federal and state capitals through the districts and subdistricts (*mukims*) to the villages. Under the jurisdiction of a district

officer, the districts were the smallest administrative unit with significant bureaucratic activity. The eight districts in Johore were divided into *mukims*, led by *penghulus*. Originally the *penghulus* had been quasi-independent representatives of the sultan in the *mukims*, but after the war they were absorbed into the state's administrative bureaucracy.¹⁷ They became the district officer's salaried assistants in the administration of an increasing array of policies and programs designed to raise the standard of living in the rural areas. The *penghulu's* major communications link with the villagers became the *ketua kampung*, who was responsible for one or more *kampungs*, depending upon their size and proximity to each other. Whereas the *penghulus* were incorporated into the state bureaucracy after the war, the *ketua kampungs* continued to serve as honorary community leaders. Their position imposed endless demands upon their time and energy, for which they received a very small allowance. The new *ketua kampung* of Sungai Raya was one of seven village headmen in the two *mukims* under the *penghulu's* jurisdiction.

Although the *ketua kampung's* position in the traditional administrative hierarchy accorded him considerable status, he had little formal authority and no coercive sanctions. He did not rule; the villagers ruled themselves by adhering to their customs, especially those governing human relationships.¹⁸ Although better educated, the incumbent *ketua kampung* actually exercised less influence than his predecessor. One elderly informant observed that before the war if the *ketua kampung* had tried to organize the villagers to perform a job such as clearing the drainage canals, a hundred men would have appeared. In 1966, the informant noted sadly, only three or four would assist him. Although the villager exaggerated, by then the men were far more inclined to question the actions and ideas of the *ketua kampung*. He was normally able to enlist only his friends in support of *kampung* activities.¹⁹ Before the war the headman was one of the few literate villagers; in 1966 many of the *ketua kampung's* peers had a comparable or superior education. The fact that a number were wealthier than he lessened his prestige. Furthermore, his comparative youth (thirty-seven years) did not enhance his status with older men.

Expanding the Headman's Responsibilities

The new *ketua kampung's* responsibilities were quickly expanded as the federal and state governments sought to penetrate further into the *kampungs*, to mobilize the Malays' participation in rural development efforts, and to increase support for UMNO and the government. A few months after the headman was appointed by the *Menteri Besar* (the state's chief minister), the scope of the *ketua kampung's* responsibilities was increased by the estab-

lishment of a village development committee (*Jawatankuasa Kemajuan Kampung*) as part of the federal government's efforts to increase the Malays' political support and to raise their standard of living. The committee was part of a hierarchy extending from the Ministry of Rural Development through state and district development committees to the *kampungs*.²⁰ In 1975, these *kampung* organizations were renamed village development and security committees.

The development committees were expected to encourage villagers to formulate requests for government assistance, to plan and initiate community self-help projects on the basis of mutual cooperation, to urge villagers to make maximum use of their land, and to increase awareness of government concern for Malay welfare.²¹ The committee received a large bulletin board stating the Ministry of Rural Development's basic goals, with instructions to list thereon the community's own development goals and its progress in achieving them.

Formation of the committee in Sungai Raya demonstrated the headman's numerous roles in the community, the lack of differentiation in leadership responsibilities, and the ways in which administration and politics were interrelated at the local level. The *ketua kampung*, as chairman, appointed eight Malays and one Chinese to be committee members. As in most *kampungs*, the committee in Sungai Raya included members of the local UMNO branch's executive committee. The selection of UMNO leaders as committee members reflected their level of education and concern about the Malays' socioeconomic advancement, their personal ties with the *ketua kampung*, and the chairman's recognition that politics and rural development were intertwined.

The government's efforts to promote rural development increased the headman's responsibilities but did not significantly strengthen his influence. Assigned more and more developmental duties, he increasingly became a representative of the bureaucracy, a change which undermined his traditional role as spokesman for the community. However, he exercised no control over the expenditure of government money. Allocation of public works projects and developmental funds was made by the district rural development committee or by higher authorities.²² Thus, in contrast to the situation in some Third World societies, such as the Philippines, efforts to hasten rural development did not give the headman control over any material resources or other forms of patronage that could be used to increase his influence, repay favors, build a base of support, or mobilize the community.

The headman's performance of his leadership roles was profoundly affected by the dramatic change in his delegated responsibilities. When the government accelerated its rural development activities in the early 1960s, the *ketua kampung's* duties were increased to include active promotion of

socioeconomic change and development in the *kampungs*. Despite his best intentions, the *ketua kampung* in Sungai Raya could not cope with all the tasks assigned him. Attendance at a two-week leadership course could not have trained him sufficiently to lead the development committee, whose roles included planning and implementing self-help projects in all fields of *kampung* development, arousing the villagers' initiative and self-confidence to undertake activities which would increase their incomes, and persuading the Malays to adopt a more progressive way of life.²³

The *ketua kampung* and most villagers shared a common perception of the headman's role in the community. He saw himself as a communications link between the villagers and the government, but not essentially as an agent of change. Most residents in Sungai Raya considered the *ketua kampung's* principal duties to be those of communicating with higher authorities and mediating within the *kampungs*. The preservation of social harmony in the villages was his fundamental responsibility. Malays in Sungai Raya expected a *ketua kampung* to exemplify good manners and patience, to be just, trustworthy, and sensitive to the feelings of others. He must work hard and speak well in public; he must care about the welfare of individuals, the development of the *kampungs*, and the reputation of the community. He was expected to serve as the *penghulu's* representative, to appeal to the government on behalf of individuals, to assist villagers with personal problems, to solve minor disputes in the community, and to serve as a symbol of village unity. One informant observed in 1966 that a headman "must have ability, education, and experience in worldly matters, and he must have many friends who held high posts."

Although the Malays referred to the headman as the "leader," if the *ketua kampung* had tried to lead rather than merely to communicate and mediate, many villagers would have rejected any new activity or project he might initiate, especially if it did not involve immediate benefits for themselves or their families. Some would have felt that he was proud or offensively aggressive, while others would have resented not being consulted in planning the undertaking. Even if successful, his efforts would probably have aroused jealousy and resentment.

The *ketua kampung* was caught in the dilemma which arises when external authorities expand the role of traditional leaders to include new responsibilities that are not understood or accepted by the community. As the government increased its efforts to accelerate rural development, the headman's performance was judged by two different criteria. The villagers expected him to perform the traditional roles of maintaining harmony and communicating with higher authorities, as well as the new, post-independence role of securing assistance for the *kampungs*. The bureaucracy, on the other hand, expected him to mobilize community participation in efforts to encourage social change and economic growth.

Without adequate authority, training, and patronage, the *ketua kampung* also lacked sufficient motivation to perform effectively his numerous responsibilities.²⁴ The necessity of earning a livelihood conflicted with the performance of his many designated duties. In 1966 he received an allowance of only M\$180 per year, about one-fifth the median annual income of Malay families in Sungai Raya. Yet the time-consuming demands of his position had forced him to close a small shop he had operated before being appointed *ketua kampung*. Without adequate remuneration, regardless of training and motivation, he could work only part-time as leader of the community.

Establishing New Ties with the Government

Whereas before the war the *ketua kampung* was the villagers' only direct link with the government, after independence other connections developed which tied the community more closely to the state and federal governments. The *kampung* UMNO stalwarts organized a local party branch, the state assemblyman promoted patron-client ties with his constituents in Sungai Raya, and the *ketua kampung* formed a village development committee as part of the federal government's efforts to encourage rural development. The establishment of these new ties increased the *kampung* residents' involvement in national politics, changed their perceptions and expectations of the governments, and accelerated the pace of socioeconomic change in the community.

The local UMNO branch, as noted earlier, was organized in Sungai Raya in late 1958 or early 1959, months before the first national election after independence. Eight years later several respondents explained that the organization was established because other *kampungs* in the subdistrict had begun setting up their own branches, because the villagers in Sungai Raya were dissatisfied with the leadership of the *mukim* branch (centered in a large village five miles away), and because the *kampung* residents wanted to strengthen their ties with the UMNO leaders in Muar District.²⁵ The organizational meeting was held in neighboring Bukit Pasir and was attended by several key members of the Muar UMNO division, including Haji Othman bin Haji Mohd. Sa'at, a member of a prominent Malay family who lived three miles from Sungai Raya and was a representative to the state legislature from a constituency in southern Johore. These local party dignitaries were invited in order to enlist support for the new branch. The Malays believed that inviting prominent speakers to a meeting would induce a sense of commitment to purposes of the gathering among those present.²⁶ Years later, one of the participants at the organizational meeting recalled:

After the leaders had given the necessary information in their speeches about UMNO's struggle, explaining how important it was for UMNO to be strong, and how essential it was for the Malays to unite in UMNO, the leaders of the local UMNO branch were elected in accordance with the program of the meeting.

Initially the local party branch had between twenty and thirty members. The membership encompassed Malays living in Bukit Pasir, a village just west of the town, and the three *kampungs* in Sungai Raya. Years later as the membership grew, the members in Bukit Pasir and the village west of it established their own branches, and the local organization changed its name to UMNO Sungai Raya.

Establishment of the local UMNO branch in Sungai Raya created links between the *kampung* political leaders and officers of the Muar division of UMNO and enabled villagers to attend political meetings and courses in town. The local organization provided a channel through which the national party could communicate with the *kampung* residents and through which the villagers could request governmental assistance. Furthermore, formation of the branch drew together the politically concerned men in the *kampungs*, affording them opportunities to engage in politics between elections and to mobilize electoral support for Malay communal concerns. The character and extent of the branch activities were influenced by the political stability of the area. UMNO had been invincible in Johore since its founding in 1946. The multiethnic Alliance Party had won every election in the state and parliamentary constituencies encompassing Sungai Raya.

Interest in politics fell off in Sungai Raya after the 1959 election, and membership in the local UMNO branch grew slowly. Given the villagers' very low level of political awareness at the time and UMNO's overwhelming support in the area, the branch leaders did not make a major effort to persuade neighbors to join the party. In 1966 the branch in Sungai Raya was one of 2,500 local branches throughout the Malay Peninsula. At that time nearly three-fourths of the men aged twenty-one and above were members, paying M\$1 per year. They explained that they had joined UMNO because they felt it was the Malays' party, because they wanted to strengthen Malay political power, or because they liked UMNO's policies. In contrast, only 10 percent of the women aged twenty-one or older were party members, a reflection of their low level of literacy, limited exposure to the news media, and political apathy.

In the mid-1960s the Malays in Sungai Raya regarded the local UMNO branch as an organization which sustained party allegiance, mobilized electoral support, and secured governmental assistance. The leaders were respected as among the most knowledgeable and progressive men in the community. The key branch leaders were elected because of their status in

the *kampungs*, participation in religious and social activities, interest in politics, superior education, and presumed ability and willingness to work for the local organization. The officers were primarily spokesmen for the villagers rather than representatives of the party or the local state assemblyman.

In 1966 the UMNO branch was led by about ten men; half were members of the annually elected branch executive committee, and all worked to mobilize electoral support before national elections.²⁷ In Sungai Raya, as in nearly all *kampungs* in the area, the *ketua kampung* was also the branch chairman and the key political leader in the community. He embodied the merging of political and administrative responsibilities at the *kampung* level and was the community's link with both the UMNO leaders in town and the administrators in the district office. The chairman was assisted by about nine others, including his older brother (recently retired from the police), four teachers, two rubber tappers, a landowner, and an elderly villager who had served briefly as *penghulu* in another *mukim* and had worked for years as a clerk in Muar. With one exception, these men were active in the traditional social and religious life of the community. Most were between thirty and forty-five years of age. Their median landholding was eight acres, nearly three times that of Malay families in Sungai Raya. The median monthly family income was M\$251-M\$300, while that of the average Malay household was M\$61-M\$100. Three-fourths of these leaders discussed politics at least weekly in contrast to a tenth of the other men. All read a newspaper at least three or four times a week, while one-third of the other men did so. Better educated and politically informed, they were more conscious than most villagers of the crucial role that UMNO had played in attaining independence, in achieving Malay rule, and in promoting rural development. Imbued with a strong sense of nationalism, they aspired to raise the Malays' standard of living and sought to preserve the special privileges of the indigenous community. Distressed by the Chinese domination of commerce, more than one local leader expressed concern that the Malays might be overwhelmed "as the Red Indians in America were," an analogy common in the Malay press.

The local UMNO leaders' sense of political efficacy was significantly higher than that of most men in Sungai Raya.²⁸ They believed that they, with other villagers, could persuade the government to provide assistance for the community, especially if their requests fell within the government's rural development programs. In contrast, only a few other men thought the villagers could exert much influence. The leaders had the skills and self-confidence to organize branch meetings and campaign rallies. As persons of some means they could afford the time to attend political meetings and courses in town. Furthermore, social pressure obliged some of them to take an active role in the local party organization.

The branch officers and a few other politically active men were involved in a number of political activities, ranging from leadership of their own meetings to attendance at division meetings and even national UMNO gatherings in Kuala Lumpur. Each year the key branch leaders met periodically to discuss memoranda and directives received from the Muar division of UMNO, to plan local annual meetings, or to draft requests for governmental assistance, which they forwarded to the Muar division headquarters. In 1966, for example, the branch executive committee submitted a formal request asking that the government install electricity and piped water in the two small villages in Sungai Raya, expand the English-medium primary school, and build a midwife clinic in Bukit Pasir. It asked the government to renovate the *suraus* in Kampung Parit Masjid and Bukit Pasir and to improve the drainage canal in Kampung Parit Masjid. Reflecting the concerns of parents and *kampung* teachers, the branch also called for standardization of school texts.

That same year branch leaders participated in four meetings of the Muar UMNO division; several men attended the UMNO twentieth anniversary celebrations in the capital, 120 miles to the north, and another went to Independence Day celebrations at the home of the state's chief executive 110 miles to the south. During the year several Sungai Raya leaders went to Muar to attend one-day UMNO courses taught by national party leaders. Among the topics discussed were the First Malaysian Development Plan, Indonesia's confrontation with Malaysia, Singapore's withdrawal from Malaysia, recruitment of party members, collection of membership dues, and "the future of the Malays." Attendance of *kampung* leaders at such gatherings increased their political sophistication, quickened their interest in politics, and strengthened their sense of identification with UMNO and key party leaders.

Attendance at UMNO meetings in town also enabled the *kampung* political elite to communicate with state and national party leaders. In 1966, for example, the *ketua kampung* and several other village leaders went to four division-level meetings in Muar. These were attended by delegates from the division's seventy-three branches, the state assemblymen and the member of Parliament from the division, the *Menteri Besar*, and one or two federal cabinet members or national UMNO officials. Delegates often adopted resolutions which provided the national leadership with important indicators of local aspirations, opinions, and concerns. Occasionally the motions reminded Alliance leaders of the gulf existing between them and UMNO branch leaders, upon whom they depended for mobilization of most of the Alliance electoral support. During one meeting, for example, the secretary general of UMNO explained that the Alliance Party had decided to accept individual members, so that Sri Lankans (Ceylonese), Eurasians, and others who could not belong to one of the three component organizations

of the Alliance might join the party. Despite his assurance that this policy would not undermine UMNO's dominance in the Alliance, the branch representatives passed a motion opposing the new membership plan after the secretary general's departure.

The introduction of elections to choose representatives to the state legislatures and federal parliament established another important tie between the villagers and the government. After independence, especially after the Alliance government launched its rural development program in October 1959, the state representatives used development funds to establish patron-client ties with their constituents. In 1959 Haji Othman bin Haji Mohd. Sa'at was elected state assemblyman from the Sungai Raya area. A descendent of Bugis immigrants from Indonesia, the thirty-one-year-old politician had been elected unopposed to the state legislative assembly from another constituency in 1954. He lived in a large, two-story, traditional Malay house in a *kampung* three miles from Sungai Raya. Before the war his father had been *penghulu* of the *mukim* adjacent to the subdistrict in which Sungai Raya was located. One of Haji Othman's older brothers had assumed that position in 1946, and in 1958 he also became the *penghulu* for Mukim Sungai Raya, the subdistrict in which the community of Sungai Raya is located. Another older brother was a senior official in the state Religious Department.

An ardent nationalist, Haji Othman joined UMNO shortly after it was formed. He became a wealthy Muar rice importer during the communist insurrection (1948–1960), when Chinese participation in rice trade was curtailed as part of the counterinsurgency program. Following the 1959 election, he quickly became a key leader of the Muar division of UMNO. After the 1959 election another assemblyman from Muar became the *Menteri Besar* of Johore, and Muar District began to dominate Johore politics. Early in the 1960s Haji Othman was appointed to the state's eight-man executive committee (cabinet), and in 1965 he was awarded the honorific title of Dato by the Sultan of Johore.²⁹ Dato Othman was highly respected in Sungai Raya because of his status as a prominent businessman and political leader, because he was a dynamic speaker, and because he had made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Whereas the district officer had been the leading figure in the district before the war, after 1959 Dato Othman gradually became the recognized leader and patron in his constituency.

The dynamic assemblyman worked tirelessly to build personal ties with political leaders in Sungai Raya and other communities. Although he commuted almost daily to his office in Johore Bahru, 110 miles away, he tried to meet at least weekly with *kampung* leaders. Whereas the district officer, who administered the largest district in the peninsula, visited Sungai Raya about once a year, Dato Othman spoke there two or three times a year. At home he was always accessible to individuals or groups. By day and by night villagers living in his constituency, and occasionally those

from adjacent areas, came to his house requesting assistance in obtaining government aid. Many sought help with personal problems. Periodically during the year the *ketua kampung* and other leaders in Sungai Raya met with the assemblyman in his home, at UMNO meetings, or at other functions, such as an exhibit depicting government achievements in rural development. During the celebrations following *Ramadan* in 1966, for example, thirty men from Sungai Raya called upon the assemblyman to pay their respects.³⁰ After they had chanted in Malay and Arabic for half an hour, he gave a short extemporaneous speech about the importance of education for Malays. The assemblyman's personal ties with Sungai Raya were strengthened by the fact that one of his brothers was the *penghulu* of the *mukim* in which the community is located. Furthermore, periodic attendance of the assemblyman's wife at social and religious gatherings in Sungai Raya helped to sustain the Malays' awareness of his role as their representative and patron.

Within a few years of becoming the state representative from Sungai Raya, Dato Othman became the community's most effective means of securing governmental assistance. He repeatedly suggested that *kampung* leaders apply for specific benefits. Shortly after the 1959 election, he asked the UMNO branch executive committees in his constituency to prepare lists of improvements needed by their *kampungs*. (His action complemented the efforts of the *penghulus* to enumerate *kampung* needs for the recently established district rural development committee.) During the next few years Dato Othman occasionally volunteered to secure specific improvements for Sungai Raya if the *kampung* leaders requested them. He acknowledged during an interview that villagers could often obtain governmental assistance more quickly by approaching him than by requesting aid through their village development committee. By 1966 Dato Othman, a close associate of the *Menteri Besar*, had procured more benefits for his constituents than most other assemblymen from the district.

Sungai Raya's third post-independence link with the government was the village development committee established in 1962 as part of the federal government's efforts to increase the Malays' political support and to raise their standard of living. Whereas the organization of the local UMNO branch reflected the *kampung* leaders' political and economic concerns, the village development committee was formed because of a directive from the district officer rather than in response to a recognized community need. Although the villagers in Sungai Raya exhibited considerable initiative and organizational ability during the preparations of traditional social and religious functions, such as weddings and the celebration of Mohammed's birthday, these traits were not reflected in the committee's activities.

The committee considered its main functions to be discussing village problems, requesting governmental assistance, and informing the com-

munity when agricultural extension workers and other bureaucrats would visit the *kampungs*. Unpaid, without training in techniques of community development, and lacking control over any resources, the committee members were reluctant to initiate any form of *kampung* improvement.³¹ This was to be expected, considering the great emphasis that the Malays placed upon the maintenance of harmonious interpersonal relations. Community development, in contrast to traditional leadership activity, inherently risked arousing resentment, since it involved persuading others to change their values and behavior patterns.

Although the development committee was organized as a part of the government effort to facilitate developmental activities and to encourage local self-help programs, Malays in Sungai Raya and other *kampungs* in the district regarded the committee solely as a channel for requesting governmental assistance. In 1967 a key member of the Muar District Rural Development Committee observed that the *kampung* committees had become merely "Please can we have this bodies." Many villagers in Sungai Raya justifiably believed that seeking assistance through the local committee was not as effective as appealing to their state assemblyman, a prominent member of the Muar District Rural Development Committee. When asked in 1966 how villagers could persuade the government to provide something the *kampung* desired, such as a community hall, free school books, electricity, or a clinic, one survey respondent, expressing the belief of many villagers, replied, "We meet Haji Othman (the assemblyman); he can give. If he gives, we get. If he doesn't give, we don't get. That's his service on behalf of poor people."

