Singapore's Ethnic Relations' Scorecard

Hussin Mutalib
National University of Singapore, Singapore

ABSTRACT

This is an assessment and analysis about the Singapore government's management of its multiethnic, plural society; particularly its ethnic minority, the Malays. It appears that, in spite of its relative success in pursuing the national integration quest, the State (read: Government) is still grappling with some pertinent socioeconomic and religious identity issues besetting its Malay citizens. Not only has the latter's malaise lagged behind their Chinese and Indian counterparts but have also persisted since Independence. Arguably, the State, given its dominant and preponderant power, could mitigate the Malay dilemma if it acknowledges the reality that in Singapore's globalizing culture, the Malay minority, if left without greater State intervention, has little chance to progress and keep pace with other citizens – thereby impeding, if not impairing the Republic's hard-won stability and prosperity.

Keywords: Singapore, Malays, ethnicity, governance, state, integration

Introduction

Singapore's response to the plight of her ethnic minorities cannot be understood, and what's more, cannot be sufficiently appreciated, without placing it within the framework of the role and power of the State (read: Government) in charting the contents and contours of the Republic's nation-building agendas. Lest we forget, this is a State with a "dominant one-party system," and where the same political party (the People's Action Party [PAP]) has ruled the island Republic continuously ever since 1959. Accordingly, any analysis of the status and role of ethnic minorities in modern Singapore will be incomplete, if not superficial, without due cognizance to this political reality.

It is, thus, imperative that we have to deliberate on the ruling elite's ideological mindset and worldview and its management of ethnic relations in general, and its attitudes and treatment toward its indigenous

Vol 28(1): 31–55. DOI: 10.1177/0169796X1102800102

Malay minority in particular. This ethnic minority will be the focus of this study, given the perennial problems associated with its historical and constitutional status, its Islamic identity aspirations, and its persistently low socioeconomic status if compared to fellow Chinese and Indian counterparts.

State Worldviews and Governing Paradigms

There is considerable literature on the pivotal role of the State – its capacity, philosophical predispositions, policies, and politics – in determining the success or otherwise of especially plural, multiethnic societies (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998; Hegre, Ellingsen, Gates, & Gleditsch, 2001; Walter, 1999).

So, too, with writings and commentaries about Singapore's governing paradigm and modus operandi. Broadly, this is an assertive, (soft) authoritarian state whereupon the ruling elite, via its policies and politics and operating under the "dominant one-party system," sets the rules and oversees the content and contours of the body politic. Practising a peculiar type of illiberal democracy, which has little tolerance of opposition, the end-goal of the governing PAP – which has been ruling Singapore continuously ever since 1959 – is to ensure compliance with its worldviews and preservation of its electoral mandate, in return for the promised deliverance of economic and material goods to the citizenry (Barr & Skrbis, 2008; George, 2007; Rodan, 2004, 2009; Tan, 2007; Tremewan, 1996). It is, thus, not surprising that the many Human Rights' reports such as contained in the *Amnesty International Report 2009* (http://www.amnesty.org) and *Human Rights Watch 2009* (http://www.hrw.org) have not been that encouraging.[1]

Apparently, the historical, geopolitical, and economic realities or binding "givens" that are inherent in the makeup of the island State, and the "survival vulnerability" psyche of its governing elites, informed the founding fathers of modern Singapore, that is, the "Old Guard," such as Lee Kuan Yew, Goh Keng Swee, S. Rajaratnam, and Toh Chin Chye, to adopt such worldviews and devise politically creative tactics and strategies. Of the three common strategies that multiethnic and plural states assumed in their nation-building agenda – that is, assimilation, domination, and accommodation[2] – the latter was adopted by the PAP no sooner after winning the inaugural local Assembly Election in 1959. "Accommodation" is the Government's engagement with ethnoreligious

minority groups so as to arrive at a broad consensus on national issues, while still maintaining its overall leadership of the state. Emphasizing peaceful collaboration, assurances will be given to such minorities that their identities and cultures will be protected while expecting them to, in turn, accord priority to national goals and targets over and above their particularistic needs and aspirations. However, given the government's pragmatism, a combination of persuasion and coercion is sometimes employed to ensure compliance of its national agendas.

Upon analysis, it appears that such a flexible pragmatic approach has helped the Republic well, especially when dealing with new economic and political challenges confronting the State. At a time when incidences of ethnic conflict and violence are proliferating in many parts of the world, Singapore's ethnic scene (comprising mostly Chinese and minority Malays, Indians, and Eurasians) has been relatively serene and stable. However, there have been policy ambivalences, if not conflict, in some areas of its management of ethnic relations – particularly in dealing with the Malay minority plight, as will be shown soon. The demographic data from the Republic's Department of Statistics indicate that by 2008, Singapore's total population was 4,839.4 million, out of which, 3,642.7 million was the residential population; of this latter figure, ethnic Malays comprise about 14 percent of the resident population, numbering 495,100.[3] Official statistical data also reveal some intriguing information about the problems and challenges confronting this particular minority – who, in the Republic's Constitution, are regarded as the "indigenous" people of Singapore (*Constitution of Singapore*, Article 152).