At the turn of the century, the founders of Sungai Raya had worked together on the basis of mutual assistance born of common necessity. In 1966, however, the Malays felt no inclination to work with the development committee. Resenting admonitions to exercise greater initiative, many ignored suggestions to raise more vegetables, cultivate rubber more diligently, or install water-sealed toilets. Convinced that these proposed improvements had little relevance to their basic needs, the villagers wanted the government to raise their standard of living by improving educational facilities, expanding employment opportunities, opening new areas for landless peasants, providing additional agricultural extension services, and making medical care more widely available.

The committee mobilized the villagers to implement only two types of *kampung* improvements between 1962 and 1966. Each year families living along the dirt roads in Sungai Raya worked to resurface the roads with crushed rock provided by the government. And when the local member of Parliament had secured funds to build a new prayer house, the residents provided the labor. The villagers' failure to participate in community development was illustrated by neglect of the bulletin board designed to

encourage *kampung* initiative. Although it hung in the headman's front parlor in compliance with a government directive, it listed neither community goals nor achievements. While the *ketua kampung* kept detailed records of weekly visits by agricultural extension agents and other bureaucrats, he never replaced three members of the development committee who moved out of Sungai Raya. The committee, which was instructed to meet every month, failed to meet for six months during 1966.³²

As in many areas of Malaya, the committee limited its activities almost exclusively to petitioning the government for assistance in such projects as repairing the mosque, expanding the local primary schools, stationing a midwife in the area, providing cattle for several families, and installing piped water in the sparsely populated areas of Sungai Raya. The Public Works Department was asked to deliver water by truck during the dry season to houses in remote parts of Sungai Raya, some distance from the three standpipes along the highway. The committee's appeals were often augmented by identical requests from the local UMNO branch. During the five years after the committee was organized in 1962, funds were provided to renovate the mosque, expansion of the English-medium school was approved but not funded, and delivery of water during the dry season was begun.

The development committees in Sungai Raya and other *kampungs* merely became channels for requesting assistance, not instruments of change. After the initial burst of bureaucratic enthusiasm, no effort was made to develop these committees as viable institutions that could mobilize villagers to contribute time, labor, or capital to local improvements. In the mid-1960s the government was more interested in providing political patronage for local UMNO politicians than empowering rural Malays to initiate their own development efforts.

Growing Political Awareness

During the first two decades after the war there was a significant rise in the villagers' level of political awareness, which reflected their increasing levels of education and exposure to sources of political information, their heightened communal concerns, and the general postwar politicization of Malay society. This growing political awareness, in turn, helped to shape the Malays' opinions and expectations of UMNO and the government.

Before the war few villagers had any understanding of the political situation in Malaya, but by the mid-1960s most men and many women had at least vague ideas about parties, elections, and the national government. Political awareness for most villagers was limited to matters of immediate personal relevance or was the result of their direct observation. Virtually all

men and most women were aware that the government was attempting to raise the Malays' standard of living. As peasant agriculturalists, they were particularly conscious of programs providing immediate assistance rather than long-term benefits.

With the exception of *kampung* political leaders, most villagers in Sungai Raya knew very little about the intercommunal character of the ruling Alliance Party. They thought of the government as a Malay or UMNO government ruled by Malays for Malays, rather than as an alliance of three communal parties dominated by UMNO. Virtually all the men were aware that UMNO or the Alliance won the 1964 general election. Whereas about half the men could differentiate clearly between UMNO and the Alliance, almost none of the women could do so. Awareness of more abstract political matters was even lower.

Changing Political Perceptions and Opinions

A decade after independence the villagers varied widely in their perceptions of politics and in their opinions and expectations of the government and UMNO. These differences reflected their level of education, exposure to the news media, degree of political awareness, and concern about politics. Most men and women were not interested in politics. Given the overwhelming support for UMNO among Malays in the area, there seemed little reason to think about anything so distant from their immediate concerns of family, religion, and work.

In the mid-1960s the older, less-educated men and better-informed women thought of politics in terms of being *pandai* (clever), people who were *pandai*, or people who were *pandai* at public speaking. Rural Malays expected those in authority to speak correct Malay and to be "fluent in the proper uses of all the phrases, figures of speech, and addresses which are part of the language."³³ The state assemblyman from Sungai Raya usually spoke extemporaneously for an hour at the local UMNO meetings. He was probably the most *pandai* individual and speaker most of the villagers had ever met, and it was not surprising that many associated politics with speeches and *pandai* public speakers. Many women could not offer any interpretation of the word "politics." Asked what she thought when she heard the word "politics," one woman expressed the *kampung*-centered world of most women in Sungai Raya: "Ah, of course, I don't know. People speak about it, I just hear. If I go to shop to buy, I hear. But I don't know what they are talking about." The younger, better-educated men and the *kampung* political leaders associated "politics" with political parties, the exercise of power, and governing the country.

Although many villagers were unable to articulate opinions about the meaning of "politics," three-fourths of the men and women supported the development of politics in postwar Malaysia. They associated the rise of political activity with socioeconomic improvements in the rural areas or attainment of independence. As an elderly male villager commented, "Before we didn't have drainage, roads, electricity. Now the government supplies everything. There were no mosques; now we're given assistance. The poor are given help. Those who are sick are given medicine." A rubber-tapper in his mid-forties observed, "Before the Japanese came, the whites governed; whether it was right or wrong, their race governed. Now our race governs. I think this is better. This is a Malay country and it is governed by Malays."

Most men were convinced that religion and politics were inseparable. An elderly, literate villager noted that both the Koran and the Prophet's sayings make it clear that there is a connection between religion and politics. One of the most articulate *kampung* political leaders said, "Religion and politics are interrelated.... If politics does not help religion to progress, then this is against religious principles. We want both. We have politics, but religion can't be neglected. It is necessary that politics safeguard religion."

Six years after the rural development program was launched in 1959, three-fourths of the men in Sungai Raya aged twenty-one or older and nearly half the women thought that the government was concerned about the welfare of rural Malays. Most of the other women were unable to voice an opinion when asked about the government. During the 1966 survey villagers cited socioeconomic improvements in rural areas, various forms of agricultural assistance, new schools, and adult education classes as evidence of government concern. One man reasoned, "Usually, if the government can't give everything the villagers ask for, it gives a little. If the villagers tell the government their problems, the government gives. Roads, electricity, piped water. . . . If we ask, the government gives. So it really cares for us." Nearly a fifth of the men and about a tenth of the women saw the government as a source of unlimited assistance. These were mainly older, illiterate villagers.

However, about a tenth of the men and women felt that the government was not concerned about rural Malays, and others appeared to have no opinions. Moreover, when asked whether the government had done enough to help Malays achieve more comfortable lives, a fifth of the men and a fourth of the women said it had not. They were especially dissatisfied with the Malays' low living standards and the high cost of education. Some felt that urban Malays and Chinese had received more help than they deserved. Complaining about the government's inadequate assistance for rural Malays, a *kampung* resident charged:

Half the state assemblymen only stress the necessity of our voting for them. After winning, they never bother to look in at the villagers. We ask for help; three-fourths of the time they don't even consider it. For example, at my place [his village], we asked for a clinic; didn't get it. Asked for a community hall; it also wasn't given. Asked for water to be installed; also didn't get it.

All of the *kampung* political leaders approved of the emergence of political parties and political activities during the postwar period. They were highly conscious that politics, especially the activities of UMNO, had played a significant role in attaining independence, in achieving Malay rule, and in initiating rural development. Although most of the *kampung* political elite believed that the government sought to uplift rural Malays, at least half thought that it was not doing enough. As one observed, "The government gives the same treatment to all races, even though according to the constitution the Malays are supposed to be privileged." The leaders were frustrated, and some were bitter because the Malays' standard of living was not keeping pace with that of the Chinese.

In the mid-1960s virtually all the Malays in Sungai Raya identified with UMNO and supported it as the party of the Malays. They backed UMNO for at least four reasons. First, it was the oldest existing Malay political party and had always been very strong in Johore. Second, it was the party of recognized leaders of the Malay community at the village, district, and national levels. Third, it was regarded as the party of the Malay race and as the guardian of their religion and culture. Fourth, it was considered responsible for various social and economic improvements since independence. One teacher observed that the villagers could no more imagine changing their party allegiance than embracing another religion. During the survey in 1966 one-third of the men and more than half of the women said they supported UMNO partly or wholly because others approved of it or simply because it was in power. Most of these villagers were illiterate and over forty years of age. Their feelings were epitomized in the observation of one man: "I just follow the crowd. Because it rules, I support it." In contrast, the village leaders supported UMNO either because they endorsed its politics or because they believed it could do more than any other party to promote Malay interests.

Much of the villagers' support of UMNO reflected community sentiments rather than individual opinions. Many men and women were not actually UMNO supporters in the sense of identifying with the party or its policies. Knowing little about politics, they simply upheld traditional values by following their recognized leaders. Thus, their support of UMNO was essentially an expression of communal allegiance, stimulated in part by the presence of foreign communities.

Although virtually everyone supported UMNO, a fifth of the men expressed dissatisfaction with the party when questioned during the survey. Some believed it had not provided sufficient assistance. Others thought it had not adequately protected the Malays' special rights and privileges, such as the constitutionally guaranteed position and prestige of the sultans, establishment of Islam as the state religion, recognition of Malay as the national language, and the preferences given to Malays in the allocation of scholarships and positions in the civil service. These critics were younger, better educated, and better informed than most of the men. The village political leaders were even more discontented. More than half thought that UMNO had not done enough to provide benefits for rural Malays and to safeguard their interests. Some believed that the Malays were so backward that UMNO could not possibly provide all the help they needed. Others felt that UMNO could not adequately protect Malay communal interests because of demands by other ethnic groups.

One of the most significant changes in the villagers' political opinions was the transformation of their expectations of the government and political leaders. Before the war they had only vague ideas about the government; they knew only that the sultan combined religious and political authority and administered the state through district officers and *penghulus*. While the *kampung* residents thought of themselves as the sultan's "children," they expected little assistance from him or state authorities. After the war their perceptions and expectations of the government changed because of the rise of Malay nationalism, the formation of political parties, the introduction of national elections, the attainment of independence, and the provision of rural development as political patronage.

In Sungai Raya, as in *kampungs* throughout the country, bureaucrats, many of whom were active UMNO members, deliberately encouraged the belief that the government would respond positively to requests for assistance. Politicians repeatedly reminded villagers what UMNO had achieved for the Malays, promised that it would raise their standard of living, urged them to ask for help through the party, and indicated that assistance would be provided to communities that steadfastly supported UMNO. The *penghulu* urged the leaders of Sungai Raya to seek assistance from the district rural development committee through the *kampung* development committee. The local member of Parliament suggested benefits that he could provide if the villagers would request them. In 1961, for example, he urged them to apply for money to rebuild one of the *suraus* in Sungai Raya. The MP secured funding for the needed materials, the villagers rebuilt the chapel, and he spoke at the opening ceremony.

In Sungai Raya the key architect of the transformation of the villagers' expectations was the state assemblyman elected in 1959 and repeatedly thereafter. He was a tireless politician who usually spoke at the annual

UMNO branch meetings, as well as at major religious and social events in Sungai Raya. A dynamic speaker, he reminded the villagers of everything UMNO had done for "our race, our religion, our homeland." He promised that the party would continue to struggle on their behalf. He repeatedly urged the leaders in Sungai Raya and other villages in his constituency to apply for amenities which would make their lives easier. In 1961 he offered to provide laterite rock to resurface the dirt roads in Sungai Raya if the villagers would agree to spread the rock over the road surface. Later he suggested that they request bridges over the *parits* that ran parallel to the dirt roads. In 1963 he offered to arrange to have electricity provided for the *kampungs*.

Initially the *kampung* leaders were hesitant to ask for assistance, but their expectations of the government gradually changed, especially after the appointment of new headmen throughout the state in 1962. Repeatedly urged to apply for more assistance, the *kampung* elite began to perceive UMNO and the government as an almost unlimited source of potential benefits for the community. Whereas before the war they expected almost nothing from the government, by the mid-1960s the *kampung* leaders and many of the other villagers believed that UMNO and the government were capable of raising their standard of living, that the Malays, as "sons of the soil," deserved special help, and that the government should provide additional assistance in exchange for continued electoral support.

Increasing Political Participation

During the decade after the introduction of national elections, the level of political participation in Sungai Raya rose gradually. By the mid-1960s most of the *kampung* residents engaged in marginal participation, such as joining a political party and voting in national elections. A few men engaged in such active participation as mobilizing support during election campaigns. Although only a few villagers joined the local UMNO branch when it was organized, membership grew gradually and by 1966 nearly three-fourths of the men aged twenty-one and above were dues paying members, as were a tenth of the women. Two years after the 1964 election, more than three-fourths of the men reported that they had voted in the previous election, as did almost two-thirds of the women. Most women voted because they were asked to by the *kampung* political leaders or by prominent, illiterate, politically uninformed women who worked with the local UMNO leaders on election day. Villagers who did not vote were not registered, were away from the community on election day, or were home caring for sick children or relatives.

A few UMNO leaders in Sungai Raya actively participated in the national elections begun in 1955. Attendance at special UMNO meetings before the campaigns heightened their motivation and added to their organizational skills. Whereas in 1955 and 1959 the state and national elections were held on different days, in subsequent elections they have occurred on the same day. Although the 1964 campaign did not officially begin until nomination day five weeks before the election in April, the parties began preparing for the election five or six months before the formal launching of the campaign. The Alliance Party was much better organized than in previous contests.³⁴ One of its national organizers estimated that it had 100,000 workers at the local level, mostly in the rural areas.³⁵ For the first time the Alliance attempted to contact every registered voter throughout the country by assigning a party worker to every ten houses.

In Sungai Raya a fifth of the men worked in the 1964 campaign. A house-to-house canvas was conducted by villagers carefully selected for their piety and social status. Each canvasser urged his contacts to vote for the "sailboat" (the Alliance symbol) and distributed summaries of the Alliance manifesto with sample ballots showing only a picture of the sailboat and the Alliance candidates' names. The four-page summary of the manifesto, written in *Jawi*, stressed the numerous programs which the Alliance had initiated for Malays; it promised to provide peace, happiness, and prosperity if the party were returned to office. The local leaders, five of whom had been briefed in Muar on the Alliance campaign, put up posters in Sungai Raya showing pictures of Alliance candidates and/or the sailboat. These were placed on trees, telephone poles, provision shops, and the walls of homes. The village UMNO leaders also helped organize two election rallies in Bukit Pasir and two in Sungai Raya. Their time and location were announced over loudspeakers on a vehicle driven slowly through the community. In Sungai Raya, as in the rest of Malaysia, the primary objectives of the Alliance campaign were to mobilize electoral support and to project an image of the party rather than that of individual candidates.

By election day in 1964 the campaign had aroused an interest and enthusiasm comparable to that evoked by weddings and religious holidays. On voting day cars, taxis, and bicycles were used to transport *kampung* residents to the polling stations. Alliance backers reminded voters to support the party providing the ride. Near the polling stations villagers were greeted by workers from the Alliance information booth, handed an umbrella to protect them from the sun, and again asked to put their "X" next to the sailboat. One female UMNO supporter, capitalizing on the lack of sophistication of many village women, asked female voters, "What can you do with a sailboat? You can go to Mecca in it! But what can you do with an ox head or a hoe [parts of the opposition Socialist Front Party's symbol]? You can make soup with an ox head, and you can dig a hole with a hoe." Late

in the day UMNO canvassers contacted those who had not voted. If an individual could not get to the polls, a car or bicycle was sent for him. When the polls closed some men went to Muar to join the crowd of UMNO supporters awaiting returns. Recalling the election festivities, one political leader reported two years later that when the winners in the state legislative assembly constituencies were announced at about 2:00 a.m., "Alliance Party supporters shouted with joy; they lifted Haji Othman [their assemblyman] and carried him on their shoulders to a waiting line of Alliance cars—about fifty or so. In the early morning they went around Muar in a procession." The Alliance victory was perceived as a triumph for the Malays and their leaders.

Electoral support in Sungai Raya did not demonstrate widespread political awareness or allegiance to the ruling intercommunal Alliance. Rather, it reflected the efforts of a few village UMNO leaders who mobilized the Malays by appealing to communalism and by exerting social pressure. Two years after the 1964 election, only half of the men and almost none of the women could clearly distinguish between UMNO and the Alliance. Whereas working in the campaign gave local leaders a sense of participation in the promotion of Malay interests, for most villagers voting was essentially an expression of communal solidarity in which they reaffirmed loyalty to the Malay community, to UMNO, and to prominent Malay politicians.

Politicization and Stability

The politicization of the villagers in Sungai Raya during the first two decades after World War II typifies the process by which Malays became increasingly involved in national politics.³⁶ As an analytical concept, politicization suffers from a profusion of definitions with varying emphasis on awareness and participation. As used in this study, politicization refers specifically to the process of becoming involved in politics. The process has three distinct dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. The first is a growing awareness of government and its relevance to one's own life, the second is a rising concern about politics, and the third is an increasing political participation based upon this political awareness and concern. Participation is defined as an endeavor to influence political decision making and policy implementation. Politicization expands the political elite and broadens the stratum of the population whose opinions and expectations cannot be ignored by those in power. It multiplies demands for government services, which, in turn, generate pressures to increase government capabilities. Furthermore, though it may intensify interest in local needs, it usually leads to a shift in concern from local to regional or national issues.

A number of factors contributed to the politicization of the villagers in Sungai Raya between the outbreak of World War II and 1966. These concurrent, interrelated factors included growing communal concerns, rising levels of education and exposure to the mass media, organization of the UMNO branch in the community, establishment of ties between *kampung* leaders and UMNO officials in town, receipt of numerous benefits under the government's rural development programs, and increasing political awareness and concerns during election campaigns. In Sungai Raya, as in other villages throughout the country, the politicization of the community sharpened communal awareness, heightened the personal relevance of politics for most Malays, expanded the *kampung* political elite, and increased the number of villagers whose opinions and expectations could not be ignored by national leaders. It multiplied aspirations for governmental assistance and began to shift village concerns from local socioeconomic needs to national issues.

Although the level of political involvement was much higher than before World War II, in the mid-1960s most villagers were still only marginally involved in politics. In 1966 less than a fourth of the men discussed politics at least weekly, and virtually none of the women did. Most *kampung* dwellers' lives were focused on family, religion, and work. The key UMNO leaders, in contrast, had become keenly interested in politics and were concerned about the preservation of Malay political hegemony and the promotion of Malay communal interests.

The most significant consequence of Sungai Raya's growing involvement in national politics in the mid-1960s was the rising discontent of village political leaders with the policies and achievements of UMNO and the Alliance. Increasing politicization accentuated the leaders' sense of inferiority vis-a-vis the Chinese, intensified communal concerns, and strengthened support for UMNO. Growing politicization heightened the leaders' aspirations for more Malay privileges and benefits, and caused disappointment with what was perceived as the government's insufficient efforts to protect Malay rights and to raise village living standards. UMNO and the Alliance, dependent upon electoral support of these and other village leaders, could not afford to ignore their request for more help in furthering Malay communal interests and socioeconomic development.

Notes

1. Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Policy Towards the Malayan Chinese 1941-1945," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 1, no. 2 (September 1970): 61-89; and Chin Kee Onn, *Malaya Upside Down* (Singapore: Jitts, 1946).

2. Burridge reported that Malay-Chinese relations in the adjacent district of Batu Pahat began to deteriorate during the Japanese occupation. See Kenelm O. L. Burridge, "Racial Relations in Johore," *The Australian Journal of Politics and History* 2, no. 2 (May 1957): 162.

3. J. H. Brimmell, *Communism in South East Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 198-99; and K. G. Tregonning, *A History of Modern Malaya* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 1964), 285-86.

4. Alleged atrocities against Malays in northwest Johore are discussed in Burridge, "Racial Relations in Johore," 162-65.

5. Shamsul describes similar communal violence in Selangor during the immediate postwar period. See Shamsul A. B., *From British to Bumiputera Rule: Local Politics and Rural Development in Peninsular Malaysia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), 59-60.

6. National Operations Council, *The May Tragedy: A Report* (Kuala Lumpur, 1969), 8.

7. The best account of the birth and demise of the Malayan Union is James de V. Allen, *The Malayan Union*. Southeast Asia Studies, Monograph Series No. 10 (New Haven: Yale University, 1967).