The Plight of Indigenous Malay Minority

Essentially, the primary challenge for the Malays is how to ride the wave of Singapore's globalization process and not be left behind by other ethnic communities, while still retaining their particularistic Islamic identity in multiracial and multireligious Singapore. This is especially so, given their minority status and their lingering low socioeconomic status (SES), even if compared to the ethnic Indian minority, which proportion of the population is smaller than theirs. Apparently, this SES gap, particularly in the crucial areas of education and economy, has stubbornly endured for decades in spite of much effort being put to bridge it. While admittedly minority Malays have benefited from Singapore's overall economic prosperity, this similar benefit is felt by all Singaporeans as a whole.

The data on Malay progress was published in the official Government document entitled *Progress of the Malay Community in Singapore Since 1980*. A closer analysis of the educational and economic advancement of Malays as documented in this particular official report, however, reveals that the achievement gap between Malays and other ethnic citizens is not only there but the gap persists despite much effort to bridge it.

A quick reference to the official statistics as to how Malays had performed in a period of 25 years in some key areas, namely, examinations and income levels are perhaps instructive here.

Accentuating the Malay predicament is the legitimacy issue of their political leaders. This issue came to the forefront in the 1990s and 2000s when publicly articulated by the Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP).[4] Other issues besetting the Malays include the relatively high occurrence of social ailments in the community, such as divorce, youth delinquency, and drug addiction as well as the perceived lack of State support with regard to their Islamic aspirations. In this latter regard, it appears that international and regional Islamic developments seem to have impacted the religiosity of the Republic's Malays. Given the significance of this "Islamic factor" to our discussion about the Malay dilemma, we shall devote some attention to this issue in the pages to follow.

As it turned out, by the mid-1980s, Malays were leaning more toward Islam, evident in the vibrancy of religious programs in mosques (*masjid*), religious schools (*madrasah*), and Islamic organizations. This led to the government's commissioning of a study in 1987 to examine the trend of religious revivalism and to make policy recommendations as to its social and political implications (*Straits Times,* February 19, 1989: 1–2). What ensued from the study was a string of comments from the top political elite, especially Prime Minister (PM) Lee Kuan Yew himself, who spoke of the "tendency for some Malay/Muslim Singaporeans to dress, eat and behave as Muslims in the Middle East do" (*Straits Times,* January 23, 1988). By 1989, the Government-supported "National Survey on Religion" revealed that while there has been a religious revival among all religious communities in the Republic, it was the Malays (Muslims) who placed the utmost importance to religion and religious education.[5]

Obviously, such trends did not escape the eyes of the Government. The terrorist attacks of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the United States of September 11, 2001, that catapulted the world's attention on Islam and the Muslims, accentuated the government's worries. When in December 2001, the Internal Security Department (ISD) arrested

15 Muslims (most of whom belonged to the *Jemaah Islamiah* [JI] group) for their plans to bomb some US and Western targets in Singapore the State was stunned beyond belief. How and why could Malays (Muslims) resort to such violence when life has generally been good in prosperous and modern Singapore? While Singaporeans were still grappling with the news and PM Goh Chok Tong himself called a big gathering of about 1,000 community leaders of all ethnic and religious creeds, the government announced yet another scoop of arrests in August 2002. In this latter arrest, another 21 was rounded on similar charges and most were detained under the ISA, which denies them the right to be tried in an open court. The Government issued a *White Paper* in Parliament on this matter on January 7, 2003 (Cmd. 2 of 2003), titled "The Jemaah Islamiah Arrests and the Threat of Terrorism."

By then, in a policy speech at a major international forum in Washington, DC, Lee Hsien Loong, Deputy PM, reiterated the sentiments of Lee Kuan Yew:

> Muslims are adhering more strictly to prayer schedules and food restrictions, more Muslim women are covering themselves up, and there is less free mingling between sexes. A national, ethnic identity is being replaced by a broader religious identity…on top of this, political Islam is gathering strength…[6]

Now that we have laid bare the broader context and other developments that have led to the Government's wariness about the Islamic reassertiveness among Singapore Malays (Muslims), it is time to highlight three specific Islamic issues that had the effect of denting State–Malay relations.[7]

The first was the Government's dismay at the wide and open objections from influential segments of the Malay community to its proposal to amend the "Administration of Muslim Law Act" (AMLA) in 1998. This plan, first tabled officially via a Parliamentary Bill (*Government Gazette* No. 18, April 21, 1998), was rationalized to resolve two outstanding issues besetting the management of Muslim affairs. The first was the long queues with regard to the settlement of Muslim divorce cases in the Islamic court (*Mahkamah Shari'ah*). The second was the limited role and powers that was thus far accorded to the statutory body that administers Muslim affairs, the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS).