8. J. M. Gullick, *Malaysia* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), 104.

9. Quoted in Ishak bin Tadin, "Dato Onn and Malay Nationalism, 1946-1951," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 1, no. 1 (March 1960): 68.

10. Gordon P. Means, *Malaysian Politics* (London: University of London Press, 1970), 113.

11. United Kingdom, *Parliamentary Debates* (House of Commons), 5th ser., vol. 425 (9 July 1946): 306.

12. The Federation of Malaya, based upon a new set of treaties with Malay rulers, established a highly centralized government with authority in all matters of importance to the entire country. At the same time, it preserved the nine Malay states and two former Straits Settlements as distinct federal units, restored the prestige and jurisdiction of the sultans in all purely Islamic and local matters, and established a new federal citizenship which favored the Malays but enabled the Chinese and Indians to make Malaya their home. The abandonment of the Malayan Union and the formation of the Federation of Malaya are discussed in B. Simandjuntak, *Malayan Federalism 1945-1963* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1969), 41-47.

13. During 1949 the British had begun a program in which more than half a million villagers, mostly Chinese squatters living on the fringes of the jungle, were resettled in over 550 new villages, where the communists could not intimidate them into providing food and manpower. The relocation of one-fifth of the Chinese population significantly increased the Malay proportion of the rural population.

14. The Malays' constitutionally sanctioned special privileges are discussed in S. H. Huang-Thio, "Constitutional Discrimination Under the Malaysian Constitution," *Malayan Law Review* 6, no. 1 (July 1964): 1-16.

15. Similar changes occurred in three Malay villages studied by S. Husin Ali. See S. Husin Ali, "Patterns of Rural Leadership in Malaya," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 10, pt. 1 (July 1968): 95-145.

16. M. G. Swift observed a similar phenomenon in the state of Negri Sembilan. See M. G. Smith, *Malay Peasant Society in Jebebu* (London: The Athlone Press, 1965), 158.

17. Kenelm O. L. Burridge, "Rural Administration in Johore," *Journal of African Administration* 9, no. 1 (January 1957): 29-36; "Managerial Influences in a Johore Village," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 30, pt. I (1957): 93-114; and Ibrahim bin A. Rahman, *Johore Penghulu's Handbook* (Johor Bahru: Government Printing Department, 1951).

18. Robert J. Wolff, "Modern Medicine and Traditional Culture: Confrontation on the Malay Peninsula," *Human Organization* 24, no. 4 (Winter 1965): 342.

19. Robert Jay found a similar situation among Malay villagers in the state of Perak. See Robert Jay, "Local and National Politics in a Rural Malay Community" (paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Washington, D. C., 21 March 1964).

20. The origins, organization, and performance of the village committees are discussed in Shamsul A. B., "Village: The Imposed Social Construct in Malaysia's Development Initiatives," (paper prepared for a workshop entitled "The Village Revisited: Community and Locality in Southeast Asia," organized by the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands, 7-9 April 1988).

21. Gayl D. Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development in Malaysia: A Study of Complex Organizations in Stimulating Economic Development in the New States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 201-06.

22. District level committees are composed of the district officer (chairman), district heads of government departments, and the state assemblymen elected from the district. In 1967 a key member of the Muar District Rural Development Committee acknowledged that politicians in the committee competed for assistance for their constituents and that they exercised great influence in the allocation of improvements costing less than M\$25,000.

23. Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad, "Leadership and Leadership Training at the Ground Level—A Study of the Role of the Village Leader (Ketua Kampong)," *Development Forum* 2, no. 2 (December 1969): 17.

24. Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad reported a similar problem in a *kampung* in Negri Sembilan. See Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad, "Leadership and Leadership Training at the Ground Level," 18-19.

25. The branch is the basic unit in UMNO, usually serving the area of a polling station. The next level in the organizational hierarchy is the division, encompassing a parliamentary constituency. The Supreme Executive Council, headed by the party president, is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the party.

26. Jay, "Local and National Politics in a Rural Malay Community," 8.

27. Membership in the *kampung* political elite was determined during the 1966 survey by asking the headman and three other men known to be active in the UMNO branch to name the ten key political leaders in Sungai Raya. They all named four teachers and three mentioned the *ketua kampung*. He was too modest to list himself. Five others were mentioned at least twice.

28. Political efficacy was measured by asking survey respondents: "In your opinion how much could you or other people in this village influence the government

to help villagers here? Would you say that the amount of influence which you or other villagers have is a great deal, just a little, or almost none?"

29. Later, after becoming *Menteri Besar* of Johore in February 1967, he was awarded the federal title of Tan Sri, and his full name became Tan Sri Dato Haji Othman bin Haji Mohd. Sa'at.

30. During the *Hari Raya* (Great Day) celebrations following the Muslim fasting month, Malays return home to visit their parents. They also call on friends, associates, and superiors, and all of them serve refreshments. In 1966 the assemblyman's wife used nearly 200 pounds of sugar to bake an endless variety of cookies for villagers who dropped in during the *Hari Raya* celebrations.

31. Conner Bailey found in 1968 that members of the village development committees in Sik District in Kedah did not understand what the government expected them to do and that they lacked resources to initiate development projects. See Conner Bailey, "Brokers, Mediators, Patrons and Kinsmen: Rural Malay Leadership in Transition" (M. A. thesis, Ohio University, 1974), 52-55.

32. Harun bin Abdul Karim discovered the same general pattern of leadership, motivation, and performance in twenty-eight village development committees in Perak. See Harun bin Abdul Karim, "Village Development Committee: A Study of its Origin, Organization and Performance" (B. A. thesis, Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya, 1971).

33. Wolff, "Modern Medicine and Traditional Culture," 342.

34. The campaign is discussed in detail in K. J. Ratnam and R. S. Milne, *The Malayan Parliamentary Election of 1964* (Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1967), 158-98. See also R. K. Vasil, "The 1964 General Elections in Malaya," *International Studies* 6, no. 1 (July 1965): 20-65.

35. Ratnam and Milne, *The Malayan Parliamentary Election of 1964*, 160, n. 10. Although many UMNO workers in the rural areas throughout Malaya were volunteers, some were paid M\$3-M\$5 per day. At least one supporter in Sungai Raya who had worked as a volunteer in the previous elections received M\$5 in 1964. Financing of the campaign is discussed in R. S. Milne and K. J. Ratnam, "Politics and Finance in Malaya," *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 3, no. 3 (November 1965): 182-97.

36. The politicization of the villagers between 1945 and 1966 is analyzed in Marvin L. Rogers, "The Politicization of Malay Villagers: National Integration or Disintegration?," *Comparative Politics* 7, no. 2 (January 1975): 205-25.

Accelerated Socioeconomic Development

Since independence in 1957, Malaysia has pursued top-down rural development strategies that have had both economic and political goals. Designed to raise rural incomes and to increase agricultural productions, these efforts have been consciously promoted in order to strengthen Malay support for UMNO and to legitimize the UMNO-led government in the eyes of *kampung* residents. The various rural development strategies have included opening vast areas of virgin forests as settlement schemes for landless villagers, developing unused land for integrated rural development projects, and providing assistance for existing rural Malay villages. Sometimes *kampungs* such as Sungai Raya have been called traditional villages to distinguish them from communities established in land development schemes.

The rural development programs for traditional Malay *kampungs* have provided two forms of assistance: basic amenities and agricultural projects. These amenities have included piped water and electricity, health services, schools, mosques, community halls, roads, bridges, and improved telecommunication services. Major amenities, such as health centers, schools, and mosques, have been funded by federal and state government departments and generally have been built in accordance with their long-range plans. However, small projects, such as building community halls and small bridges or providing public telephones and folding chairs, have been provided as political patronage by local members of parliament and state representatives. Members of parliament who belong to the ruling National Front coalition each have M\$200,000 annually in contingency funds that they can dispense for their constituents. In Johore, state representatives who are members of the National Front each have M\$50,000 annually in similar funds. Frequently both the national and the state politicians are able to obtain more than twice these amounts for projects in their constituencies.¹

Agricultural projects are funded and implemented by national and state government departments and by special federal agencies such as the Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (RISDA), the Farmers Organization Authority, and similar bodies. Politicians have little influence on the implementation of these programs. In Johore, agricultural development projects for traditional Malay villages have included encouraging replanting of old, low-yielding trees with new, high-yielding varieties, providing extension services, organizing cooperatives, and initiating other efforts to raise the villagers' standard of living.

Patterns of Social Change

During the two decades after 1966, and especially since the inauguration of the New Economic Policy in 1971, Sungai Raya received numerous basic amenities from the federal and state government. These improved the quality of life in the *kampungs*, increased opportunities for social mobility, accelerated the rate of social change in the community, and heightened the Malays' sense of Islamic consciousness.

In the early 1970s the government responded to the villagers' repeated requests for piped water and electricity for the two smaller *kampungs*. In 1966 piped water was available only to houses along the highway through Sungai Raya; those without piped water carried water from standpipes along the highway or from wells near their homes. In 1973 pipes were laid along the dirt roads through the smaller villages. Whereas in 1966 only 18 percent of the Malay households in Sungai Raya had piped water, by 1978 the figure had risen to 71 percent. Electricity first became available to houses along the highway in 1965, and in the early 1970s it was provided to the two smaller *kampungs*. The percentage of families with electricity rose from 45 to 79 between 1966 and 1978. The other households continued to use kerosene lamps or kerosene-burning pressure lanterns. During casual conversations in 1978, a number of villagers indicated that the provision of water and electricity for the two smaller *kampungs* was the most significant change in Sungai Raya between 1966 and 1978. The water pipes and electrical lines were extended during the following decade, and by 1987 virtually every house in Sungai Raya had these facilities.²

Comparable improvements were made in the medical services available to the community. In 1966 the only care provided in the Sungai Raya area was a bimonthly child health clinic in which babies were examined and weighed. Responding in part to repeated petitions by Sungai Raya's political leaders, in 1973 the government opened a small health center (*Pusat Kesihatan Kecil*) in Bukit Pasir. A second building was constructed in 1976, and more facilities and staff were added in 1977. In 1984 the center was

upgraded to become a big health center (*Pusat Kesihatan Besar*), one of four such centers in Muar District. Additional buildings were built, staff housing was constructed, and a resident physician and dentist were assigned to the center. Whereas the government hospital in Muar provided curative care, the center in Bukit Pasir focused on preventive medicine, especially maternal and child health care.

In 1987 the center offered an impressive range of medical services for the residents of Bukit Pasir and villagers in Sungai Raya and surrounding *kampungs*. The doctor, who also worked in several smaller clinics, provided free care one morning and five afternoons a week. This was supplemented by a daily outpatient clinic staffed by medical assistants. In mid-1987 the resident dentist's position was temporarily vacant, and a dentist from Muar attended to major dental problems two mornings a week. Dental nurses dispensed basic dental care daily. The center's regular nurses held a weekly prenatal clinic for pregnant women and another weekly clinic for infants. They saw as many as 120 patients in an eight-hour day. Traveling by bicycle, motorcycle, or van, they also visited homes in the nearby villages to provide pre- and postnatal care. In addition, two or three times a year the staff visited seventeen elementary and two secondary schools in the area served by the center. All first, sixth, and ninth graders were given physical examinations, which included eye tests. When teachers suspected hearing problems, the children's hearing was tested and problem cases were referred to the hospital in Muar. All first graders were given polio drops and medicine for worms. They were vaccinated for tuberculosis, diphtheria, and tetanus. They were also given measles shots if they had not been vaccinated as infants. The TB shots were repeated in the sixth grade.

Although the center had promoted family planning for a decade, in 1987 the staff still faced formidable challenges among all three ethnic groups in the area: Malays, Chinese, and Indians. Some women did not realize it was possible to prevent pregnancy, some did not know free contraceptives were available at the center, some who wanted to space their children were too shy to ask for information or help at the center, and some were afraid their husbands would take another wife if they insisted on using contraceptives. Furthermore, contraceptives could only be provided if the husband gave his permission. However, most men in the area felt that child care was solely the women's responsibility, and they seldom came to the center with their wives and newborn infants. Moreover, some men felt that the number of children a family had was entirely up to God.

The doctor and nurses, as well as midwives at the center and its four midwife clinics, advocated contraceptives only as a means of spacing children in order to promote the mother's health, never as a way to reduce the number of children. Most acceptors used the pill; some used condoms. The discouraged staff reported in 1987 that in 1979 only 14 percent of the

women of childbearing age (15-44) in the area had used contraceptives. However, following the government's decision in the mid-1980s to reduce its family planning efforts in order to increase the domestic market for locally manufactured goods, the use of contraceptives declined. The center staff estimated that only 3 percent of the women of childbearing age used family planning in 1986. In the final analysis, the staff members were so busy promoting maternal and child care they simply lacked the time to promote family planning effectively. Furthermore, as one member candidly admitted, there was little likelihood of dramatically increasing family planning until the staff or status individuals in the three ethnic communities began convincing men that it was a good idea.

In addition to providing medical and dental care, the center attempted to improve the sanitation in Sungai Raya and other *kampungs*. Seeking to persuade villagers to construct water-sealed toilets (*tandas curah*), the center's two public health assistants argued that these toilets had no smell, that they improved sanitation about the house, and that they reduced the incidence of hookworms and roundworms. Although the government had begun advocating construction of these toilets in 1965, it did not begin to promote them vigorously until the early 1970s. In 1966 there were more television sets in Sungai Raya than sanitary toilets. Twelve years later, 76 percent of the households had water-sealed toilets while 48 percent had television sets. In 1987 the villagers estimated that at least 90 percent of the households had televisions; the public health assistants reported that 97 percent had water-sealed toilets. The center's staff attributed the change to its health education program, to rising family incomes, and the piping of water to individual homes.

These changes were paralleled by equally impressive improvements in the educational opportunities for children in the Sungai Raya area. Between 1966 and 1988 the villagers benefited from the government's strong commitment to education as a means of promoting socioeconomic development, reducing the income imbalance between ethnic groups, and raising the rural Malays' standard of living. In Sungai Raya, as in *kampungs* throughout the country, the government sought to improve educational facilities, reduce financial obstacles to education, and maximize the academic achievements of the brightest youngsters. In the early 1970s a new English-medium elementary school was built at the northeastern edge of Sungai Raya in Bukit Pasir. This impressive, large, white structure, with a big mural on one wall, was one of hundreds of similar schools built throughout Malaysia in the 1970s. It replaced an English-medium school built after World War II beside an older Malay-medium school in Sungai Raya. In the late 1970s the language of instruction in the new school was changed from English to Malay as part of the national program to phase out all English-medium schools. In the mid-1980s an additional building was added to the

old elementary school in Sungai Raya. This two-story structure included a small library and a room where classes could watch television programs broadcast by the Ministry of Education. In 1987 a three-story junior high school was opened on the edge of Bukit Pasir.

During the 1970s and 1980s a number of families in Sungai Raya benefited from a variety of programs designed to maximize the educational opportunities available to village children. Aware that the cost of textbooks had been a major burden for rural Malays and a frequent source of complaints from *kampung* political leaders, the government instituted a program under which families earning less than M\$200 per month could borrow textbooks without cost. In 1978, 10 percent of the families with children in elementary school borrowed texts. By 1987 elementary schools were loaning books to all children, and families with less than M\$500 per month could borrow secondary school texts. If additional books were available, they were loaned to students whose family income exceeded the limit.

Early in the 1970s some of the brightest children in Sungai Raya began receiving scholarships to attend residential secondary schools in other parts of the state or elsewhere in the country. These schools were designed to bring together the best teachers and the brightest Malay youths in an effort to provide the best possible secondary schooling for future Malay leaders. Commenting on the range of programs to help *kampung* children, a perceptive teacher in Sungai Raya remarked, "Today any bright, hardworking, poor Malay child can get ahead."

The improvement in educational facilities and the increased opportunities for secondary schooling were reflected in the rising level of education among the villagers and in increasing academic achievement among *kampung* youth. In 1966 only 29 percent of the men and 4 percent of the women aged twenty-one or older had completed more than four years of schooling. By 1978 these figures were 48 percent and 34 percent respectively, and 10 percent of both men and women had attended secondary school. Some of this improvement was due to Malays who had above-average levels of schooling moving into the community. The rise in educational attainment was even more dramatic than these figures suggest because many of the best-educated men and women had left Sungai Raya in search of urban employment or further education. At the time of the initial investigation, no Malay from Sungai Raya had ever passed the examination at the end of Form V (eleventh grade) that is a prerequisite for further formal education. Two decades later about twenty men and women were enrolled in or had graduated from universities in Malaysia, America, Australia, Britain, and Canada. One man had earned a Ph.D., another had become a medical doctor, and at least one woman was working as an engineer. In addition, about ten others had attended or were enrolled in the three-year MARA

Institute of Technology, teacher-training schools, or polytechnic institutions.

In Sungai Raya, as in *kampungs* throughout Peninsular Malaysia, the change in the villagers' level of education was accompanied by an improvement in their access to the mass media and an increase in the frequency of their exposure to the media. In 1966 only one or two Malays in Sungai Raya subscribed to a newspaper, and very few villagers bought newspapers while working or shopping in town. Most Malays who read a newspaper did so in provision shops in Sungai Raya, at a coffee shop in Bukit Pasir, or in schools or offices where they worked. Since Malay custom, reflecting Islamic proscriptions against mixing of the sexes, did not permit women to sit in the shops and read papers, the few literate women in Sungai Raya seldom had access to newspapers in the mid-1960s.

A decade later one of the shops in Bukit Pasir sold 100 Malay papers daily. Half were purchased by subscribers from Sungai Raya and nearby *kampungs*. The provision shops in Sungai Raya continued to buy papers to entice customers, as did coffee shops and restaurants in Bukit Pasir. By 1987 access to the press had risen further. One provision shop in Sungai Raya bought a daily for its patrons; another distributed six papers to subscribers. Several coffee shops in Bukit Pasir provided papers for their customers. In addition, three shops in Bukit Pasir (Chinese, Malay, and Indian) received a total of 320 Malay newspapers daily. They reported that sales had dropped significantly around 1985 when the price of rubber fell. A third of these papers were purchased by subscribers. Whereas in the 1960s most Malays in Sungai Raya had preferred *Utusan Melayu*, which is written in Arabic script (*Jawi*), two decades later many younger readers could not read *Jawi* fluently, and most patrons bought the two national Malay dailies written in Roman letters (*Rumi*). The most frequently purchased paper was *Berita Harian*, followed by *Utusan Malaysia*. Only a seventh of the customers bought *Utusan Melayu*.

The significant rise in newspaper readership after the mid-1960s was a result of the villagers' increasing access to the press, their improving standard of living, and their rising level of education. In 1966 one-fourth of the men aged twenty-one or older read a paper daily, and half read one at least weekly. By 1978 one-third of the men read one or more newspapers daily, and two-thirds read a paper at least weekly. Among the women, readership rose even more significantly. In 1966 only a tenth of the women aged twenty-one or older read a newspaper weekly, a reflection of their low literacy rate and very limited access to newspapers. In 1978, following a rise in their level of education, one-third of the women read papers at least weekly. As Table 6.1 indicates, newspaper readership rose more dramatically among young villagers aged seventeen to twenty. Although it was not possible to measure the frequency of newspaper reading during the field-

work in the 1980s, it had undoubtedly increased as the Malays' level of education rose further and as their incomes grew.

The growth of newspaper readership was paralleled by a similar rise in

TABLE 6.1 Exposure to the Mass Media

Frequency of Exposure	Men 21 or older		Women 21 or older		Boys 17-20		Girls 17-20	
	1966	1978	1966	1978	1966	1978	1966	1978
	%		%		%		%	
Read newspaper daily	24	36	0	18	14	45	10	78
Read newspaper at least weekly	50	67	12	34	57	95	60	94
Listen to radio news daily	21	13	7	13	14	30	10	17
Listen to radio news at least weekly	58	59	19	44	71	65	40	67
Watch TV news daily	3	16	0	18	0	20	0	56
Watch TV news at least weekly	23	62	2	46	64	65	30	83
(Number of cases)	(62)	(70)	(43)	(76)	(14)	(20)	(10)	(18)

the villagers' access to radios and a small increase in their exposure to news broadcasts. In 1966 only 37 percent of the families owned operating radios, but in 1978 the figure had risen to 65 percent. In 1966 and 1978 half the men listened to radio news programs at least weekly. The consistency of their exposure to newscasts, during a period in which the number of households with radios doubled, probably reflected increased reliance on television for news reports. Exposure to radio news broadcasts rose slightly among women and *kampung* youth after 1966. During the initial fieldwork radios were often heard being played in *kampung* homes. In 1987 one almost always heard a television set when interviewing villagers in the late afternoon or night, but radios were seldom heard. Given the spread of television

throughout the *kampungs* in the 1980s, it is quite probable that the percentage of the Malays listening to radio newscasts fell between 1978 and 1988.