Malays, being Muslims, were clearly unhappy with at least two aspects of the proposed amendments, particularly those relating to the Shari'ah court. Even the former President of the Shari'ah Court, Haji Abu Bakar

Hashim, did not hide his objections to the amendments in the meeting organized by the Center for Contemporary Islamic Studies, a Muslim NGO and attended by about 25 invited Muslim leaders and activists. The first relates to what they perceived to be a dilution of the powers of the Shari'ah court, and the second was the fear that the changes would compromise the religious sanctity of Islamic law itself. Many Muslims were also not won over by the government's argument that non-Muslim judges have the competence to arbitrate and judge on matters involving Islamic laws. In an interview in the Malay daily, *Berita Harian*, a Muslim lawyer, Hussein Latif, commented thus (translated from Malay):

> Under the existing AMLA, the matter of child custody upon Muslim divorce, specifically children under 7 years old, is placed under the mother's custody. But the new proposal does not guarantee this…if the father wants a better chance to have custody, he would obviously refer his case to the civil court. (*Berita Harian*, April 24, 1998)

The Singapore Religious Scholars' Association (PERGAS) in its press release and submission to the MUIS was even more critical:

> We see the amendments to lead to the curtailing of the powers of the *Shari'ah* Court…and to have the President (of the court) without *Shari'ah* qualification is…grossly disrespectful to the intention of the AMLA itself…The obvious implication of this amendment is actually the extension of the Civil law (especially on matters of custody and division of wealth) to Muslims…Once we give up any prerogatives within AMLA, it will be very difficult to reinstate it back later whenever we see the need for it again… (*Berita Harian*, February 19, 1999, p. 7)

Predictably, given the Republic's governing paradigm and the Government's overwhelming parliamentary dominance, the new provisions for the AMLA were passed by parliament after its third reading, on April 15, 1999 (*Berita Harian*, April 16, 1999, p. 1; August 23, 1999, p. 7; August 24, 1999, p. 6; August 25, 1999, p. 1).

The challenge for the Government to manage the restive Islamic inclination of the Muslim minority then was not allowed to rest when, no sooner after the passage of the new *AMLA Amendment Bill* came to effect, the Government threw open, in 1999, yet another controversial bombshell. This was the plan for a nationwide "compulsory education" (CE) system that would make it obligatory for all Singaporean primary students, irrespective of their racial or religious backgrounds and

preferences, to attend a national system of education. Many Malays view the proposal as precipitating the closure of some of their full-time religious schools or *madrasah*, an institution that pre-dated the introduction of secular education in Singapore itself.

Prior to its formal proposal in 2000, for two consecutive years, 1999 and 2000, PM Goh included such concerns in his *National Day Rally Speech*, arguably, the most important speech by the PM in any given year. In his 1999 address, the PM highlighted the high dropout rates of *madrasah* students – 71 percent in 1996, 60 percent in 1997, and 65 percent in 1998 – and his concern about their future educational and job prospects. He then proposed that existing laws that govern the educational path of *madrasah* students in particular and Singaporean students in general, be changed to make every Singaporean student attend a compulsory education (CE) national system of education (Committee on Compulsory Education, Singapore, 2000). It is an understatement to say that many *madrasah* leaders were angry; they were openly defiant. As an illustration, the school Principal, Kamsinah Abdul Rahman, and the Chairman of the Management Committee, Syed Abbas Alsagoff of the *Madrasah Alsagoff*, refuted the Government's claim of poor academic performance of *madrasah* students, by circulating publicly its own "Report Card" dated November 19, 1999, showing that its students had performed creditably in Government examinations from 1990 to 1999.

In a rare expression of protest, PERGAS even convened a press conference on March 31, 2000, to express its objection to the Government's proposal. Among its four-point statement on the matter, PERGAS declared the following:

> PERGAS rejected the idea of compulsory education…as it would lead to the closure of *madrasah*'s primary classes, even if not intended…Those who argued that *madrasah* education can begin from the secondary level (and the proponents included the Malay Members of Parliament)…did not understand the concept of Islamic education, that it must begin from young…

Again, the government, characteristic of its governing ethos and style, listened attentively – but then proceeded to implement its proposal nonetheless.

The third issue relates to the matter of the Islamic headgear or headscarf. As discussed, the Government had, for some time, been wary about the increasing attention of Singapore Malays to their Islamic identity. By the 1990s, it was a common sight to see Muslim women putting on

the Islamic headscarf, known in Malay as the *tudung*, an attire that was later to cause even more strenuous State–Malay relations. Some months before the "*tudung* issue" came to light, Lee Kuan Yew had actually commented:

> Throughout 150 years of British rule and 36 years of Independence, dress was never an issue. But now the Muslims have made it a major one. I'm sure you've seen the covered heads of women around town. It's part of this worldwide movement. And we have a problem. (*Sunday Times*, May 20, 2001, p. 46)

The problem started when four Malay parents demanded that their girls (then in primary school) be allowed to wear the *tudung* in school. Undeterred by the fact that their children would be suspended from school if they came to school dressed in the headscarf, three of the four parents went ahead. To them, it was a matter of faith as they declared their intention to defend their right in court if they had to (*Straits Times*, February 1, 2002, p. H1).

Ironically, the government's responses, meant to silent both the leader of the *tudung* protest, Zulfikar Shariff, and the pro-*tudung* groundswell, actually intensified the problem. Not only was the matter exposed to an even wider international audience when many international media publicized the controversy, the question of the rights of minority Malays in secular Singapore to practice their religion freely also caught the attention of neighboring Muslim-dominated states, Indonesia and Malaysia, which decided to chorus their support for the *tudung* demand (Shariff, 2002). Again, the influential Islamic Religious Scholars' Association, PERGAS, affirmed that it was not convinced of the Government's argument that wearing the *tudung* in secular schools impedes national integration. In an apparent rebuke of the Mufti's religious ruling (*fatwa*) that the Muslim parents should adopt a more pragmatic approach on the controversy by thinking more about the education of their children than on the *tudung* matter,[8] PERGAS issued a press statement dated February 8, 2002, insisting that the *tudung* issue should not face closure "just because the Mufti had made a statement."[9]

The government refused to budge and the Ministry of Education reiterated its "standard uniform" requirement that all students must comply with. After PM Lee blasted Zulfikar on the issue, the man fled Singapore for Australia and the affected Muslim parents decided to lie low while some of them still refusing to send their children to school. As a

foretaste that the issue of religious spaces is bound to continue, and with it, the State–Malay dialectical tension, as recent as 2010, three Cabinet Ministers openly broached their concerns about the re-assertiveness of religions in Singapore (*Today*, April 19, 2010, p. 1).

Governing Philosophies: "Multiracialism," "Meritocracy," and "Secularism"

With the above backdrop, it is perhaps appropriate to now highlight the State's governing philosophies and principles. Upon Independence in 1965, the PAP leadership was more than determined to uphold its brand of multiracial ideology, seeing it as the only way forward to build a united, multiracial Republic. This "multiracialism" creed, which emphasizes the recognition of common rights and common destinies for all Singaporeans, was vigorously implemented through a series of policy initiatives, including the following: the adoption of four official languages for each of the four ethnic communities; the introduction of compulsory National Service for all Singaporean youth irrespective of ethnicity; the policy of bilingualism that allows all ethnic groups to have their own ethnic languages but with English as the main language of administration; and an integrated school system.

But changing times and circumstances have forced the PAP elite to reappraise multiracialism. Speeches by Cabinet Ministers on this matter reflect the evolution and enrichment of this multiracial practice. The original inspiration was that of the "melting pot" idea. This was the belief that an integrated nation could only actualize if the Republic's different ethnic groups were to merge and subsume their separate and parochial interests and identities under an all-encompassing, Singapore-first, national identity. But then, regional and international ethnic turbulences in the late 1970s subsequently impressed upon Lee and his comrades to change course yet again. Lee saw the foolhardiness in the belief that plural, multiethnic societies, with urbanization and modernization, would cast aside their ethnoreligious values and predispositions in favor of a broader, national outlook (Barr & Low, 2005). Thus, Singapore's newer ideological thrust; first touted as the "salad bowl" approach (where different ethnic groups share commonalities while still retaining their distinctiveness), it later became manifest in the "Return to Ethnic Roots" policy.

The idea was that each ethnic community must at least be familiar with its own ethnic cultures since – it was argued – such familiarity would

enable them to understand not only the richness of their past civilizations but also act as an anchorage in moments of crises. The government's decision to formally launch the "Speak Mandarin" campaign and the "Special Assistance Plan" (SAP) schools for the Chinese in 1979 and "Ethnic Self-help Groups" (starting with Mendaki) for the Malays in 1981 reflected this new shift of national integration policy. Apparently, this "return to ethnic roots" policy was also precipitated by Lee's anxieties that Singaporeans were losing their "Asian" cultural ballast at a time when Western liberal cultures and values were fast encroaching upon the Republic's open and cosmopolitan environment. However, noticing the rise of Islamic assertiveness both internationally and among Singapore's Malays since the 1990s and acknowledging the persistence of ethnoreligious pulls by all ethnic groups in the Republic, the Government relented somewhat and creatively offered greater spaces for ethnoreligious identities to function within a broader framework of shared "common spaces." Towards this end, in 1999, PM Goh articulated the idea of four overlapping ethnic circles.[10] He repeated the shift towards "common spaces" on a few occasions since then, including at the *Majlis Pusat*'s 30th Anniversary Dinner on October 30, 1999. A decade later, in 2010, the same slogan was reiterated by Deputy PM, Teo Chee Hean (*Today*, April 19, 2010, p. 1).