Television viewing, on the other hand, grew steadily between 1966 and 1988, reflecting the rising affluence in the community. In 1966, several years after television was introduced in Malaysia, only 4 percent of the Malay families in Sungai Raya owned a set. Nearly one-fourth of the men watched television news programs at least weekly; virtually none of the women did so. Twelve years later, 48 percent of the households had television sets; two-thirds of the men watched newscasts weekly, as did nearly half the women. As in 1966, two-thirds of the young men watched newscasts weekly in 1978, while the number of young women viewing them had increased threefold. In 1987 numerous villagers estimated that at least 90 percent of the households owned a television set. Presumably the percentage of Malays watching news programs had increased significantly.

In 1987 the two government channels were supplemented by a private station that had begun operation in 1985. All three channels, but especially the private concern, broadcast a number of foreign programs, particularly American shows. The Hollywood productions included cartoons, detective stories, *The Cosby Show*, and *Dallas*.³ Villagers who did not get enough entertainment or thrills from the government-censored television could turn to video films. In 1987 five Malay families in Sungai Raya owned video players, and the number will most likely increase, just as the number of television sets rose in the 1970s. A shop in Bukit Pasir rented hundreds of video films in Chinese and English. By 1988 the Chinese proprietor had expanded his inventory to include ninety films in Malay and Indonesian. In Muar numerous stores rented films in Chinese, English, Malay, and Tamil. Several shops also rented video players.

In addition to major amenities, such as piped water, electricity, and schools, since 1966 the villagers have benefited from numerous less expensive forms of assistance that have added to the quality of life in the *kampungs*. As in similar rural communities throughout the country, frequently this support has been provided as political patronage in response to requests by the local UMNO branch or other village groups.⁴

In 1968 Sungai Raya finally got the community hall (*balai raya*) that the villagers had repeatedly requested during the early 1960s. When the local state assemblyman promised to secure funds if the villagers would provide a suitable lot for the building, the headman and other *kampung* leaders persuaded the wealthiest villager to buy a lot and donate it to the community. In 1975 the center was expanded after an allocation of additional funds. Seating close to 200 on folding chairs, it provided a meeting place for various *kampung* groups that had formerly met in the nearby school buildings. These groups ranged from political gatherings and conferences with agricultural extension agents to kindergarten and adult education classes. The

lighted concrete playing field adjoining the center provided a place where young men could play badminton, *sepak raga*, and *sepak takraw*.⁵

During the 1980s the local politicians continued to provide amenities, services, and benefits for Sungai Raya. These included public address systems for the mosque and *suraus* that amplified the calls to prayer, a public telephone in front of the headman's house, a bridge in one of the two smaller villages, and improvement of the major drainage canal on the northeastern edge of Sungai Raya to reduce the likelihood of flooding. In addition, the community obtained three portable structures used to cover tables during wedding feasts, the lights over the playing field next to the community hall were repaired, and the local village development and security committee was given a typewriter. In the late 1980s the member of Parliament provided a pingpong table and other sports equipment worth M\$500, and the state assemblywoman secured M\$2,000 in assistance funds for the women's section of the local UMNO organization. In 1988 the dirt road parallel to the drainage canal in the smallest *kampung* was finally paved.

During the two decades of accelerated socioeconomic change, Sungai Raya benefited under the government's politically inspired program of building mosques and *suraus* throughout the country. A new mosque, seating 500, was built in the mid-1970s at a cost of M\$50,000. It was constructed beside the old mosque, which the villagers had built with their own money before World War II and which they had renovated and expanded with state funds in the early 1960s. In 1978 the government financed construction of an impressive brick and wooden *suraui* in one of the two smaller villages in Sungai Raya.

The gradual Islamization of Malaysian society under the Mahathir administration, which began in 1981, was reflected in the allocation of additional funds for religious buildings in Sungai Raya. M\$350,000 was provided in 1987 to build a two-story, ten-room state religious school behind the mosque. This structure, built on a lot donated by two of the wealthiest men in the community, provided facilities for the state-supported afternoon religious school that had met for decades in the main elementary school in Sungai Raya. The impressive new structure was opened officially early in 1989.

In the mid-1980s the villagers began seeking M\$150,000 to expand the mosque in order to double its seating capacity. In 1987 and again in 1988 the federal government allocated M\$50,000 for this project. Early in 1988 the Johore government promised to provide an additional M\$50,000 if the allocated development funds were not spent that year. Unable to secure all the needed money from the federal and state authorities, in mid-1988 the mosque committee began meeting several nights a week to send out appeals for donations to help finance the expansion of the mosque. These were mailed to prominent Malays throughout the country.

The pattern of social change in Sungai Raya during the past two decades has clearly been influenced by the construction of new religious buildings in the community, by the government's increased support of Islamic activities throughout the country, and by the Islamic resurgence in Malaysia that began in the early 1970s.⁶ In 1987 both men and women indicated that the villagers had become more devout during the past decade as their knowledge of Islam grew. Some suggested that the rise in Islamic consciousness was partly in response to the accelerating rate of socioeconomic change in the *kampungs*. Malays noted that the government was more actively promoting religious instruction, that there had been a significant increase in the Islamic content of television and radio broadcasts, and that the state Religious Department in town was more earnestly enforcing Islamic rules and obligations in the Syari'ah court. Some younger men also admitted that they were more fearful than in the past that they would be caught and punished if they violated any Islamic religious laws. Villagers repeatedly stressed that the religious instruction started in the mosque in the mid-1970s was a key factor in the rising level of religious consciousness. In 1987 these classes were taught by two respected, retired religious teachers from Muar who were paid from donations collected at each session. Held on Saturday and Monday nights, the classes attracted from fifty to 150 men and women from Sungai Raya, nearby *kampungs*, Muar, and other communities as far as twenty miles away. Although villagers of all ages attended, most were middle-aged or older men. There was also religious instruction for women in the *surau* in the center of Sungai Raya, which was taught by the *imam*. While there had been religious classes in the 1960s, in 1987 villagers repeatedly said that the new classes had increased the Malays' understanding of Islam and had heightened their concern about adhering to the precepts and proscriptions of their faith.

The rise in the villagers' devotion was reflected in a number of ways in their daily lives. Islamic prayers were a more important part of the ritualistic opening and closing of all social, economic, and political gatherings in the community. The Islamic portion of the Malay wedding ceremony, the *nikah*, was given more prominence than in the past. Most families had hung framed passages from the Koran, written in Arabic, over the entrances to their homes or on the walls of their front rooms. Many had replaced pictures of movie stars, scenery, or family members with pictures of the Ka'aba, the sacred shrine in Mecca. In the mid-1980s villagers began answering the telephone, greeting friends on the street, and announcing their arrival at a home by saying *Assalamualaikum*, the Arabic expression for "Peace Be with You." More men prayed in the mosque and *surau* in the late afternoon and early evening than had a decade earlier, and many more men participated in *gotong royong* efforts to clean the mosque and *surau*s and to cut the grass in the cemeteries. With rising incomes, an increasing number

of Malays made the Pilgrimage (*Hajj*) to Mecca, which cost a total of M\$6,000 for those going by plane in 1987 and 1988. In the early 1980s three or four villagers made the *Hajj* each year. In 1986 seven Malays went, in 1987 five made the trip, and six went in 1988. A number of old men told me they were spending more time studying religion than they had in the past. While this may have reflected their advancing age, it also illustrated the rise in religious fervor in the community.

The Malays' heightened devotion was evident in the women's dress. In 1966 most younger women and teenage girls did not wear anything on their heads when they were in public. While many other older women wore some kind of head covering, it was not designed to cover all but the face. In the late 1970s a few daring teenage girls wore jeans and t-shirts in public. In 1987 and 1988, however, all women were conservatively dressed. Most, regardless of age, wore something over their heads when in public. Some older women merely wrapped a scarf about their heads, as they had earlier. However, most women, and especially young women, wore a *mini telekung* that covered their heads and shoulders. Many fastened it tightly about their heads so only their faces were exposed, while others wore it loosely over their heads and shoulders. Some women wore the *mini telekung* as an expression of piety; others reportedly adopted it because of the admonitions of religious teachers, the insistence of husbands, or the suggestion of parents. Still others wore the head coverings because they were the latest clothing fashion. Men and women of all ages emphatically denied that there was social pressure to wear the *mini telekung*. Many explained that the decision to cover one's head was a personal matter between a woman and God. While the adoption of a head covering in Sungai Raya was religious in inspiration, it was also a reflection of a rural, conservative way of life. Fewer Malay women in the town of Muar wore head coverings in public, and still fewer wore them in the nation's capital.

During this period of social and religious change, there was little increase in the population of Sungai Raya because young men and women emigrated to obtain improved employment, to further their education, or to follow their husbands. At the time of the initial fieldwork in 1966, 37 percent of the Malay families had one or more sons living outside the *kampungs* and 25 percent had a daughter residing outside the community. Twelve years later, 56 percent of the families had one or more sons living outside Sungai Raya, and 53 percent had at least one daughter elsewhere. Between 1966 and 1978 the number of Malay families rose from 136 to 159 while the number of Chinese households increased from 16 to 17. The Malay population rose from 822 to 878, and the number of Chinese residents grew slightly from 147 to 149.

The following decade the population grew slowly as Malays and Chinese moved into the area because of the availability of land that could be

purchased for house lots, because of the need to care for aging parents, or because the community was perceived to be a nice place to live, being near a city and offering various urban amenities such as piped water, electricity, and schools. Between 1978 and 1987 the number of Malay households increased from 159 to 188, and the number of Chinese families rose from seventeen to twenty-five. One Muslim Indian family moved into the community. In 1987 there were approximately 1,030 Malays and 220 Chinese in Sungai Raya.⁷ The immigration into Sungai Raya was actually greater than these figures suggest, as thirteen Malay houses were scrapped during this period when families moved out of the area. Many of the Malays who settled in Sungai Raya were civil servants working in Muar or were recently retired members of the armed forces and the police. In 1987 ten former servicemen and six retired policemen were living in Sungai Raya. Their above-average incomes had enabled them to build spacious, new homes, and some had bought farmland in or around the Sungai Raya area. Two recently pensioned servicemen interviewed in 1987 had built homes costing M\$25,000 and M\$35,000 respectively. Several of the Chinese families that had moved into the area from Bukit Pasir had built huge, attractive homes. One two-story house cost M\$140,000; another even larger house was built in 1987.

Patterns of Economic Change

In addition to the numerous amenities that have improved the quality of life in Sungai Raya, the villagers have also benefited from agricultural projects designed to raise the Malays' productivity, diversify their crops, and increase their incomes. These federal and state programs have included replanting old rubber trees, persuading *kampung* residents to diversify their tree crops, expanding the agricultural extension services, and establishing a local farmers organization.

In Sungai Raya, as in rubber-producing areas throughout the country, the government has encouraged villagers to replant old, low-yielding rubber trees with new, high-yielding varieties of rubber, fruit or other tree crops. A few Malays in Sungai Raya began rehabilitating old rubber lands in the mid-1950s under the Rubber Replanting Board's subsidized program. Replanting increased dramatically after the establishment of the Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (RISDA) in 1973. Part of RISDA's seven-year replanting subsidy was provided as seedlings and agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, insecticides, and herbicides. The rest was given as cash to help compensate for the loss of revenue while the trees matured. RISDA also subsidized the cost of growing short-term cash crops, such as sugarcane, papaya, and bananas, between rows of maturing trees.

Its subdistrict field staff provided villagers with new technical information on the care and tapping of rubber trees, and in 1979 they began distributing free fertilizer to those whose trees had matured and were being tapped, a program that was still in existence in 1988. In 1978 two-thirds of the Malay households in Sungai Raya that owned rubber or fruit lands had replanted all or nearly all their acreage with improved strains. In 1988 the headman estimated that at least 80 percent of the families who owned agricultural land had replanted their trees with high-yielding varieties of rubber, fruit, or other tree crops. Those who were replanting less than ten acres in rubber received M\$2,200 per acre from RISDA. Villagers replanting more than ten acres in rubber received a \$1,500 subsidy per acre.

In addition to encouraging villagers to rehabilitate old rubber and fruit orchards, RISDA and state agricultural extension personnel urged them to diversify their tree crops in order to increase their incomes and to protect themselves against drastic drops in the world commodity prices for rubber and oil palm. In the late 1970s a few Malays began replanting old rubber trees with oil palm, in response to the falling price of rubber and the soaring price of oil palm. In 1978 the headman and several other Malays received several hundred small coffee and cocoa plants as part of a program to encourage cultivation of potentially more profitable crops. The coffee seedlings died, but a few enterprising villagers began raising cocoa. During the early and mid-1980s, state agricultural extension agents distributed free fruit tree seedlings, insecticides, and herbicides and sold fertilizers at half price. These efforts were designed particularly to help poorer farmers.

In 1987 the extension agent, stationed three miles away, began a concerted effort to persuade more villagers to plant cocoa by outlining the financial advantages compared to other crops and offering to provide free seedlings and other agricultural materials for the first year and additional fertilizer at half price the following year. Fifteen villagers were given seedlings to plant a total of thirty acres. Later they were taken on an all-day tour to observe cocoa cultivation in another district. The following year an additional sixteen Malays were given cocoa seeds, plastic bags, topsoil, and fertilizer. In 1988 the headman estimated that 80 percent of the Malays who owned agricultural land had planted part of their acreage in cocoa. While Sungai Raya remained basically a rubber-producing community, the increasing diversification of its agricultural base may help to increase and stabilize the villagers' incomes.

During the 1980s the local agricultural extension agent encouraged the villagers to establish a community-wide organization to facilitate the dissemination of farming information and to distribute agricultural inputs. About 1980 the headman established a training and visiting organization (*Latihan dan Lawatan*). The "Two Ls" (*Dua L*), as the local organization was called, was led by the *ketua kampung*, who was assisted by a small executive

committee elected from the thirty to forty members. The committee included a few women. This was one of a number of similar organizations established in Johore after 1978 on a model developed earlier in the state of Kelantan. Initially the extension personnel met with the villagers twice a month to teach or to demonstrate improved agricultural practices, but slowly, as the members' farming expertise improved, the meetings were held less often until eventually in the mid-1980s they were held only once every three or four months. The members' concerns and problems normally dictated the focus of gatherings. During the early and mid-1980s, the *Dua L* distributed the free fruit seedlings, insecticides, and other agricultural materials provided by the state Department of Agriculture. In 1987 respondents reported that the advice and materials received through the *Latihan dan Lawatan* had contributed to the improvements in the villagers' agricultural expertise and the rise in their productivity.

Less than a decade after the training and visiting organization was established in Sungai Raya, the extension agent persuaded the villagers to disband their group and form an alternative organization called a group farming project (*Projek Ladang Berkelompok*). The new organization was based upon a model started in Malaysia in 1982 and introduced in Muar District in 1985. Whereas the *Dua L* organizations were designed to provide information for farmers, solve their problems, and distribute free and subsidized agricultural inputs, the new community-wide agricultural organizations were designed to maximize agricultural production by persuading villagers to work together in small groups on the basis of mutual cooperation. In the Sungai Raya area most of the *Dua L* organizations did not become group farming projects. They were only upgraded if the members had agricultural land that could be more effectively cultivated by group farming. Whereas the members of the *Dua L* organization in Sungai Raya established one group farming project, frequently, in other areas of the district, the members of two or three *Dua L* groups were combined to form a single project. While the focus of an individual group project's efforts was theoretically left up to the members, in practice the extension personnel used the new organizations as vehicles to encourage *kampung* residents to diversify their crops. In Muar District nearly all the new organizations focused on cocoa cultivation.

In Sungai Raya, the group farming project was organized in 1987 by the headman, who was assisted by a small executive committee. Membership was initially limited to those who were able to begin planting cocoa between rows of rubber and fruit trees that could provide the shade needed for the seedlings. Only about twenty Malays joined the new group initially because the state department of agriculture could only provide free seedlings for thirty acres. Encouraged by the extension agent, the villagers divided into five-member units and began working together on the basis of

mutual assistance to farm their cocoa acreage. A year later about twenty more Malays joined the project. They were given cocoa seeds, not seedlings as the initial members had received, and other agricultural inputs. Presumably other *kampung* residents will join the project as the state distributes more seeds and inputs or as more villagers invest in cocoa cultivation.

In another effort to raise the Malays' standard of living, a branch of the Farmers Organization Authority (*Lembaga Pertubuhan Peladang*) was established in Bukit Pasir in 1978. One of the roughly 400 branches throughout Malaysia, it was run as an agricultural cooperative with dues-paying members sharing the profits. Open to all Malaysians, the local branch of the Farmers Organization Authority (FOA) had a M\$1 registration fee, M\$1 dues, and a requirement that members invest at least M\$50 in the organization during the first year, funds that would be returned upon withdrawal. Nine years after the farmers association was started, its staff had risen from three to nine, it covered six subdistricts, the government had given it a large building in Bukit Pasir, and it was committed to paying the staff members' M\$6,000 monthly salary until 1990. In December 1987 the organization had 1,234 members who were grouped into eighteen units averaging thirty members each and eighteen smaller, temporary units. The members had invested M\$66,515 in their cooperative. The Sungai Raya unit, organized by the headman in 1985, had seventy-two members. Ten of them were women, most of whom were widows or wives of men living outside the community.

The local FOA branch provided a number of services for its members. It sold equipment such as hoes, sprayers, and grass cutters, as well as agricultural materials such as fertilizer, insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides. While these were sold to members and nonmembers at the market price, there was no risk that they had been diluted. Members who had invested at least M\$100 could buy some of their supplies on credit, but few did because most had not invested enough or because they were discouraged by the guarantees and paperwork involved. The farmers organization also bought scrap rubber weekly at slightly more than market price, and in 1988 it started buying cocoa and palm oil. In addition, it managed 168 acres belonging to some of the members, land that had been developed as a mini oil palm estate with a government loan. In 1988, seven years after this project began, it still had not produced a profit for the landowners. Besides these services, the branch also had a 1.5 ton truck and a driver that members could hire, as well as a savings program paying 6 percent that was similar to the service provided in the post office. When a member died, a small sum of money was normally given to his or her family. In 1985 members voted to establish a provision store in Bukit Pasir that sold a variety of household items. Unable to compete with the numerous Chinese shops in town, it closed in 1988.

The organization was governed by an elected board of directors, all of whom were members. This board established broad policies and determined the annual dividends paid to members. In the mid-1980s these averaged 10 percent, as they did in most FOA branches throughout the country. The board also established annual rebates paid to members who had bought agricultural supplies from the organization. Although it is difficult to determine how much membership in the association benefited individuals, the attention and interest evident during the annual meeting in 1987 suggested that the organization was clearly contributing to the rising standard of living in Sungai Raya and neighboring *kampungs*.

As part of the governments' efforts to raise rural incomes, the Veterinary Department provided cattle that the villagers could raise to eat or sell. In the 1970s a few *kampung* residents began raising cattle. Most of their stock was obtained under the government's *Lembu Pawah* program, which gave a villager a cow, provided that the first calf would be given to the government. In 1978, 16 percent of the Malay households were raising one to three head of cattle. A decade later the program had been so successful that the government stopped providing cattle to Sungai Raya. Malays wanting a calf applied to the *ketua kampung* and obtained one from a villager who had earlier received a cow under the program. Walking through Sungai Raya in 1987 it seemed clear that more cattle were being raised than earlier. Throughout the 1980s the Veterinary Department continued to provide free vaccinations for the Malays' cattle.

During this era of dramatic socioeconomic change in Sungai Raya, there was little change in the pattern of land ownership in the *kampungs*. In 1966, 60 percent of the Malay households owned at least two acres of land; 11 percent owned more than ten acres. Twelve years later 62 percent of the families owned at least two acres; 6 percent owned more than ten acres. Between 1966 and 1978, 15 percent of the Malay households increased their acreage; 7 percent of the Malay families sold part or all of their holdings. Most purchases and sales were of one to three acres. During the following decade a few wealthy villagers bought five or more acres of agricultural land outside Sungai Raya and a number of new residents purchased house lots in the community. In 1966 and 1978 the median landholding per Malay family was two acres. A decade later the headman estimated that there had been little change in the average Malay household's acreage. Given the number of new residents, it may have actually fallen by 1988.