To complement Singapore's nation-building model, other than "multiracialism," two other overarching ideological matrices were added by the Republic's ruling elite, that is, "meritocracy" and "secularism." Insofar as "meritocracy" is concerned, as early as 1970, a key ideologue of the PAP, S. Rajaratnam, declared that "The essence of a multiracial society is that its citizens…should be able to advance solely on the basis of hard work and merit" (*Mirror*, May 25, 1970). This emphasis has remained much intact till this very day as seen from the chorus of sentiments aired by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet Ministers (*Today*, June 30, 2003, p. 4; *MITA, Government Press Release*, August 18, 2003). Insofar as "secularism" is concerned, while the official position has been that all ethnic communities in the Republic are free to engage in their respective religious pursuits, they must always be mindful about the equal need to respect the different religious bearings of fellow citizens. Rules and laws have been passed by parliament to ensure that interreligious peace is maintained, such as the *Religious Harmony Act* of 1990. As it turned out in the past, the government had demanded retractions or apologies from religious groups that either offended other religious communities or acted in ways that were seen to put a blight to Singapore' secular foundation.

Singapore's National Integration Agenda: Policy Elaborations

Some major policies that reflect the State's obdurate adherence to multiracialism, meritocracy, and secularism are mirrored in all key policies, ranging from Defense to Education to Housing. As an illustration, let us focus our attention on policies relating to multiracialism.

In March 1989, the then Minister for National Development, S. Dhanabalan, proposed the Parliamentary Bill after what the Government saw as "…two disturbing trends in public housing, which, if left unchecked, would undermine...social and racial integration" (*Straits Times*, January 7, 1989; *SPRS*, January 6, 1989, and February 16, 1989). The first trend was the return of ethnic groups to their old residential areas, as was the case of Malays who prefer the Bedok/Tampines areas, and Chinese, in Ang Mo Kio, Hougang, and Bukit Merah. The second was the consolidation of this racial regrouping by the very nature of the resale market for HDB flats. It was observed that Chinese sellers living in Malay areas have a ready Malay clientele to quickly buy their flats – with the HDB having "no control over the increasingly active resale market" (*Straits Times*, January 7, 1989).

The government argued that such movements toward racial enclaves, if allowed to continue for another 10 to 20 years, would derail the Republic's national integration process. In the parliamentary sitting in February 1989, Dhanabalan elaborated in greater detail the government's concerns; the House was told that if nothing was done, in only 10 years, Malays would constitute 43 percent in the new Bedok town and Chinese would comprise 93.1 percent in Bukit Merah (Singapore Parliamentary Records System, February 16, 1989, Vol. 52, No. 1, *Straits Times*, January 31, 1989). Hence, in parliament on February 16, 1989, the government declared that for HDB neighborhoods, the new racial limits would be capped as follows: Chinese, 84 percent; Malays, 22 percent; and Indians and others, 10 percent. For HDB blocks of flats, the limits were set three-percentage points higher for the three racial groups, namely, 87 percent Chinese, 25 percent Malays, and 13 percent Indians and others (*SPRS*, February 16, 1989, and February 17, 1989).

Other than the housing policy, yet another key area that was given much emphasis by the Government in pursuance of "multiracialism" was in the realm of education. To begin with, soon after Independence, "bilingualism" (English and the mother tongue language) was made compulsory to all schoolchildren. In 1999, "National Education" was also made an

obligatory subject from primary to tertiary levels after the Government's observation that younger Singaporeans have little knowledge of the country's historical roots and such a situation, if left unchecked, would impede the national integration quest. The school curriculum was later devised such that it included other practices, including sports and extra-curricular activities where all ethnic groups participate.

In the area of Defense policy, compulsory National Service was introduced in 1967. Other than buttressing loyalty and patriotism to the country – daily, soldiers stand at attention to declare their "Pledge" to Singapore, sing the National Anthem, and raise the State Flag – it was also hoped that this military conscription would promote interethnic solidarity. Since the mid-1990s, National Service itself took a new and holistic meaning with the introduction of the concept of "Total Defense," which looks at defense as interrelated with all other aspects of security, such as sociopsychological defense, military defense, and economic defense. Politically, not to miss mentioning is the Group Representation Constituency (GRC) Scheme, with the principal aim to ensure that Singapore's legislature will forever be multiracial in composition and representation. Through this electoral reform, election candidates have to contest as a multiracial team.

There are many other annual national celebrations meant to achieve a similar goal of building a more cohesive and integrated nation, such as the *National Day Parade* and *Racial Harmony Day*. A new "ideology" – *Shared Values* – was also enunciated, where citizens promise to adopt commonly held values such as the emphasis on the communitarian spirit, the importance of the family institution, and the commitment to resolve conflicts through peaceful consensus and not resorting to violence. In 2003, PM Goh launched the *Code of Religious Harmony*, aimed at getting Singaporeans to agree on some fundamental principles that are hoped to consolidate interreligious harmony.

State Assumptions and Predispositions about Ethnicity

Now that we have highlighted the broad historical and ideological setting that guides the government's national integration agenda, as well as its policies and socialization strategies in support of its governing philosophies, it is time to cast attention and analysis to some perceptions and predispositions that, arguably, have guided the State's policies and responses to the "Malay plight."[11]

The first important determinant is the belief in the salience and persistence of the "ethnic factor." The government is unapologetic that ethnoreligious pulls are here to stay and hence, it is imprudent to assume that Singapore could be left to evolve into a nation without State intervention. Instructively, too, the government (and this was even more obvious when Lee Kuan Yew was Prime Minister) believes that Singapore Malays show the strongest attachment to their ethnoreligious values, and this could complicate the nation-building agendas. The Government has often highlighted the two racial riots in 1950 and 1964 to substantiate its concerns (*Straits Times*, May 1, 1989). Related to the belief in the intractable nature of ethnicity as a "given" in multiracial Singapore is a second presumption, that is, that ethnic stability can only be achieved if the existing ethnic proportionality among the three communities be zealously maintained. In 2000, such an ethnic population mix saw the Chinese comprising 76.8 percent of the population, Malays 13.9 percent, and Indians 7.9 percent out of a total population of about 4 million. There was a slight change for 2010 with Malays constituting 13.4 percent and Indians 9.7 percent.

Given the relatively high emigration rate and low birth rate among the Chinese, the government liberalized its immigration policy and today, its pro-Hong Kong and pro-China immigration policy has resulted in thousands of Hong Kong and China residents becoming either permanent residents or citizens. Trends and policy speeches by the Cabinet after the General Election of 2011, however, suggest that this liberal immigration policy will no longer be as open. These trends could imply that the government's fertility policies that were "implicitly bifurcated along racial/ethnic lines" and aimed at preserving the proportion of the Republic's racial mix (King, 2002, p. 279) would continue.

Another imperative that explains the government's determined reluctance to adopt an ethnic-blind national policy strategy relates to Singapore's geopolitical location within the "Malay World" of Southeast Asia. As had been seen, from time to time, Singapore's bilateral relations with its closest neighbors, Indonesia and Malaysia, particularly the latter, were bruised by assertive pro-Malay and pro-Muslim overtures from the leaders of these two Malay neighbors. Predictably, Singapore's tendency of adopting a "tit-for-tat" attitude in rebutting foreign criticisms heightened the tension. An example of a widely-publicized spat between Singapore and Malaysia was Lee Kuan Yew's statement in a sworn affidavit, in January 1997, that the Malaysian state of Johor was notorious for

shootings, muggings, and car-jacking. Obviously, this caused a furor on the other side of the Causeway, with the Malaysian media deciding to whip up emotions. The then Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamed, charged Lee for being insensitive to Malaysia, while a popular columnist berated the Republic for its tendency to blame Malaysia as a way of resolving its own "internal unity considerations" and alluded to the cordial Singapore–Israel relations as contributing to Singapore's attitude towards Malaysia. As recent as January 2011, Mahathir again berated Singapore for its "meritocracy" policy, which he found to have disadvantaged the Republic's Malays (*Berita Harian*, January 8, 2011, p. 18).

State–Malay Relations

With the above background, it is time to deliberate on the resolve of the State to maintain its governing philosophies and principles – and subsequent Malay retort – resulting in the tensions characteristic of State–Malay relations in the Republic. It seems that for relatively minor grievances that do not challenge long-held worldviews and principles of governance, the Singapore Government had been more than prepared to accommodate Malay aspirations. In fact, since Independence, a few policies were initiated to help Malays: making Malay as the National Language and choosing Malay lyrics for the National Anthem; offering of free tuition and bursaries to Malay students from the post-primary level onwards[12]; lowering the cost of land for the building of mosques[13]; instituting the office of the "Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs"[14]; establishing the "Presidential Council of Minority Affairs"; and initiating the GRC electoral system.

However, time and again, the Government demonstrated its dogged tenacity not to cave in to Malay pressures or compromise its core principles of nation-building, that is, "multiracialism," "secularism," and "meritocracy" (Ganguly, 2003). Even outside pressures – including from neighboring Malaysia and Indonesia – aimed at showing empathy to Singapore's Malay plight have not been allowed to sway the government's position. This policy resolve was clearly demonstrated whenever indigenous ethnic Malays pressure for policy changes on matters considered close to their hearts – as was seen in their failed attempts with regard to the *madrasah*, AMLA, and *tudung* episodes as conferred to earlier. As discussed, one such principle that has been avowedly defended by the

State is "secularism" as State ideology. Expectedly, this zealous maintenance of secularism as State ideology, at a time when religious revivalism has been on the ascendancy in the Republic and different faiths have their own interpretations of the State's policies and principles,[15] resulted in greater tensions in the State–religion dialectical relationship. While secularism consciously separates the worldly and the religious, in the intrusive policies and politics of the Singaporean State, invariably, national (secular) laws and institutions had been accorded precedence over particularistic, ethnoreligious considerations. As an illustration, although the Government permits its Muslim civil servants time off to perform their obligatory congregational Friday prayers, such a policy does not lead to the freezing of business and provision of public services, as practised in some Muslim countries. In fact, there have been occasions when Singapore's Parliament sits on Fridays even though its Muslim MPs are duty-bound to fulfill their obligatory prayers (*Straits Times*, February 23, 1999, p. 39).