The dramatic pattern of social and economic change in Sungai Raya and other *kampungs* during the two decades after 1966 profoundly influenced the villagers' economic attitudes. In the early 1960s most Malays in Sungai Raya admired the industriousness and entrepreneurial drive of the Chinese, but few wanted to emulate them. A teacher explained: "There are those who envy the Chinese for having so much money, but the envy ends there;

we don't wish to work for money as the Chinese do. This is our fault." During the next two decades there was a marked change in the villagers' economic orientation. This was particularly evident in 1987 among men and women in their late teens and early twenties. Many did not know how to tap rubber; most did not want to work as agricultural laborers. Some had moved to the cities to work after finishing secondary school. Young women still living in Sungai Raya were happy if they could commute by factory bus to work in Muar; young men wanted permanent employment in the big cities.

Repeatedly encouraged by national leaders and the government to venture into business, during the two decades after 1966 a growing number of villagers in Sungai Raya embarked on an increasing range of entrepreneurial activities. The two provision shops begun in the early 1960s eventually failed, as did other endeavors, but the villagers kept trying. In the mid-1970s a well-stocked provision store was opened by a villager who had started a business in another *kampung* with a government loan. By 1987 his store had expanded, the range of commodities had grown, and the value of merchandise had risen. A smaller concern begun by an older Malay in the late 1970s eventually closed, but in 1984 another well-stocked store opened, and three years later it was flourishing. In 1987 a woman who had formerly worked as a cook in Johore Bahru and who had later run the school canteen in Bukit Pasir opened a small provision shop that also served light meals, as well as hot and cold drinks. The canteen part of her very meagerly stocked shop closed in 1988 after the new religious school was constructed and the workmen stopped patronizing her business.

In the early 1970s several men began renting small, government-built stalls in Bukit Pasir where they sold coffee and cakes, used clothing, meat and vegetables, and other inexpensive items. They operated with pathetically small inventories. In 1987 six men were still selling coffee and cakes, vegetables, and fresh fish. In 1978 an enterprising Malay began making concrete building blocks, toilet bowls, and Malay gravestones. While this business did not last long, others did. That same year a retired policeman rented space in government-built shops in Muar for a son in Kuala Lumpur who wanted to open his own radio and television repair business. Eventually the son returned to a government job in the capital, and other family members turned the shop into a small restaurant, with a photocopying machine on the side.

During the 1980s the range of business activities expanded further. The headman became a small contractor, and the son of a semi-retired contractor went into the house-building business. A schoolteacher's sons began packaging palm oil that they bought in bulk from an oil palm estate. In 1987 they owned several trucks, had six employees, and sold palm oil in seventeen- and one-kilo containers to stores in Muar District. Another Malay, who was

one of the first to start growing cocoa, secured a license to buy and sell it. A retired soldier and two unemployed young men began raising mushrooms for sale. By the mid-1980s the wealthier *kampung* residents were clearly looking for new ways to maximize their incomes. Responding to a major sales campaign, by 1987 an estimated 60 percent of the adults in Sungai Raya had bought at least M\$10.00 worth of stock in the National Unit Trust (*Amanah Saham Nasional*), a special government-backed mutual fund for the Malays.

The rise in educational attainment and the change in economic attitudes were reflected in an eventual change in the pattern of employment. In 1966 and 1978 two-thirds of the men and one-third of the women aged twenty-one and older worked as unskilled laborers tapping rubber trees, cutting grass, clearing drainage canals, and so forth. The number of men working in "skilled" jobs such as truck drivers and carpenters, or in "semiprofessional" positions such as policemen and government clerks, rose from 11 to 18 percent. There was, however, far more occupational mobility than these figures suggest, since many of the best educated men had left Sungai Raya to work as policemen, soldiers, junior government officials, or teachers.

By 1987 there were further changes in the pattern of employment: the percentage of villagers engaged in unskilled agricultural jobs had dropped, and the percentage employed in "skilled" and "semiprofessional" jobs had risen, as had the number of teachers and civil servants living in the community. Furthermore, an increasing number of *kampung* residents were engaged in a variety of business activities, and many young women were working in factories in Muar. Whereas a decade earlier the best and the brightest young men and women had left Sungai Raya for white-collar jobs, in the mid-1980s they were employed in various professions such as engineering, medicine, and college teaching. One young man who had moved from Sungai Raya was a member of the state legislature; another was a banker in London.

The various amenities and agricultural programs provided during the two decades after 1966 contributed to a dramatic rise in the villagers' incomes. In 1966 the monthly Malay family income in Sungai Raya ranged from M\$10 to M\$500; the median income was M\$80.⁸ Twelve years later the monthly household earning in current dollars varied from M\$36 to M\$3,450, and the median income was M\$275.⁹ Adjusted for a 61 percent increase in the Consumer Price Index, the 1978 earnings in constant 1966 dollars ranged from M\$22 to M\$2,143 per month; the median income was M\$171.¹⁰ The real income of each quintile of the Malay households rose at least 100 percent between 1966 and 1978. While it was not possible to determine family incomes during the fieldwork in 1987 and 1988, it was possible to estimate the number of families who owned motorcycles. In 1978 one-fourth of the Malay households had a motorcycle. By contrast, in 1988

nearly three-fourths owned one or two motorcycles. The median Malay family income appears to have risen significantly during the 1980s.

A number of factors contributed to this increasing prosperity. The percentage of villagers employed in unskilled jobs had declined, and the percentage working in "skilled" and other better-paying jobs had risen. The number of wage earners in many homes had grown as young Malays married later than they had a generation earlier. Nearly all the families had replanted their agricultural land with improved strains of rubber and fruit trees that had matured and begun to yield. The increased acreage in fruit trees provided an important source of income during drops in the price of rubber. The yield per acre had risen because of the Malays' improved farming methods and because of the increased use of agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, insecticides, and herbicides. Many households received financial help from children who had moved away, usually to urban areas. In 1978, 37 percent of the families received assistance from their children, ranging from M\$5 to M\$350 per month. The median contribution was M\$60. Finally, the meager earnings of a few families, especially those headed by widows and divorcees, were supplemented by small monthly allowances from the Department of Social Welfare.

While villagers readily acknowledged an income disparity among the *kampung* residents, in 1987 and 1988 they continued to insist that there was no social gap between the haves and the have-nots. One knowledgeable community leader said, "It can't happen in Islam." The men's attendance at Friday prayers in the mosque and other religious activities, as well as the villagers' continued participation in social activities, such as preparations for weddings, helped to maintain social bonds within the community.

Although not all families had shared equally in the community's rising standard of living, the growing prosperity was very evident in 1978. Forty-seven percent of the Malay families had repaired or improved their homes between 1966 and 1978, at a median cost of M\$945. Whereas in 1966 only 56 percent of the Malay houses used corrugated iron roofing rather than thatch (*atap*), twelve years later 87 percent used the more durable material. In 1988 the rise in prosperity was even more obvious. As noted earlier, the number of families with a television set had risen from 4 percent in 1966 to more than 90 percent in 1988. The rise in the number of cars was as dramatic as the above-mentioned increase in the number of motorcycles. In 1966 only 2 percent of the households owned a car; twelve years later 13 percent did so, and a decade later 18 percent had one or more cars. In mid-1988 nearly every Malay family with a male wage earner owned a motorcycle or car. During the initial study none of the Malay families had a telephone. Two decades later 14 percent had a phone. Several villagers explained that as the *kampung* residents' incomes had risen, they first improved the kitchen or other parts of their homes, then they bought a car, and still later they purchased more

land. Eventually, as their savings rose, they went to Mecca. Finally, in the mid-1980s some of them began to invest seriously in the government-backed National Unit Trust mutual fund.

TABLE 6.2 Percentage of Malay Households Owning Major Consumer Items

Item	1966 %	1978 %	1988 %
Piped Water	18	71	95*
Electricity	45	79	95*
Radio	37	65	95*
Television	4	48	95*
Motorcycle	6+	27	70*
Car	2	13	18
Telephone	0	3	14
(Number of cases)	(136)	(159)	(188)

*Estimates by the Village Headman.

+This figure includes both motorcycles and motorscooters.

Uneven Development

While the pattern of development in Sungai Raya has been very successful, it has had its economic and social drawbacks. The rural development programs have raised agricultural productivity and household incomes, but they have not significantly increased employment opportunities in the *kampungs*. During the 1980s, especially after the onset of the 1985–86 recession, an increasing number of young men and women have been unable to secure permanent work after finishing the eleventh grade (Form V). They did not know how to tap rubber and were not interested in “dirty” agricultural jobs. Whereas factories in Muar provided work for some girls, there were few unskilled jobs for boys in the Sungai Raya area.¹¹

In 1987 at least fifteen young women were commuting to town in company buses to work in American and French-owned factories producing semiconductors and radios. As the women worked, young men gathered in provision shops and in bicycle sheds along the edge of the road in Sungai Raya to chat, to search the employment sections of the newspapers, and to smoke cigarettes. Although many of the male school leavers had periodically held temporary jobs, about twenty-five young men had never been able to obtain employment. Many had been without work for two or three years; one I met had been unable to find work for six years.

Another young man, a mechanical engineer trained at Syracuse University in the United States, was part of the 35,000 unemployed "graduates" the Malaysian press discussed daily. Unable to find employment as an engineer, he decided to work for his father buying and selling cocoa.

The development strategies that have raised the villagers' standard of living also have contributed to the growing income inequality among rural Malay households. In 1966 the top fifth of the families in Sungai Raya received 49 percent of the total Malay income, while the bottom fifth got 6 percent. In 1978 the top quintile obtained 59 percent of the total earning, and the lowest quintile received 5 percent. The inequality was even more pronounced if one compared the highest and lowest deciles. In 1966 the top tenth received 33 percent of the income and the bottom tenth earned 3 percent; twelve years later the top decile obtained 47 percent of the Malay income and the bottom received only 2 percent. In 1987 and 1988 key informants reported that everyone's income had risen during the previous decade, but that the income gap had not increased. However, the new homes, household furnishings, and cars of the retired soldiers, teachers, and other civil servants who had moved into the community suggested that the income inequality may have increased further during the 1980s.

Notes

1. Shamsul reports that in the early 1980s the state representatives in Selangor, who were members of the ruling party, received M\$120,000 annually for special development projects in their constituencies, while the members of Parliament received M\$100,000 annually for similar expenditures. Shamsul A. B., *From British to Bumiputera Rule: Local Politics and Rural Development in Peninsular Malaysia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), 196.

2. In 1988 a study by the Johore Economic Planning Unit reported that 82 percent of the villages in Johore had electricity and that 75 percent had piped water, (*The New Straits Times* [Times Two: South], 6 July 1988, 1).

3. One cannot help but ponder the possible confusion felt by adolescent Malays who attended two to four hours of religious instruction in the afternoon and then had access to *The Love Boat* and *Dynasty* in the evening.

4. The use of land and basic amenities as political patronage in the state of Selangor is described in Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 48-51; in Shamsul A. B., *From British to Bumiputera Rule* and in his "The Politics of Poverty Eradication: The Implementation of Development Projects in a Malaysian District," *Pacific Affairs* 56, no. 3 (Fall 1983), 455-76.

5. *Sepak raga* is a traditional Malay game in which players in a circle kick a small rattan ball from one side of the circle to the other. *Sepak takraw* is a similar game in which teams of three players kick the ball over a net.

6. The Islamic resurgence in Malaysia is described in Zainah Anwar, *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia: Dakwah Among the Students* (Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications (M) Sdn. Bhd., 1987); Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Islamic Revivalism and the Political Process in Malaysia," *Asian Survey* 21, no. 10 (October 1981), 1040-59; Clive S. Kessler, "Malaysia: Islamic Revivalism and Political Dissatisfaction in a Divided Society," *Southeast Asia Chronicle* no. 75 (October 1980), 3-11; Diane K. Mauzy and R. S. Milne, "The Mahathir Administration in Malaysia: Discipline through Islam," *Pacific Affairs* 56, no. 4 (Winter 1983-84), 617-48; Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya: Penerbit Fajar Bakti Sdn. Bhd., 1987); Judith Nagata, *The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam: Modern Religious Radicals and Their Roots* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984); and Jomo Kwame Sundaram and Ahmad Shabery Cheek, "The Politics of Malaysia's Islamic Resurgence," *Third World Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (April 1988), 843-68.

7. The method used to estimate the number of residents is explained in chapter 1, footnote 7.

8. The initial census of Sungai Raya did not obtain information on Malay family incomes. However, during the 1966 surveys of half the men and one-fourth of the women aged seventeen or older, respondents were shown or read a card with incomes ranging from M\$1 to M\$500 or above and were asked to indicate "your family income, including wages or income from land, or welfare, or other income." Estimates of households were obtained from 70 percent of the Malay families; the median income calculated from this information is very similar to that found in other studies of Malay *kampung*s in the mid-1960s.

9. In 1976 the median monthly Malay household income in current dollars was M\$229 throughout Peninsular Malaysia. Government of Malaysia, *Mid-Term Review of Third Malaysian Plan 1976-1980* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1979), 44.

10. Differences in the methods used to collect data may have inflated the rise in household earnings. Whereas in 1966 Malay survey respondents were asked to indicate total family income from a range of figures on a card that was shown or read to them, during the 1978 census every household head was asked a series of questions on all possible sources of earnings and the monthly household income was computed with the respondent's assistance.

11. During the 1970s there was a dramatic rise in the number of young Malay village women working in labor-intensive, export-oriented industries. See Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline* and her "Global Industries and Malay Peasants in Peninsular Malaysia," in *Women, Men and the International Division of Labor* edited by June Nash and Maria Patricia Fernandez-Kelly (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 426-41.

Political Continuity and Change

Political Continuity

While the two decades after 1966 were a time of dramatic socioeconomic development in Sungai Raya, it was also a period of both political continuity and change. Although there had been a noticeable rise in the level of political involvement in the *kampungs* during the first decade after independence, by the mid-1960s the pattern of political activity in the community had become routinized. The second survey of Sungai Raya in 1978 indicated little change in the men's overall level of political involvement and only a marginal rise in the women's involvement in politics. This continuity reflected the politically safe nature of the Sungai Raya area, the decline of partisan competition in Johore, and the depoliticization of Malaysian politics after the 1969 violence in the federal capital. It also reflected the institutionalization of Malay political hegemony after 1969, UMNO's post-1969 efforts to increase Malay support, and the villagers' perception that UMNO and the government were trying to raise the Malays' standard of living.

Political involvement, as used in this analysis, has three distinct dimensions: awareness of government and politics and their relevance to one's own life, concern about politics, and political participation. Participation was defined earlier as an endeavor to influence policy decision making and policy implementation. When the villagers of Sungai Raya were surveyed in 1966 and 1978, there were striking differences between men and women in terms of their awareness, concern, and participation. Young men and women aged seventeen to twenty were better informed than older Malays, many of whom were illiterate. The continuity and change in the villagers' political involvement during this decade is more evident if the men, women, and youths are examined separately.

Political Awareness

During the second decade after independence, the level of political awareness in Sungai Rava ranged from those who did not know the name of the prime minister to those who resented the government's using funds to assist Vietnamese refugees that might otherwise be used to help poor Malays. Most villagers knew that UMNO was the dominant Malay party, that it controlled the government, and that the regime was trying to raise the Malays' standard of living. However, in 1978 many still did not understand the distinction between UMNO and the UMNO-led ruling coalition. The prime minister and the dynamic state assemblyman from the Sungai Rava area were household names, but other prominent leaders were not well known.

There was almost no growth in the men's political sophistication during this decade. As Table 7.1 shows, in 1966 only half could accurately distinguish between UMNO and the ruling Alliance Party. Twelve years later less than half could explain the difference between UMNO and the governing National Front. Similarly, when asked in 1966 which party had won the election two years before, only one-third correctly identified the Alliance Party; most mentioned UMNO. Four months after the short, intense 1978 campaign, in which UMNO spearheaded the government's election efforts, only half the men realized that the National Front had won. Others thought it had been UMNO.

TABLE 7.1: Political Awareness

	Men 21 or older		Women 21 or older		Boys 17-20		Girls 17-20	
	1966	1978	1966	1978	1966	1978	1966	1978
	N		N		N		N	
Distinguished between UMNO and Alliance in 1966 or UMNO and National Front in 1978	73	41	1	16	11	0	1	6
Identified which party won the last election	31	17	1	8	36	53	1	53
Number of cases	621	707	431	767	141	207	101	181

There was remarkably little change over the years in the men's knowledge of key political leaders. Nearly all could name the prime minister in 1966 and 1978, and three-fourths could identify the deputy prime minister when given his name. On the other hand, many did not know the names of less prominent figures who were frequently mentioned in the mass media. In 1966, for example, only half could identify Khir Johari, minister of education and a well-known UMNO leader. Twelve years later slightly more could identify Datuk Musa Hitam, who was minister of education and widely regarded as a possible future prime minister. Similarly, in the initial survey fewer than half could identify Ahmad Boestaman, a well-known left-wing Malay opposition leader. In the second survey, half the men correctly identified Datuk Asri Haji Muda, until recently the head of the Islamic Party and the leading Malay opposition spokesman. Many did not know the leaders of the other ethnic communities. In 1966 half were able to identify Tan Siew Sin, who was minister of finance and head of the Malaysian Chinese Association. In 1978 fewer than half could identify Lim Kit Siang, leader of the Democratic Action Party and probably the most important non-Malay politician in Malaysia.

Whereas the men's level of awareness remained consistent during this period, the women's meager knowledge of national affairs increased, reflecting their rising levels of education and exposure to the mass media. At the time of the first survey, none of the women interviewed could distinguish between UMNO and the ruling Alliance Party, and virtually none knew which party had won the previous election. During the second survey, however, a sixth could differentiate between UMNO and the National Front, and nearly a fifth realized that the Front had triumphed in the recent election. Still, the women's knowledge of national leaders remained considerably lower than that of the men, for while nearly two-thirds of the women could name the prime minister in 1978, only one-fourth could identify Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, the deputy prime minister. One-sixth knew who Datuk Musa Hitam was, but virtually none could identify key opposition leaders.

The most dramatic rise in awareness was among the *kampung* youth aged seventeen to twenty, a fact that reflected significant socioeconomic changes in the community during the previous decade. In 1966 half the young men and most of the young women had only an elementary school education. The local UMNO leaders made no effort to include them in branch activities. By 1978, however, the youth's level of education had risen; many were in the upper grades of secondary school. Many of the young men and women were involved in social activities sponsored by the local UMNO branch.

In 1966 only a fifth of the boys could distinguish between UMNO and the Alliance, and none of the girls could do so. That year only one-third of the young men knew which party had been victorious in the previous election,

and none of the girls realized that the Alliance had won. By contrast, in 1978 three-fourths of the young men and half of the young women could differentiate between UMNO and the National Front. Nearly all of them knew that the National Front had prevailed in the recent election. The young men and women were more knowledgeable about national leaders than the older villagers. In both 1966 and 1978, the boys were more politically sophisticated than the girls. Whereas most of the boys could identify key opposition leaders, almost none of the girls could do so.

Political Concern

The continuity in the Malays' level of political awareness was reflected in their lack of concern about national affairs. Few villagers talked about politics with friends or acquaintances. *Kampung* residents claimed that they were not interested in such matters, that they did not know enough about politics to discuss it, that they were too busy with work or household duties to be concerned about national affairs, or that politics was the responsibility of politicians, not rural folk. Some older men felt that politics was potentially controversial and should be avoided when talking with friends. In 1966 nearly one-fourth of the men discussed politics at least weekly. Several months after the 1978 election, only a fifth of the men indicated that they talked about politics this often. Among women interest was even lower, but it was rising slowly. During the initial survey, 5 percent of the women interviewed said that they discussed politics weekly; twelve years later 8 percent of them said that they did so. Interest also rose among *kampung* adolescents. In 1966 only a tenth of the young men talked about politics at least weekly, and none of the young women did so. Four months after the 1978 campaign, one-third of the boys and one-third of the girls said that they discussed politics this often.

Political Participation

The scope and level of participation were influenced by the villagers' perceptions of politics. They viewed their community as "an UMNO village," thought of the government as an UMNO government, believed that the party had assisted in raising their standard of living, and thought that UMNO was the only Malay party that could advance their political and communal interests. Few *kampung* residents felt there was any reason to become actively involved in politics between elections. Many villagers, especially men, understood that the local UMNO branch could request additional assistance and that the UMNO-led regime used rural develop-

ment projects and government services as patronage. They, like the Malays in the villages Ong, Scott, and Shamsul studied, recognized that joining UMNO enhanced their chances of getting government benefits.¹ When asked in 1978 why he had joined a political party, one rubber tapper with a sixth-grade education and above-average level of political awareness explained:

When we ask for any kind of [government] form, they ask if we are UMNO members. We want to increase the membership. If membership is small, then it is difficult to get assistance.... If we have a large voice, the government will give in to us.