Understandably, secularism poses certain difficulties for communities whose worldview makes no distinction between the worldly and the religious, particularly Christians and Muslims. For Malays, the dictum of giving Caesar and God their respective domains comes in conflict with the Islamic Faith, which looks at religion as an all-encompassing "way of life." Thus, secularism has enabled the State to legislate a number of parliamentary bills that were objected to by religious communities, such as the nod to marriages of sex-change persons. The Government could afford to conveniently rubbish the call by the Opposition party, the Singapore National Front, to replace the Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs after the Minister tabled a parliamentary bill proposing to recognize transsexual marriages, which the SNF charged as "most unbecoming" for a Muslim Minister to do so (*Straits Times*, February 6, 1996, p. 17). It also granted rights to homosexuals and gays, the appointment of religious leaders in state-sanctioned statutory boards and agencies, the legal provisions that granted non-Muslim judges to adjudicate on Muslim divorce cases, and laws disallowing Muslim students from wearing the Muslim headscarf. Intriguingly, these governmental maneuvers seem to show that in the main, the burden to comply with the rule separating religion from politics falls on the shoulders of the citizens, more than the State.

Other than "secularism," the State's practice of "multiracialism" and "meritocracy" has also been subject of some public disquiet, especially from Malays. Insofar as multiracialism is concerned, many Malays could

not understand why the government was unhappy with their different lifestyle and religious orientation vis-à-vis other Singaporeans, insisting that Malays should be more nationalistic, inclusive, and be in cahoots with fellow citizens on major issues. As an example, in 1995, Lee Hsien Loong, then the Deputy PM, had called upon Malays to widen their common ground with non-Malay Singaporeans. This came about after it was revealed that very few Malays had involved themselves in grassroots activities, a concern that led to the Malay daily, *Berita Harian*, to mention the issue no fewer than 378 times in 1993 and 1994 – "an average of one report every other day" (*Straits Times*, February 18, 1995). Apparently, Malay MPs have not impressed upon the national political elite that as Muslims, Malays are enjoined by their faith to spend more time in mosques rather than in Community Clubs. Four years after the clarion call by DPM Lee, Malay participation in grassroots bodies continue to be miniscule – 7 percent (1976) if compared to 85 percent (24,008) for the Chinese (*Straits Times,* April 1, 1999). This led PM Goh, in his *National Day Rally Speech* of 2003 – arguably the PM's most important speech in any given year – to declare the following: "…Do not isolate yourselves and end up being a less important tributary…Malays have no choice but compete within a 'meritocracy' culture" (*MITA: Government Press Release*, August 18, 2003).

Throughout 2002, against the backdrop of the arrests of the JI (Muslim) operatives the Government rallied Malays to join hands with other ethnic groups on major issues where a united stand was warranted.[16] This came about after the Government saw the different standpoints adopted by Malays when it comes to issues requiring a united Singaporean position. These had included the visit of the Israeli President Chaim Herzog in 1986, and the two US-led wars in Iraq, in 1991 and 2003. In the 1986 issue, even after many Malay/Muslim organizations protested over the visit, PM Lee (and Malay MPs) not only maintained the right of the State to extend the invitation[17] but also observed that "In certain circumstances, the Malay Singaporean reacts with the emphasis on Malay/Muslim rather than Singaporean…This boiled down in the end to a question of loyalty" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 19, 1987, p. 42). In the latter Iraq war, in sharp variance to the position of the Government and the majority of non-Malays, which supported the US' decision to attack Iraq, some well-known Malay/Muslim groups sent a combined press release urging the Government not to support the war plan (*Straits Times*, September 10, 2002).

Here again, the Government's lack of accommodation of alternative views and actions adds to its strained relations with especially the Malays. More fundamentally, it seems that the government has its own ideas and predispositions as to how citizens must act even on basic, governing philosophies. Take the case of the policy ambivalence relating to "multiculturalism." On the one hand, the government has openly given its blessing to see each ethnic community anchor themselves with knowledge of their own ethnoreligious cultures and civilizations. On the other, however, this admirable policy is clouded by a definition and approach of "multiculturalism" that is still embedded with a redundant multiracialism flavor. Not surprisingly, some writers had criticized aspects of its policy implementation (Chua, 2003; Tremewan, 1996).

As is known, unlike multiracialism – which views diversity and plurality of ethnic groups as liabilities in the nation-building quest – multiculturalism (sometimes depicted as "cultural pluralism") actually celebrates such heterogeneity and diversities, viewing them as creative assets that should be cherished and encouraged by the State. As is practised elsewhere, more than mere acceptance of diversity, multicultural societies reduce racism, sexism, and discrimination by emphasizing the coexistence and mutual rights of many cultures in a locality, without any one culture or mainstream viewpoint dominating the society (Chua & Kwok, 2001; Harris, 1995). Contrast this with the Singapore government's criticisms of the atypical Malay responses with regard to the US-led attacks in Iraq, dubbing such different responses as signs of unpatriotism and disloyalty to the country.