There were basically three levels of political participation in Sungai Raya during this period. A number of politically apathetic residents did not participate in any form of political activity. Many villagers were marginally involved in activities designed directly or indirectly to influence the formulation and implementation of government policy. A few were actively engaged in efforts to affect the political system. In 1966 and 1978, the most common forms of marginal participation were joining a political party, attending local branch meetings, and voting in national elections. The key modes of active participation were contacting government officials to secure assistance for the community and mobilizing electoral support before national elections.

The proportion of men who were dues-paying UMNO members rose very little during this period, a time when the national party endeavored to increase its membership and the number of local branches doubled throughout Malaysia. As Table 7.2 shows, in 1966 nearly three-fourths of the men were party members. They explained that they had enrolled in UMNO because they felt it was the party and protector of the Malays, because they wanted to strengthen the Malays' political power, or because they liked UMNO and approved of its policies. One rubber tapper in his mid-twenties acknowledged, "I joined because I think I can fight for the Malay race, the Malay country, and Malay religion. If we don't fight for our race, who will?" Many older men signed up partly or wholly because of social pressure. An illiterate unskilled laborer in his late forties explained, "I think it's better for me to join rather than exclude myself from the others. If others join, I too shall join. It is not a good idea to be different from others." Twelve years later just over three-fourths of the men were party members. The most common reasons given for joining were that Sungai Raya was an UMNO village and others supported the party, that UMNO should be strengthened, that membership facilitated securing governmental assistance for the community, and that UMNO protected the Malays' special rights. An elderly rubber tapper who was seldom exposed to the news media and had a very low level of political awareness stated that he had joined UMNO

because "UMNO helped to get independence. UMNO has existed from the past until today, and I will always be a member, no matter what happens. After all, we live in a village; we must follow the village headman. The headman is an UMNO person, and we should be likewise."

TABLE 7.2 Political Participation

Activity	Men		Women		Boys		Girls	
	21 or older		21 or older		17-20		17-20	
	1966	1978	1966	1978	1966	1978	1966	1978
	%		%		%		%	
Member of UMNO	71	79	10	84	21	15	10	59
Attended branch UMNO meeting in past year	47	51	0	53	21	20	0	53
Voted in last election	79	76	63	76	*	*	*	*
Worked in last election campaign	19	36	5	12	0	10	0	12
Contacted an official on behalf of the community	16	17	0	1	0	10	0	6
(Number of cases)	(62)	(70)	(43)	(76)	(14)	(20)	(10)	(18)

*Most were too young to vote.

Whereas most of the men who did not enroll in UMNO in 1966 were politically apathetic, some refused to join in 1978 because they opposed the party and supported its chief rival, PAS. The men who declined invitations to join ranged in age from early twenties to late sixties. While their exposure to the news media was slightly lower than that of the branch members, their levels of education and political awareness were higher.

Although three-fourths of the men paid the annual party dues, only half attended the yearly general branch meeting. In a politically safe area such as Sungai Raya, the *kampung* leaders did not feel any need to marshal maximum attendance. In 1966 and 1978, the more politicized men attended because of their interest in politics and communal issues; others went

because of social pressure or a desire to be with friends. The featured event at the local gathering was a long politicizing address by the state assemblyman or his representative. They extolled UMNO's record in attaining independence, in preserving the Malays' special rights, and in promoting rural development. With the rise of newspaper readership and television viewing, the *kampung* meetings became less important as a source of political information. They remained important, however, as a means of fostering the men's allegiance to UMNO as the guardian of the Malays and of sustaining their sense of identification with prominent state and division-level party leaders.

During this period there was little change in the percentage of men voting. Two years after the 1964 campaign, 79 percent of the men recalled having voted; four months after the 1978 contest, 76 percent said they had balloted. Most who did not vote in these elections were not registered, were sick, or were away from the *kampung* on election day. While some men were not on the election rolls because they simply had not bothered to register, a few others were not registered because they had recently moved to Sungai Raya.

In contrast to the pattern of continuity among the men, the women's level of participation rose dramatically during this period. In 1966 most women were politically apathetic. That year a male UMNO branch leader observed: "Most women don't want to be bothered with such matters as politics. Most of them are concerned with their homes and children. They don't understand politics. . . . Politics does not reach them." At that time 10 percent of the women were UMNO members. Most of these were married to or related to prominent men with above-average incomes who had enrolled them in the party. Others, using culturally sanctioned, self-deprecating comments, explained that they had not joined a party because they were "stupid," "uneducated," "didn't know anything," or because "people didn't ask me." No effort was made to recruit women at that time because they were not interested in politics, because the men felt that politics was not a proper concern for *kampung* women, and because the local leaders were confident that women would vote as instructed by their husbands or by socially prominent villagers. Furthermore, the branch chairman thought that one membership per family was sufficient.

By 1978 the situation was strikingly different. UMNO had begun a nationwide effort to mobilize all Malays behind the party. Eighty-four percent of the women were dues-paying members. Social pressure prompted many to join, just as it had influenced many men a decade earlier. Nearly one-third of the women acknowledged that they had joined the party because "Sungai Raya is an UMNO village," because "others like it," or because they had "just followed others." One illiterate rubber tapper in her late forties, who watched television newscasts daily, admitted that she

joined UMNO "because all my friends are UMNO members. If I don't join, I wouldn't feel right."

During this period there was a dramatic rise in the women's attendance at branch meetings. In 1966 only a few women went to local party gatherings, and those who did worked in the kitchen preparing refreshments for the men. In 1978 half of the women joined the annual branch meeting. For many, attendance was primarily a social affair with little or no political significance. Presumably most men could follow the long politicizing speeches at these gatherings, but many women lacked the interest, background, and vocabulary to understand the lengthy harangues about UMNO's achievements.

There was little change in the proportion of women voting during this decade. In 1966 two-thirds of the women who were old enough cast their ballots. As Table 7.2 indicates, three-fourths voted in 1978. Despite the rise in party membership, attendance at branch meetings, and exposure to the news media, most women still could not distinguish between UMNO and the ruling party. Aware that UMNO was the party and guardian of the Malays, villagers continued to perceive voting essentially as an expression of communal solidarity.

There was no significant change in the *kampung* youth's marginal participation during this period. Single men and women, especially those still in school, were considered adolescents, and older Malays were not interested in their opinions. Local party stalwarts were not concerned about recruiting villagers before they were old enough to vote, nor were they anxious about training future branch leaders. Although all Malays sixteen and older were eligible to join UMNO, the *kampung* leaders continued to feel that youngsters should not become involved in politics until they completed school, lest their studies suffer. Little effort was made to enroll villagers under twenty years of age.

During the initial survey, 21 percent of the young men claimed to be UMNO members. Twelve years later only 15 percent indicated that they had enrolled in the party. Fifty-five percent of the boys erroneously thought they were too young. A fifth of those surveyed explained that they had not joined because they did not know anything about politics. During this period the percentage of young women belonging to UMNO rose from zero to 59. In 1978 nearly half the girls thought they were not old enough to join UMNO. Half of those who were members had enrolled partly or wholly because of social pressure. The rise in the youth's attendance at local branch meetings followed the same pattern. The higher attendance rate among young women may reflect more sensitivity to social pressure.

While there was considerable change in the level of *marginal* participation in Sungai Raya between 1966 and 1978, there was little change in the pattern of *active* involvement in the political process. In 1966 a sixth of the

men approached their assemblyman to ask his help in obtaining assistance for Sungai Raya. That same year, a sixth of the men indicated that at some time in the past they had sought governmental aid for the community. Acting as leaders of the UMNO branch, as members of the village development and security committee, or as individuals, they asked the authorities to construct a medical clinic in Bukit Pasir, to install piped water and electricity in the remote parts of Sungai Raya, to repair the mosque, to build a community hall, to standardize the textbooks, and to increase the number of teachers in the afternoon religious school.

In 1978 a similar proportion of men actively sought governmental assistance for the community. That year 7 percent sought help from the assemblyman for Sungai Raya or for other individuals in the *kampungs*. Seventeen percent indicated that they had approached the government at some point in an effort to obtain aid for the community. Assuming that not all these men were still involved in efforts to secure help, it seems realistic to conclude that in 1978 at least a tenth of the men were actively trying to get help from the authorities. They approached the assemblyman and the government as individuals or as leaders of various organizations, including the UMNO branch, the village development and security committee, and the parent-teachers' association (*Persatuan Ibu Bapa dan Guru-Guru*). Most requests were typed and submitted in multiple copies through the UMNO branch or the development committee. Occasionally, *kampung* groups, such as the parent-teachers' association, organized special meetings addressed by a prominent political leader for the sole purpose of asking him for further assistance. In the mid-1970s the activists sought numerous forms of assistance, such as improving the mosque and roads, providing additional facilities for the elementary schools, and granting more scholarships for *kampung* children. In hopes of persuading the authorities to allocate additional benefits, one man even wrote a letter to a newspaper describing the conditions in Sungai Raya. Having secured most of the major items requested in the 1960s, in 1978 the villagers sought less-essential items, such as repair and expansion of the washing area next to the old prayer house, a new fence and canteen at one of the elementary schools, and playground equipment for the families living at the police station on the edge of Sungai Raya.

The most significant form of active participation was the mobilization of support during national elections. In 1966 a fifth of the men and a twentieth of the women reported that they had worked in the 1964 campaign. They urged people to vote for UMNO, showed others how to mark their ballots, passed out campaign literature, conducted a house-to-house canvass of the community, helped voters get to the polls, or worked at Alliance information booths near the polling stations. The *kampung* activists organized two election rallies in Sungai Raya and helped to arrange two others in nearby

Bukit Pasir. On election day, cars, taxis, and bicycles were used to transport voters to the polling stations. Twice as many men and women participated in the 1978 effort to arouse support for the National Front. These villagers served in a number of subcommittees, whose responsibilities ranged from "psychological warfare" and transporting voters to the polls to providing refreshments and securing absentee ballots for voters temporarily away from the community.

Political Opinions

The continuity in the villagers' political involvement was paralleled by persistent opinions of UMNO and the government. Increasingly exposed to the government controlled news media, they continued overwhelmingly to support UMNO. Numerous forms of governmental assistance encouraged their perception of the regime as concerned about the Malays' welfare and capable of raising their standard of living. Furthermore, the periodic mobilization of electoral support reinforced the community's identification with UMNO, its leaders, and its policies.

The men's satisfaction with the regime's effort on behalf of the Malays rose slightly during this period. As Table 7.3 shows, in 1966 and 1978 two-thirds of the men indicated that they thought the government was concerned about the welfare of *kampung* residents. During the first survey, nearly two-thirds said the government had done enough to help the Malays. Twelve years later, three-fourths of the men said the government had done enough. They cited numerous programs as evidence of the regime's concern and its accomplishments on their behalf. These included providing land for landless villagers, installing piped water and electricity in rural areas, furnishing agricultural assistance such as fertilizer and seed, establishing special banks and programs to assist Malays in business, and building schools, roads, and mosques. One rubber tapper in his mid-fifties, who was a member of the UMNO branch executive committee, expressed the views of many:

We have received prayer houses, roads, drainage canals, and a clinic. Our schoolchildren get textbook assistance, and some receive scholarships. The villagers get subsidies from the Agricultural Department and cattle from the Veterinary Department. During the colonial period, before independence and when Malaysia was known as Malaya, we had no roads, no subsidies, no schools compared to now. I observe that the government is concerned and that it is up to us to apply. Usually all projects are carried out, although not all at once. While slow, all will be completed.

TABLE 7.3 Political Opinions

	Men 21 or older		Women 21 or older		Boys 17-20		Girls 17-20	
	1966	1978	1966	1978	1966	1978	1966	1978
	%		%		%		%	
<hr/>								
Government is concerned about villagers								
Agree	76	83	46	52	79	90	70	83
Disagree	13	10	14	3	21	10	10	6
Don't Know	11	7	40	45	0	0	20	11
<hr/>								
Government has done its best to help Malays enjoy more comfortable lives								
Agree	61	77	46	42	36	70	80	89
Disagree	21	19	27	1	57	25	10	0
Don't Know	18	4	27	57	7	5	10	11
<hr/>								
(Number of cases)	(62)	(70)	(43)	(76)	(14)	(20)	(10)	(18)
<hr/>								

Although all the villagers benefited directly or indirectly from the government's rural development programs, nearly a fifth of the men continued to feel that the government had not done enough to assist the Malays. In 1978 some of the dissatisfied contended that the government could not possibly do enough because so many villagers needed help. Several charged that the bureaucracy moved too slowly, while a few complained that governmental programs primarily benefited the well-to-do or that the poor did not receive the benefits they deserved because of corruption and favoritism. One disenchanted villager in his mid-twenties, with a strong interest in Islam and an above-average level of political awareness, charged that the government "helps only a certain group of Malays. The rich will be even richer. For example, giving logging licenses, government lands are given to strong party people or to relatives. Favoritism is practiced. . . . Actually, help should be given to those who really need it and not to a select few."

Just as the men in Sungai Raya retained their support for the government, virtually all men remained steadfast in their support of UMNO. Four

months after the 1978 election, 59 percent of the men named UMNO as their favorite political party, 17 percent mentioned the National Front, and 4 percent listed PAS. There was little change in the reasons men gave for supporting their party. In both surveys they explained that they liked UMNO or the ruling coalition because it promoted rural development, it was a Malay party, it protected the Malays' language and religion, or its politics were moderate. Many of the men's sentiments in 1978 were expressed by a villager in his late fifties who watched television newscasts daily, but who had a below-average level of political awareness. He observed, "UMNO is a Malay party. UMNO made Malay the official language. It helps a portion of the Malays who are poor, by giving welfare, land, etc."

The women's political opinions continued to reflect their low level of involvement. Many expressed views of the government and UMNO that appeared to be merely reflections of community sentiments and social pressure. Whereas nearly all the men could voice political judgments, in both surveys only half the women did so. Those who did were not as articulate as the men.

In both surveys half the adult women indicated that they thought the government was concerned about the welfare of rural Malays; nearly all the rest did not express an opinion. Those that thought the government cared cited specific improvements in rural areas as evidence of its interest. Especially in 1978, they explained that the Malays' lives would be much more difficult if the regime were not concerned about them. A woman in her mid-twenties with a sixth-grade education, who read a newspaper daily and had an above-average level of political sophistication, explained: "The government is concerned. If it were not concerned, there would be no change in this village. Furthermore, in the past in this village it was difficult for people to get cattle, secondary schooling, and scholarships, but now we have already gotten them through the UMNO committee."

The women's evaluations of the government's efforts on behalf of the Malays continued to reflect their poor comprehension of the news media and limited understanding of the socioeconomic changes that had occurred in Malaysia and in Sungai Raya. Whereas an increasing proportion of the men expressed satisfaction with the regime's accomplishments, there was no shift in the women's sentiments. As Table 7.3 indicates, more than half were unable to voice an opinion about the government's achievements.

As one would expect, virtually all the women in Sungai Raya continued to support UMNO. In both surveys the most common reason given for preferring UMNO was that others in the *kampung* backed it. Two years after the 1964 election, a literate housewife in her thirties noted "Many people say cross [vote for] UMNO; I just follow. I don't know anything else. My heart likes only UMNO." Four months after the 1978 campaign, a politically

uninformed, middle-aged woman with below-average income acknowledged that she liked UMNO because "everyone likes UMNO. Furthermore, UMNO has provided progress." In 1966 few women mentioned support for UMNO because it was the party of the Malays, but twelve years later one-fourth explained that they backed UMNO because it was the "party of the Malays."

There was little change in the youth's political opinions during this era, in which young *kampung* residents attained hitherto unimagined levels of social mobility based upon secondary and higher education. Too young to assume adult responsibilities in the home, community, or party, most did not perceive the personal relevance of politics. In both surveys the village adolescents were not as critical of the government and UMNO as the older men. In 1966 and 1978 more than three-fourths of the young people indicated that they felt the government was concerned about the welfare of rural Malays. As evidence of its interest they mentioned such improvements in the rural areas as roads, piped water, electricity, mosques, and schools. An increasing proportion of the young men, from one-third in 1966 to two-thirds in 1978, thought the government had done enough to assist the *kampung* dwellers. As Table 7.3 indicates, the approval rate remained very high among the young women.

Returning to Sungai Raya in 1987 to collect data on social and economic changes in the community, I was immediately struck by the increase in the Malays' access to the mass media, the apparent rise in their exposure to newspapers and television, and their greater travel to urban areas by motorcycles and cars. While no effort was made to try to measure changes in their patterns of political involvement, I sensed in talking with men and women of all ages that there had been a gradual rise in the Malays' level of political awareness, that there had been a small increase in the number of villagers engaged in active participation, and that nearly everyone in the community continued to support UMNO and the government. Although the headman estimated that 95 percent of the men and women eighteen and older were party members, most were not interested in politics. They were concerned about caring for their families, adhering to the prescriptions and proscriptions of their religion, earning a living, and finding urban employment for the *kampung* youth. In mid-1987, Prime Minister Mahathir had defeated his challenger for the presidency of UMNO but the subsequent split in the party had not occurred. Most Malays in Sungai Raya appeared to support the established party leadership and the pattern of politics that had provided so many benefits for the community.

The most important change in the villagers' political involvement had been the expansion in the scope of their participation. During the first two decades after World War II, participation focused on Malay political power and communal concerns. The leaders in Sungai Raya organized the local

party branch to work more effectively in ensuring Malay political dominance, in protecting Islam, and in preserving the Malays' special rights. In 1969 and 1974, the ruling UMNO-led coalition was unopposed in the Sungai Raya area and won every parliamentary seat in the state. After 1969 active participation rose and the scope of activities expanded. The *kampung* leaders increased their contacts with politicians and government officials in order to gain more assistance and amenities. Between elections participation focused on articulating and meeting individual and community needs.

Political Change

During these years of political continuity there were significant changes in the *kampung* political leadership and in the activities of the local UMNO branch. These developments reflected the institutionalization of Malay political hegemony in the UMNO-led National Front, the government's promotion of rural development programs, Johore's policy of combining politics and administration at the *kampung* level, and UMNO's use of rural development amenities and projects as patronage. Following its loss of votes in the 1969 election, UMNO sought to increase its political support by encouraging mass membership, by establishing the party as the key channel for securing government aid, and by promoting political participation under carefully prescribed and controlled limits. It skillfully used the thousands of local branches to develop a subjective sense of participation while actually denying the population any substantial influence on public policy and administration.

During the 1960s and 1970s the headman of Sungai Raya became the institutionalized leader of the community. In accordance with the state's unofficial policy, he became both the district government's representative in the *kampungs* and UMNO's spokesman in the community. In the late 1980s a former state assemblyman explained that the *ketua kampung* is a "political post." A very knowledgeable state official estimated that at least 80 percent of the headmen in Johore were also chairmen of their UMNO branches. Combining administrative and political roles at the village level facilitated the state and national governments' efforts to coordinate rural development, to provide additional services for the *kampungs*, and to increase their influence over the villagers' daily lives. It also enabled UMNO to exploit the headman's status and influence in the community to sustain support for the party.

The *ketua kampung* of Sungai Raya leads most of the important organizations and groups in the community. In addition to his role as headman and chairman of the village development and security committee, he is chairman of the UMNO branch, leader of the group farming project,

chairman of the parent-teachers association in one of the elementary schools, secretary of the *mukim* development and security committee, and a member of a district religious committee. The urbanization of his leadership roles is reflected in the large desk and swivel-backed chair at the rear of his front parlor where he usually meets individuals or groups seeking his advice or assistance. In addition to a telephone, he has a filing cabinet, typewriter, and numerous rubber stamps to endorse applications, forms, and requests that require his signature before *kampung* residents can submit them to schools and government offices.

As the institutionalized leader of the community, the headman has endless responsibilities and performs numerous roles. Thirty years ago his key role was to maintain harmony in the community; in the late 1980s he had become a gate keeper: deciding what government information and exhortations will be passed on to the *kampung* residents, and determining what individual and community needs would be sought from politicians and government officials. With virtually no formal power or authority, his status and influence depend upon his ability to organize and mobilize *kampung* support of government programs and his capacity to secure additional benefits for the community from UMNO and the government.

As in most *kampungs* in the state, the headman has served for several decades. When he was appointed in 1962, he was one of the ablest and best educated young men in his generation. The ablest young men of the next generation left the *kampungs* for education and employment in urban areas. Following Johore's adoption in the late 1980s of a policy of mandatory retirement of village headmen at sixty-five, it is not clear who will replace the *ketua kampung* in the mid-1990s.²

While some of the retired members of the armed forces and police that have moved into Sungai Raya have had experience dealing with politicians and government officials, many of them are not much younger than the headman. Although his annual allowance has been raised from M\$180 in 1962 to M\$1,200 in 1988, it hardly compensates for the demands on his time. Having invested so much responsibility and influence in the role of the headman, the state government and UMNO will have difficulty replacing him with an individual of comparable stature and ability.

The changes in the headman's roles were paralleled by changes in the leadership of the local UMNO branch after it began actively petitioning UMNO and the government for assistance. In the mid-1960s several teachers who had helped the headman organize the branch withdrew from active leadership to devote their time to other concerns. They were replaced by retired members of the police and armed forces who had settled in Sungai Raya and who exerted considerable influence in the community because of their education, income, and experience in dealing with the bureaucracy.

In 1987 the key members of the annually elected branch executive committee were the headman, his older brother who had been active in the branch for twenty years since his retirement from the police, and two retired soldiers. These men ranged in age from forty-eight to sixty-six. They, like the key UMNO leaders in the village Scott studied, were community leaders, not just party stalwarts.³ In addition to their positions in the branch, they were also members of the development and security committee, mosque committee, local unit of the Farmers Organization Authority, and other community-wide organizations. They reflected the urbanization and bureaucratization of the local UMNO leadership. They had above-average incomes, had telephones in their homes, owned automobiles, had experience interacting with politicians and government officials, and knew how to manipulate the political and bureaucratic systems. They had more in common with Malays in the urban areas than with their neighbors, most of whom still cultivated rubber and fruit trees.

The local branch's roles also changed during this period as the government expanded its programs and services in the rural areas and as UMNO increased its use of amenities as patronage. The *kampung* organization expanded its activities from merely sustaining party loyalty and mobilizing electoral support to promoting social welfare in the *kampungs*. The key branch leaders increasingly used the local party organization to articulate the religious, agricultural, economic, social, and recreational needs of the community.

In addition to the changes in the local political leadership, changes in the scope of the branch's activities in the *kampungs* increased membership in the party, expanded the range of UMNO-sponsored activities in the community, strengthened support for the party, and enhanced the leaders' ability to mobilize support. In 1968 the branch chairman established a woman's auxiliary called Kaum Ibu UMNO (Women's Section of UMNO). Organized in response to a directive from the party headquarters in town, the women's group was led by a woman with a sixth-grade education. She was married to the headman's nephew, who was a teacher and an active branch leader. All women who became party members were automatically also members of Kaum Ibu. Formation of the women's section did not significantly increase the number of women in the party because the villagers did not believe that politics was a proper concern for *kampung* women and because most felt they could not afford the M\$1.00 annual dues. Most of the initial members of the Kaum Ibu executive committee were appointed because of their age and status in the community. Some were illiterate; many knew very little about politics.

The character and role of the women's auxiliary began to change in the 1970s as the women's level of education rose, as their exposure to the mass media grew, and as the national party tried to increase its membership.

Kaum Ibu UMNO was renamed Wanita UMNO (UMNO Women) in 1971. Gradually more *kampung* women were persuaded they could afford UMNO's annual M\$1 dues, and better educated women began to serve in the auxiliary's executive committee. During the 1970s, the Wanita UMNO was led by the founder and the headman's niece, whose father was a retired policeman and active branch leader. The women's organization had its own leaders, held separate meetings several times a year, sent delegates to the division-level meetings and classes in town, and participated in a variety of social activities in Sungai Raya. In the mid-1970s the Sultan of Johore decorated the Wanita UMNO leader for her community service.⁴

Leadership of the local Wanita organization has been influenced by various factors. The men believe that political power and responsibility are male prerogatives. The key women share the men's perception of their organization as a supportive and subordinate section of the UMNO branch. Since formation of the women's auxiliary, the division Wanita UMNO organization in Muar has done little to strengthen it, declining to develop the leaders' skills in meeting the needs and interests of *kampung* women. Moreover, few women have the age, education, self-assurance, and speaking ability to lead a village-wide organization. Furthermore, some potential leaders among the brightest young women have emigrated from Sungai Raya to follow their husbands, advance their education, or gain improved employment.

The women's auxiliary in Sungai Raya has had little direct impact on the pattern of politics in the *kampungs*, but has had considerable indirect influence. Formation of the women's group has enabled the chairwoman and several other leaders to attend division-level meetings and classes in town. During election campaigns, several Wanita leaders have gone house to house to persuade women to vote for UMNO, and on the day of the balloting, Wanita leaders have served refreshments to villagers working in the campaign. However, the annual Wanita UMNO meetings in Sungai Raya, addressed by a woman from the division UMNO organization, have only momentarily heightened the *kampung* women's political awareness and concern.

Convinced that most women are politically indifferent, the Wanita leaders have concentrated on religious and social interests in order to sustain support and to heighten awareness of UMNO's role in promoting social welfare in the *kampungs*. For a number of years, the Wanita organization has sponsored a weekly Friday religious class for women in the *surau* in the main *kampung* and has supported the kindergarten in the community. The Wanita officers, as community leaders, prepare and serve refreshments at all major religious and political gatherings in Sungai Raya. In 1986 Wanita UMNO formed a *yasin* reading group that meets weekly to read aloud from selected verses in the Koran. In addition to these activities, the

group periodically sponsors sewing, cooking, and flower-arranging classes, as well as raising funds for funerals, serving meals at weddings, and organizing musical groups.⁵

In the late 1970s Wanita UMNO formed an ensemble in which women beat flat drums and chanted in Arabic. Frequently when politicians and other dignitaries arrived for an important event, they were met by a group of Wanita UMNO women dressed in matching sarongs and overblouses, who beat drums and chanted greetings. While this group was later disbanded for lack of interest, a similar religious choir (*nasyid*) was formed about 1980. Its young male UMNO members play music and young female members sing in Malay and Arabic. This group won a local contest shortly after it was formed and later performed in the national capital.

These seemingly politically insignificant activities have important roles in the long-term training of village leaders, the political socialization of *kampung* women, the maintenance of ties between the Wanita officers and the other women, and the periodic mobilization of electoral support. Organizing these activities provides leadership experiences for women in a society in which they traditionally exercise few leadership roles outside the household. The *kampung* women do not clearly differentiate between religious, social, and political activities in the community. They attend religious classes because of their interest in their faith, but they are aware that UMNO sponsors the classes and that it seeks to promote their religion. These classes, like the other social and religious activities organized by the Wanita leaders, have strengthened the women's identification with UMNO and their perception of it as a party concerned about their welfare.⁶ Furthermore, the leadership of these social events enhances the Wanita leaders' positions as community leaders and establishes personal ties with other women that are used to mobilize support during national elections.

In the late 1980s the Wanita UMNO auxilliary in Sungai Raya was one of fifty-eight Wanita organizations in sixty-eight party branches in the parliamentary constituency. It was still led by the founder, who displayed more self-esteem than most women and spoke easily in public. As the head of the women's auxilliary, she was automatically a member of the branch executive committee. She was also a member of the division Wanita UMNO executive committee. The key officers in the women's organization had above-average levels of education and family incomes and were married to teachers and other men who worked in urban areas. The ten-member executive committee included the headman's wife and his sister's daughter. Two of the committee in their mid-twenties worked as teachers for the Department of Community Development (KEMAS) and ran the Wanita UMNO-sponsored kindergarten in Sungai Raya. Their roles as government teachers and *kampung* UMNO leaders reflected the government's increas-

ing penetration into rural Malay society and its combining of administration and politics at the local level.

Each year Wanita leaders go from house to house in the *kampungs* recruiting members, talking about UMNO's efforts on the Malays' behalf, and collecting M\$1 in dues. Although Malays aged sixteen or older are eligible to join the party, the women usually only recruit women age eighteen or older, believing that girls should not become involved in politics until after completing their education. In 1987 several branch leaders estimated that 90 percent of the women were party members. However, only 50 to 60 percent of the female members attend the annual Wanita UMNO meetings at which the leadership is elected. As in the past, the auxiliary's religious and social activities in the *kampungs* are politically more significant than such overtly political activities as yearly gatherings.

In 1987 it appeared that the local Wanita organization would continue to be influenced by the politically safe nature of the area, the inadequate support of the division-level party headquarters in town, and the villagers' perception of politics. The women's successful organization of weddings and other traditional social and religious events demonstrated that some had basic leadership and organizational skills. Wanita UMNO could undertake more activities in the community if the officers received training in leadership classes, if they attended special classes related to women's concerns, and if the party sent speakers, teachers, and other resources from its headquarters and from government offices in Muar. With competent leadership and sufficient motivation, the *kampung* Wanita UMNO auxiliary could become an important instrument of social change and political socialization.

The scope of the UMNO activities in Sungai Raya was extended further about 1970 when the headman formed another branch auxiliary, Pemuda UMNO (UMNO Youth) in accordance with a directive from the UMNO division headquarters in town. All male party members from sixteen to forty years of age were automatically members of both this organization and the branch. Pemuda UMNO, like the women's auxiliary, had a hierarchical structure extending from the local branch to the division and then to state and national bodies. The local youth organization had its own chairman and executive committee, held separate meetings, sent delegates several times a year to division-level UMNO youth meetings and courses in town, and participated in a variety of nonpolitical activities, such as Koran reading contests and sports competitions. The leadership and membership of Pemuda UMNO often overlapped with that of Belia, the coeducational youth organization established in Sungai Raya in the mid-1960s. Within a few years of its formation, the Pemuda UMNO organization in Sungai Raya began to atrophy because so many young men had left the *kampungs*.

Over the years, the level and scope of Pemuda UMNO's activities have reflected both the officers' leadership abilities and the members' interests. During the 1970s it organized a *kompang* group that beat flat drums to welcome dignitaries arriving for political meetings and other gatherings in Sungai Raya and to accompany wedding parties arriving in the *kampungs*. The major youth activity was the sponsoring of martial arts (*silat*) groups that performed before dignitaries at the opening of festive meetings in Sungai Raya and nearby communities.⁷ The *silat* groups were subsequently disbanded for lack of interest. About 1980 Pemuda UMNO joined with younger members of Wanita UMNO to establish the *nasyid* group. Although several of the youth leaders attended division-level meetings and courses in town each year, Pemuda UMNO had few overtly political activities in the *kampungs* and was not assigned any major responsibilities in the election campaigns.

In 1987 the leadership of Pemuda UMNO reflected the urbanization and bureaucratization of the branch leaders. All the key officers, ranging in age from late twenties to mid thirties, worked in a school or offices in Muar. They had little in common with many of the younger men and unemployed adolescents in the *kampungs*. The ten-member executive committee headed a variety of subcommittees, or bureaus, concerned with economics, culture and sports, education and religion, and politics. Although all male party members under forty years of age were technically Pemuda members, only forty men were active in the youth organization. Pemuda UMNO's major activities in Sungai Raya included organizing various sports teams that played *sepak raga*, *sepak takraw*, badminton, and volleyball; sponsoring sports competitions with other villages; inviting religious speakers to the community; and initiating *gotong royong* efforts to clean the grounds around the mosque.

In the final analysis, Pemuda UMNO lacked motivation, responsibility, and resources. Most members did not feel there was any reason to be concerned about politics, few were interested in national affairs, and none of the branch leaders seemed concerned about training future *kampung* leaders. The older men's complete domination of the branch executive committee meant that the Pemuda officers did not have any significant responsibilities in the branch and never had an opportunity to develop as leaders. Finally, with little money from the party or from Pemuda-organized activities, the youth leaders were limited in the activities they could initiate in the *kampungs*. Like Wanita UMNO, the youth organization was essentially a social and religious group, and like the women's auxiliary, its political influence was indirect. Pemuda UMNO's activities in Sungai Raya strengthened the members' identification with the party, heightened their awareness of UMNO's efforts on their behalf, and established personal ties which the Pemuda leaders exploited during election campaigns.

During the 1970s, the local UMNO branch became the established channel for requesting further assistance from the government. The assemblyman acknowledged, as did the villagers and the government officials in town, that the most efficient way to secure benefits was to apply to the government through the UMNO division headquarters in Muar or to contact the assemblyman personally. Typed copies of the branch's requests were usually sent to the party headquarters in town, to the government departments concerned, and to the assemblyman in his dual capacity as the state representative from Sungai Raya and as head of the state government. These appeals frequently supplemented those sent by the village development and security committee.

Various incidents in 1978 demonstrated the villagers' growing perception of the branch as a prime source for obtaining rural development assistance and of the party or government as a horn of plenty. Early that year the assemblyman asked the UMNO branches in two subdistricts to submit lists of improvements needed in their communities. The Sungai Raya UMNO executive committee compiled a list of projects costing M\$30,000. Later, however, the chairman thought of other items that the community could use. These were added to the list, which eventually totaled M\$83,000. The expanded requests included funds to pave several dirt roads in the area, to build a new prayer house, to repair and expand the washing area next to the old *surau* in Sungai Raya, to erect a new fence and canteen for the old school in Sungai Raya, to purchase playground equipment for the families living at the police station on the edge of Sungai Raya, and to subsidize the women's group in Sungai Raya. The combined appeals from the UMNO branches in the two subdistricts totaled nearly M\$225,000. Unable to meet all their requests, the assemblyman allocated M\$43,000 for the Sungai Raya branch. When the chairman informed the executive committee of what had happened, the secretary immediately submitted another appeal to the division UMNO headquarters asking for an additional M\$24,000 to finance a new *surau* in one of the smaller *kampungs* in Sungai Raya, a community hall for the Malay neighborhood in Bukit Pasir, and various kinds of musical and sports equipment. Another branch executive committee member, who was also head of the community youth organization, Belia, wrote the UMNO headquarters seeking money to purchase a public address system, a mimeograph machine, and a typewriter.

The institutionalization of the party branch as the chief channel for securing assistance contributed to the decline of the village development and security committees. Throughout 1966 to 1978 the ten-man committee did little more than periodically petition the government for further assistance, such as repairing the mosques, expanding a primary school, or providing cattle for a few families. Attempting to mobilize the community for a new development effort in 1975, the committee encouraged villagers

to grow vegetables and fruit on unused land around their homes. This initiative was part of a nationwide program to reduce the cost of food, which was rising because of inflation. Although half the families reportedly participated in this project during 1975, a year later only those households that had always had gardens were still raising vegetables.

The demise of the committee as an agent of change was illustrated in another endeavor. In the early 1960s it mobilized villagers once a year to resurface the dirt roads through Sungai Raya with crushed laterite rock provided by the Department of Public Works. Enlisting help from the families that benefited was difficult, and the roads were never as smooth as desired. In the late 1970s, discouraged by the problems of organizing *kampung* support for this project, the paternalistic District Rural Development Office began resurfacing the lanes with a large road grader.

The failure of the development committees in Sungai Raya and elsewhere was almost inevitable. In 1976 the assemblyman stated that because the government had a responsibility to raise the Malays' level of living, he opposed insisting on community-based development projects before granting further assistance. In Sungai Raya, as in other *kampungs*, the committee members received no training in the techniques of community development, they lacked incentives, and they controlled no resources.⁸ Furthermore, aware that UMNO used rural development projects as patronage, the members knew that appealing to the assemblyman or to the UMNO headquarters in town was more effective than seeking assistance through established bureaucratic channels.

In 1987 the ten-member development and security committee continued to meet four to six times a year. Most of the members, appointed years before by the headman, had served at least twenty years. As in most *kampungs* in Johore, the committee included representatives of various groups in the *kampungs*, including the head of Wanita UMNO, the head of Belia, and the leader of the mosque. As in most villages in the state, three-fourths of the committee members were also in the UMNO executive committee.⁹ The *komiti*, as it was called by the villagers, served as the headman's eyes and ears in the *kampungs*. The members kept him informed about problems and needs in their neighborhoods and, in theory, passed on information from the meetings to the villagers living near them. Periodically, the committee organized community projects such as cleaning the grounds of the mosque and cemeteries. As in most villages in Peninsular Malaysia, the committee did little more than periodically petition the government for more assistance. These appeals, transmitted through the *penghulu*, merely supplemented those submitted by the UMNO branch.

One of the most striking changes in the local UMNO branch over the years has been the *kampung* leaders' increasing capacity to mobilize electoral votes during the national elections. During the 1978 election I studied the

campaign organizations, strategies, and tactics used by the ruling National Front and the opposition parties in Sungai Raya and in a comparable village in the state of Malacca.¹⁰ When the election was called, the branch chairman converted his large kitchen into an "operations room." Maps and charts were put up with data on the number, sex, and ethnic background of the voters in the local polling areas. A ten-member election committee was formed in accordance with instructions received from the UMNO headquarters in town. These men and women served as leaders of ten sub-committees charged with various responsibilities ranging from "psychological warfare" and transporting voters to the polls to providing refreshments and securing absentee ballots for voters temporarily out of the community. Approximately thirty villagers actively participated in the campaign.

Although rallies were prohibited because of the government's alleged fear that the communists might use them to incite trouble, political parties were allowed to hold indoor meetings (*ceramah*). The UMNO branch in Sungai Raya organized three such gatherings, each attended by forty to seventy-five men and women. Speaking over an electric public-address system, the chairman, the head of the Wanita UMNO, and other *kampung* leaders ignored the opposition party's challenge and focused on what UMNO and the government had done for the Malays. In an effort to reduce the number of spoiled voting papers, they repeatedly explained the proper procedure for marking votes. Talks by the *penghulu* and prominent religious leaders from town added to the villagers' understanding of the link between UMNO and the bureaucracy, reinforced their belief that religion and politics are inseparable, and enhanced the government's legitimacy in their eyes.

The ruling party mobilized government resources in an effort to maximize its electoral support. During the campaign, the Department of Information office in Muar organized an evening civics course (*kursus civic*) in Sungai Raya as part of its regular information program. The community hall was decorated with colored lights similar to those used to light homes during *Ramadan*. Wanita UMNO women beat *rebana* drums and chanted as the dignitaries arrived. During the evening 200 to 300 villagers listened to endless speeches by the assemblyman, the National Front candidate for Parliament from the area, the *penghulu*, and other UMNO leaders from town. With only one reference to the pending election, the assemblyman spoke for more than an hour about the history of UMNO and the UMNO-dominated government's efforts to raise the Malays' standard of living. Toward the end of the nineteen-day campaign, another special meeting was held in Sungai Raya to celebrate the formal opening of a new government-sponsored cooperative in Muar District. Organized by the government, this gathering attracted nearly 300 men and women from Sungai Raya and

nearby *kampungs*. It was addressed by the assemblyman in his role as *Menteri Besar* as well as by other prominent state and district officials. Although the assemblyman never mentioned the forthcoming election, he spoke at great length about the government's accomplishments in rural development. He vividly contrasted the standard of living in the rural areas at the time of independence with that achieved under the ruling party. Again, the pageantry of the meeting and the status of the leaders present added credibility to their message and reinforced the government's legitimacy among the villagers.

The branch conducted a house-to-house canvass as part of the mobilization effort. Forms supplied by the National Front headquarters in town were completed with information on each household and on each registered voter. This information included partisan sentiments, contacts with opposition spokesmen, and complaints against the government. Campaign literature was distributed, and voters were given cards listing all the information they would need to supply at the polling stations. As in rural areas throughout the country, information sheds were built near the polling stations, and on election day cars were provided to transport villagers to the polls. Working with copies of the registration list, campaign workers kept track of voters who had balloted. That afternoon the chairman and others called on villagers who had not yet voted, urging them to do so.

Hours after the polls closed at 6:00 p.m., the results were known. The National Front's parliamentary candidate from the Sungai Raya area had devastated his PAS opponent, winning 90 percent of the vote. The state representative (*Menteri Besar*) had been equally successful against his PAS challenger, securing 87 percent of the vote. Days later he hosted a stand-up dinner at his home for 2,000–3,000 campaign workers from all over the district.

In the subsequent elections in 1982 and 1986, the UMNO leaders in Sungai Raya worked even harder to get out the vote because they knew the opposition, the Islamic Party, was gaining experience. Furthermore, in 1986 they were aware that many Chinese voters were likely to support the opposition because they had become disillusioned with the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), the main Chinese party in the ruling National Front. About a week before the start of the campaign in 1986, the Department of Information office in Muar organized a civics course in Sungai Raya. The speakers included the local member of Parliament and the state representative. As in the past, they stressed what UMNO had done for the Malays and its commitment to their continued progress.

When the fourteen-day campaign began, the UMNO branch leaders in Sungai Raya established a ten-member election committee. The branch executive committee members and Pemuda leaders went from house to house to encourage support for UMNO. The head of Wanita UMNO and

the two KEMAS teachers in her executive committee also went from house to house to canvass women's votes.¹¹ Ignoring the Islamic Party, which did not have sufficient support to hold a meeting in the Sungai Raya area, the Wanita leaders reminded the women what UMNO had done, showed them how to mark their ballots, and asked them "to vote for UMNO." Pemuda UMNO's task was to put up posters and to guard them at night so they could not be torn down.

The local UMNO leaders organized seven meetings (*ceramah*) in Sungai Raya during the campaign. These gatherings were held in the afternoon and evening in all three *kampungs* and attracted twenty to forty men and women of all ages. Each was addressed by men and women from the UMNO division, the *penghulu*, and religious teachers from Muar. The National Front's candidate for the state assembly dropped in on all of these gatherings, the *Menteri Besar* attended two, and the Front's parliamentary candidate attended one. These meetings followed a standard format laid out in a guide book provided by the UMNO headquarters in town, which included a list of all the assistance that the government had provided in the Sungai Raya area. Soft drinks were served at the end of each gathering.

On the day of the election, information booths were built near the polling stations. These were manned by men and women who kept track of who voted. Every two hours they informed the branch leaders how many villagers had voted. During the day the Wanita UMNO women served refreshments to those working in the campaign. In the afternoon men and women called on those who had not voted, urged them to vote, and offered a ride to the polls.

Women were more involved in the mobilization of votes in 1982 and 1986 than they had been in earlier elections. KEMAS teachers worked with the chairwoman of Wanita UMNO in the house-to-house canvass of female voters. In 1986 women were used to exert subtle pressure on prospective voters. Each of the nine cars used to provide free transportation to the polls had a woman and a man in the vehicle. If a woman was given a ride, the Wanita UMNO representative urged her to support the party. If a man rode in the car, the other UMNO representative spoke to him.

In 1986 the National Front increased its mobilization efforts in Johore. A ten-member constituency-wide election committee was set up in each state assembly constituency. Days before the start of the campaign, the National Front candidate for Parliament and the two state assembly candidates from the same area met in Sungai Raya with leaders from all the UMNO branches in these constituencies. Following a pep talk about the pending campaign, the local branch leaders elected the chairman of the Sungai Raya branch as the head of their constituency-wide organization. He then formed a ten-man committee, each member of which headed a subcommittee. One of the rooms in his house became the constituency "operations room." Maps with

colored pins showed the anticipated levels of support in the various polling station areas. Charts listed the number and race of prospective voters in each area. The headman and representatives of the subcommittees spent the campaign in the operations room, where they daily received information by phone or in person on the progress of the campaign. Nearly every night the local National Front candidates dropped in to check on the day's developments. Given its overwhelming advantage in terms of funds, patronage, personnel, and institutionalized organizational strength, the UMNO-led National Front easily triumphed again. A year after the election, the headman estimated that 40 percent of the UMNO members in Sungai Raya had worked in the campaign and that 90 percent of the registered voters had voted. A few days after the election, twenty campaign workers from Sungai Raya went to Muar for a victory celebration dinner at the UMNO headquarters.

Malaysia's enviable record of political stability rests in part upon the government's continued ability to mobilize electoral support and legitimize its authority. While the National Front has confronted stiff competition in some areas over the years, in Johore it has had such a preponderance of resources and support that recent elections were basically rituals that helped to institutionalize the UMNO-dominated political system and to legitimize the existing regime.

In 1987, three decades after the attainment of independence, the villagers' overall involvement in national politics had risen gradually and significant changes had occurred in the leadership of the UMNO branch and in the scope of its activities in the *kampungs*. Older men seemed likely to continue to monopolize the political leadership as long as both men and women believe political leadership is essentially a male responsibility, women are barred from key roles in the major village organizations, Wanita UMNO and Pemuda UMNO are perceived as subordinate auxiliaries of the UMNO branch, and the Sungai Raya area remains solidly in the UMNO camp. If the current Islamic resurgence in Malaysia eventually arouses substantial support for the Islamic Party in Sungai Raya or in nearby villages, the pattern of political involvement could change significantly. Similarly, if the power struggle within the UMNO leadership in 1987 eventually splits the party, presumably it would affect the villagers' levels of political awareness and concern, as well as their political participation.

Whereas in the 1960s it seemed that Sungai Raya was linked by patron-client ties to the local assemblyman, by the 1980s it was clear that the bond was between the party and community. In 1982 the national UMNO leaders prevented Tan Sri Othman from running again as the National Front candidate for the state legislature because of his conflicts with the Sultan of Johore and because he had alienated some of the top UMNO leaders. His replacement, Sabaria binte Ahmat, was a very dynamic woman who had

worked for twenty-one years in the Department of Information and had served for years as an information officer in Muar District, where she was very active in UMNO. She was easily elected from the Sungai Raya area in 1982 and was reelected in 1986. Once she became the state representative, the villagers' ties quickly shifted from the former assemblyman to the new representative. She, in turn, began skillfully establishing personalized ties with the *kampung* political leaders. Each year, for example, she gives cloth for a dress to the head of the Wanita UMNO. The Malays are tied to whoever has power and can provide additional amenities and projects in return for their steadfast support of the UMNO-led government.

During a period of political continuity and change, perhaps the most striking development has been the extent to which the local political party branch has become community oriented. Organized in the late 1950s to preserve Malay political dominance and to protect Islam and the Malays' rights, in 1987 the UMNO branch, like the mosque, embraced everyone in the community and was concerned about their welfare in every sense: religious, educational, social, agricultural, economic, political, and recreational. Whereas politics at the divisional and higher levels had become a struggle for power and privilege, the day-to-day focus of political concerns and activities in Sungai Raya was on promoting community welfare through political leaders and party channels.

Notes

1. Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 48–51; James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); and Shamsul A. B., *From British to Bumiputera Rule: Local Politics and Rural Development in Peninsular Malaysia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986).

2. In 1986, 75 percent of the village headmen in Muar District were over fifty-six years of age; 29 percent were over sixty-five. These figures were provided by the Johore Economic Planning Unit, which had eight pages of data, stored in a computer, on each of the *kampungs* under the 400 village development and security committees in the state.

3. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, 135–136.

4. The women's increasing involvement in politics during the 1970s and the role of the local Wanita auxiliary are analyzed in Marvin L. Rogers, "Changing Patterns of Political Involvement Among Malay Village Women," *Asian Survey* 26, no. 3 (March 1986) 322–44.

5. Based on discussions with UMNO leaders, Noraini Abdullah contends that these seemingly politically irrelevant activities provide crucial links between individuals who appear to live in the poverty of ignorance and the national elite.

These activities, she argues "are what make UMNO meaningful at the immediate level." Noraini Abdullah, letter to the author, 1983.

6. Aihwa Ong describes a similar process in Kuala Langat District in which "games and entertainment events rich in Islamic symbolism" attract villagers "who otherwise have no interest in politics or are lukewarm about UMNO." See Aihwa Ong, "Political Mobilization of Malay Women in Rural Selangor" (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Philadelphia, 24 March 1985).

7. *Silat* is a traditional Malay martial art form of self-defense that resembles karate and tae kwon do.

8. The ineffectiveness of village development and security committees in other states is analyzed in Conner Bailey, *Broker, Mediator, Patron and Kinsman: An Historical Analysis of Key Leadership Roles in a Rural Malaysian District* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1976); Conner Bailey, "Social and Economic Organization in Rural Malay Society" (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1980); G. Shabbir Cheema, et al., *Rural Organizations and Rural Development in Selected Malaysian Villages* (Kuala Lumpur: Asian and Pacific Development Administration Centre, 1978); Alang Perang Zainuddin, "Factors Associated with Level of Participation of Members of Village Development and Security Committees in Four Peninsular Malaysian States" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio University, 1977); and Shamsul A. B., "Village: The Imposed Social Construct in Malaysia's Development Initiative," (Paper prepared for a workshop entitled "The Village Revisited: Community and Locality in Southeast Asian Studies," University of Amsterdam, Netherlands, 7-9 April, 1988).

9. In Selangor the District Officer has appointed the village headmen since 1972. These *kampung* leaders, selected in part because of their support for UMNO, have usually nominated UMNO members to the village development and security committees. See Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline*, 39.

10. The mobilization of electoral support in Sungai Raya during the 1978 campaign is described in detail in Marvin L. Rogers, "Electoral Organization and Political Mobilization in Rural Malaysia," *Manusia dan Masyarakat*, New Series, 4 (1983), 13-24. This article is reprinted in *Readings in Malaysian Politics*, edited by Bruce Gale, (Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications 1986), 54-72.

11. KEMAS teachers have also been used to mobilize electoral support in Selangor. See Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline*, 51 and Shamsul A. B., *From British to Bumiputera Rule*, 187, footnote 36.

Development and Dependence

Sungai Raya illustrates the interconnected pattern of social, economic, and political change that underlies Malaysia's remarkable political stability. While most rural Malays live in rubber-producing communities, most books on Malay villages have distorted the picture of the Malay peasantry and misrepresented the pattern of socioeconomic change in rural Malaysia by examining rice-growing *kampungs*. The socioeconomic developments during the past two decades in Sungai Raya document the rise in the *kampung* Malays' exposure to the mass media, the growth of government services in rural areas, and the rise in the standard of living among Malay villagers in the southern half of the peninsula. The political changes illustrate the politicization of the rural development programs, the link between patronage and political support, the rise in the villagers' involvement in politics, and the local UMNO leaders' changing role in national politics.

Because of differences in the basic economic character of the communities, the pattern of economic development in Sungai Raya has been different from that in the other Malay villages which have been studied since the start of the New Economic Policy.¹ Wong and Scott analyzed patterns of change in rice-growing villages in the poorer, Malay-dominated states of northern Malaysia. The incidence of poverty is much higher among rice farmers than any other major occupation group, and most paddy farmers are Malays. Many peasants in the villages Wong and Scott examined have been devastated by the Green Revolution. The introduction of double-cropping and the mechanization of rice cultivation have dramatically reduced the poorer villagers' opportunities for tenancy and employment.

In contrast, during the past two decades Malaysia's top-down development strategies have been remarkably successful in rubber-producing villages like Sungai Raya that have supported UMNO. Accelerated efforts to enhance the Malays' socioeconomic position have expanded the range of government services reaching *kampung* residents, increased the agricultural extension assistance available to the villagers, improved agricultural

productivity, raised family incomes, and increased social mobility. Rising income has enabled a growing number of *kampung* residents to adopt the materialism and life-styles of urban Malays. Villagers with higher education have obtained jobs, status, and income that were unimaginable a generation earlier.

Although the other communities studied differ from Sungai Raya in the degree of their support for UMNO, patronage politics has had a similar impact on the villagers' political attitudes and on UMNO's ties with the *kampungs*. The other communities were divided politically between majorities that supported UMNO and minorities allied with the Islamic Party. In this competitive atmosphere various rural development programs have been blatantly withheld from those who support PAS. Sungai Raya, on the other hand, has remained steadfast in its allegiance to UMNO, and patronage has been used only to reward supporters, not to punish opponents. In the communities studied by Scott and Shamsul, there was a small entrepreneurial class tied to UMNO and bureaucratic leaders at the *mukim* and district level. These connections strengthened their leadership positions in the village UMNO organizations and enabled them to exploit partisan ties for economic advantage as small contractors and well-to-do farmers. Although the *ketua kampung* of Sungai Raya has been given government contracts to clear drainage canals, none of the village leaders have been able to use their political ties for financial gain comparable to the village elites in the communities Scott and Shamsul studied. The local political wheeling and dealing that they describe appears to take place at the UMNO division level, not at the *kampung* branch level.

As in the villages that Ong, Wong, Scott, and Shamsul investigated, the government's rural development programs and UMNO's skillful use of these amenities and projects as patronage have increased the villagers' awareness of the party's concern about their welfare, demonstrating the party's ability to raise their standard of living and encouraging the belief that the government is capable of providing even further assistance. The surveys in Sungai Raya in 1966 and 1978 revealed overwhelming support for UMNO because it promoted rural development, it was a Malay party, it protected the Malays' language and religion, or its policies were moderate. The surveys also indicated a widespread belief that the government is concerned about the welfare of rural Malays. Men cited numerous programs as evidence of this concern, including the installation of piped water and electricity in rural areas, agricultural assistance, such as fertilizer and seed, and the construction of schools, roads, and mosques. Everyone I spoke with in Sungai Raya in 1987 supported UMNO. The pattern of socioeconomic development during the previous two decades had helped to strengthen support for UMNO, to legitimize the government, and to stabilize the regime.²

During the decades after 1966, the villagers' aspirations for government assistance multiplied as their members of Parliament, state representatives, and *penghulus* urged them to request additional benefits and as politicians repeatedly reminded them of what UMNO had obtained for the community. In the mid-1960s the UMNO branch had asked the government to provide such basic needs as water and electricity, a clinic, and a community hall. In 1978 most of the residents of Sungai Raya regarded the government as an almost unlimited source of assistance. By the 1980s the *kampung* leaders sought more costly items, such as a new religious school and funds to remodel the mosque, as well as less essential items, such as electric fans, typewriters, and sports equipment.

Malaysia's rural development strategies, designed to promote socioeconomic change and to strengthen support for UMNO, have undermined the Malays' capacity to undertake *kampung*-based development efforts in Sungai Raya. In the past twenty years, politicians have repeatedly reminded villagers during election campaigns and community gatherings of the benefits UMNO has provided, and they have often encouraged *kampung* leaders to apply for further assistance. The success of the development programs and the politicians' repeated urging of *kampung* residents to ask for more amenities and other services have encouraged a welfare-state mentality in which the villagers expect the government to do more and more for them while they sit back and wait for additional politically inspired benefits. Malay officials in the district office in Muar readily acknowledged that these development strategies have discouraged the growth of leadership, motivation, and institutions capable of initiating community-based projects to which the Malays contribute time, labor, or capital for the improvement of life in their *kampungs*.

In 1987 the deputy prime minister and minister of rural development, Ghafar Baba, launched a new program to encourage villagers to identify local needs and undertake development efforts with minimum outside financial help. Every *ketua kampung* received a thick guidebook detailing the various subcommittees that should be established under the village development and security committee and listing the steps to be followed in identifying local needs, planning and implementing development efforts, and evaluating *kampung* programs. A year later the headman in Sungai Raya had compiled lists of the subcommittee members, but no new projects had been initiated. A key rural development official in Muar admitted that after twenty years of urging villagers to ask for assistance and to wait for it to be provided there was little chance that the new program would persuade them to initiate new community development efforts.

Malaysia's rural development programs have promoted both development and dependence. As the range of programs and services reaching the *kampungs* has grown, the villagers in Sungai Raya have become increasingly

dependent on the government for the continuance of their way of life and for the social and economic advancement of their children. Whereas two generations ago the Malays had limited access to government services, today they have almost unlimited access to a much greater range of government-sponsored services. The villagers depend on the government to provide free medical and dental care, free agricultural extension services, and free or subsidized agricultural inputs. They expect federal and state authorities to provide funds for the local kindergarten, teachers for adult education classes, and scholarships for the brightest youngsters. They rely on the government to build and to maintain their religious buildings and schools, and they count on politicians to supply amenities to improve the quality of life in the *kampungs*. Some of the Malays save for a possible pilgrimage to Mecca in a special government-created organization; many own at least a few shares in the National Unit Trust, the government's mutual fund for Malays. Early in this century, the father of the present headman in Sungai Raya and other villagers cut down trees, sawed planks, and built their prayer house. In the late 1980s their descendants expected the government to build the community's religious buildings, and they asked politicians to secure funds for paint when repairs were needed.

During these decades of accelerated socioeconomic change, growing dependence on government programs, and politicization of state-level rural development programs, the villagers have become increasingly vulnerable to pressure by politicians. Even illiterate *kampung* residents understand that some of the benefits the community has received have been provided because of its steadfast support for UMNO. Many realize that amenities and projects have been awarded to *kampungs* that support UMNO and have been withheld from those that back the opposition.³ The most knowledgeable men realize that the federal government withheld development funds from the state of Kelantan when it was controlled by the Islamic Party during the 1960s. In 1987 and 1988, forty-eight men in Sungai Raya applied for 230 acres of state land to be developed as a small estate. Several villagers called on the *Menteri Besar* at his home in Muar to ask his help in obtaining the land. These men knew that they did not have a chance of getting the land if they did not continue to support those in power.

In Sungai Raya, as in the communities Scott and Shamsul analyzed, the UMNO patronage machine has tied the key branch leaders to the party. Their ability to determine which individual and *kampung* requests will be forwarded to political leaders and government officials enhances their status and influence in the community. Much of their prestige and authority is dependent upon their ability to obtain further assistance. While patronage has increased their influence in the community, it has also heightened their dependence on the party. If UMNO were split asunder, the key branch leaders in Sungai Raya would support the established leadership.

During an era of dramatic socioeconomic developments in which the villagers have become increasingly dependent on the government, there has been a significant change in the local UMNO leaders' role in national politics. Whereas the headman and other party stalwarts became involved in politics in the 1950s in an effort to secure independence and to preserve Malaya as a Malay country, during the 1960s their key role in the political process was to mobilize support of Malay political hegemony and the UMNO-dominated government. Their roles began to change in the 1970s as UMNO became more entrenched politically, as the regime became more authoritarian, as corruption became more prevalent, and as the villagers became more politically aware. By the late 1980s, UMNO was increasingly dependent on the *kampung* leaders to sustain the villagers' loyalty, to support the party leaders in division-level UMNO meetings, and to mobilize electoral support that would legitimize the party's leaders and policies.

The pattern of change in Sungai Raya and similar *kampungs* will continue. Development with dependence has been remarkably successful—economically, socially, and politically. It has increased agricultural productivity, raised family incomes, improved the quality of life in the *kampungs*, and strengthened support for UMNO and the government. The power struggle in UMNO, which was evident in the election for the party presidency in 1987, is likely to increase the politicization of the rural development programs and accelerate efforts to provide additional benefits. Determined to retain the *kampung* Malays' support, UMNO leaders and local politicians will exploit the villagers' dependence and vulnerability while expediting efforts to provide more amenities, services, and projects in the rural areas.

Notes

1. See the discussion of these five studies in Chapter 1.
2. Marvin L. Rogers, "Political Involvement and Political Stability in Rural Malaysia," *The Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 23, no. 3 (November 1985), 226–50.
3. Ong, Scott, and Shamsul describe the withholding of development assistance from *kampungs* that backed the Islamic Party. See Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 48–51; James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Shamsul A. B., *From British to Bumiputera Rule: Local Politics and Rural Development in Peninsular Malaysia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986; and in "The Politics of Poverty Eradication: The Implementation of Development Projects in a Malaysian District," *Pacific Affairs* 56, no. 3, Fall 1983, 455–76).

Glossary

Atap	Roofing, especially of thatch.
Barisan Nasional	National Front.
Bilal	Muezzin, one who calls Muslims to prayer.
Bukit Pasir	(1) Sand Hill, Sandy Hill; (2) name of the small town adjacent to Sungai Raya.
Ceramah	Talk, indoor meeting.
Dato	A male, honorific, non-hereditary title conferred by a state or by the Head of State, corresponding roughly to the Sir of British knighthood. This title is spelled Dato or Datuk depending on the state that has awarded it.
Gotong royong	Mutual self-help; mutual cooperation; mutual aid.
Haji	The title given to a man (Haja for a woman) who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca.
Imam	Leader of a congregation at prayer in a mosque, head of the mosque.
Jawi	An adaptation of Arabic script used to write the Malaysian language (Bahasa Malaysia).
Kampung	Village, hamlet.
Kati	A weight measure of one and one-third pounds.
Ketua kampung	Village headman.

Masjid	Mosque.
Menteri	Minister.
Menteri Besar	Chief Minister, the Chairman of the State Executive Council of the nine Malay States ruled by sultans.
Merdeka	Independence, freedom.
Mukim	An administrative subdistrict, headed by a penghulu.
Pandai	Clever, adept, smart, capable, educated.
Parit	Drainage canal, ditch.
PAS	Partai Islam Se-Malaysia or Islamic Party.
Pemuda UMNO	UMNO Youth.
Penghulu	Headman of one or more subdistricts (mukims).
Ramadan	The Muslim fasting month, ninth month in the Muslim lunar calendar.
Rebana	A flat hand drum similar to a large tambourine.
Rumi	Roman letters.
Surau	A small prayer house.
Wanita UMNO	UMNO Women.

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