The other policy that was launched as an extension of the State's adoption of "multiculturalism" relates to the government's engineered housing program. Despite its tangible benefits, some writers have actually highlighted its flip side, namely, ethnic quotas in HDB estates actually disadvantaged and discriminate Malays more than other ethnic groups. This was the report by a former senior official of the HDB in 1991 who noted that a 20 percent quota on Malay applications in any housing estate was already "administratively, silently imposed" and only made public by PM Lee in 1987 (Chua, 1991, p. 348). The report not only described the imposition of the quota on Malays as "discriminatory" but also revealed that "until 1989, this quota was maintained only on new housing stock by the HDB. When the quota for a particular estate was reached, the register was closed to the Malays. No control was imposed for resale flats" (Chua, 1991, pp. 348–349). Chua concluded that although, in principle,

these new racial restrictions affect everyone, nevertheless, they "extract a higher cost from minority groups" (Chua, 1991, p. 343). Another study in 1994 painted a less positive picture of the limitations of housing policies to building a united nation; it concluded that while the ethnic housing policy managed to prevent ethnic enclaves, there was "not enough real integration...and so superficial harmony is achieved..." (Soh, 1993).

It is here that perhaps the Malays' religious identity quests – manifest in the *madrasah* and *tudung* episodes – be accorded the "private space" that was promised by the State. After all, the community's aspiration to manage their own *madrasah* and for their children to don the *tudung* are guided by considerations of faith and more importantly, do not appear to run counter to Singapore's national identity quest. On the issue of the *tudung,* many Malays were unconvinced with the government's line of reasoning that Sikhs are granted exemption from the school uniform rule and thereby allowed to put on the turban because of historical legacy. Similarly, the government's statement that the *tudung* is incongruent to the practice of donning a standard school uniform in school seemed somewhat feeble to many thinking Malays. The Ministry of Education issued a statement on the matter:

> The government seeks to expand the common space Singaporeans share. Schools require pupils to wear uniforms, regardless of race, religion or social status. Allowing exceptions would fragment the common space and invite competing demands from different communities. (*Straits Times*, May 8, 2000; *New York Times*, March 16, 2002)[18]

Finally, in spite of noble intensions, the GRC electoral reform is not all positive to Malays who have objected to aspects of the scheme. Their protestations included the following: imposing upon the community the State's chosen leaders, tainting Malay image and self-esteem since Malay candidates merely tag along stronger non-Malay team members to win, and a Malay candidate would still win the election even if he was not supported by the community since the Malay proportion in all electoral GRC wards was relatively small and thus had little influence upon electoral outcome.

Other than the ambivalences in the State's multicultural practice, there are also some gaps in the implementation of "meritocracy." The Government's discriminatory approach in recruiting Malays for jobs or appointments that are deemed "sensitive" in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) is public knowledge; in spite of widespread Malay disenchantment

with what they saw as the government's contradictory principle towards the meritocracy policy, certain military units and other strategic security jobs continue to be "out-of-bounds" to this indigenous community. Apparently, Lee Kuan Yew's sentiment in 1987 holds sway even until this very day:

> If for instance, you put in a Malay officer who's very religious and who has family ties in Malaysia in charge of a machine gun unit, that's a very tricky business…if today the Prime Minister doesn't think about this, we could have a tragedy.

Lee reiterated a similarly abiding position in 1999 (*Today*, September 20, 1999, p. 10) and 2001 – this time, suggesting that his position has nothing to do with racial discrimination but common sense prudence – when he held a dialogue session with Malay leaders, organized by MAJLIS PUSAT and the AMP on March 2, 2001, and issued a statement entitled "Loyalty and the SAF." Although many Malays have objected to this policy and even the Opposition SDP promised to rescind the policy if it takes over the government,[19] the existence of many former senior military officers who hold similar views and who are now in the Cabinet, might suggest that the policy will be around for some years to come.

Finally, there is the ongoing tension between adopting "meritocracy" on the one hand and implementing the rights of Malays given their "special position" as the indigenous people of the land, as acknowledged in the Constitution of Singapore (Article 152). Hence, some quarters could be tempted to suggest the incorporation of some form of "affirmative action" practice that has been adopted by many States in managing their indigenous ethnic minorities. On the contrary, the Government has been more than keen to signal to the Malays that given the Republic's practice of "meritocracy," they should not mislead themselves into expecting such State support and other entitlements. In an interview with the author, David Marshall, the former Chief Minister of Singapore and later Ambassador to France, stated that this issue of Malays' "special position" was presented by his team when he led the delegation to London in 1956 to call for more powers for the Singapore's legislative Council. Marshall's version could not be verified as yet, but apparently, such a provision was subsequently accepted by Britain in 1958 when it was issued as a preamble to the Constitution. When Singapore was part of Malaysia, the same provision was included in Federation of Malaysia Constitution, Article 89 (1 and 2). Upon Independence in 1965,

Article 89 became Article 152. The sentiment seems to be that the earlier that Malays regard the constitutional provision as nothing more than symbolic – since it is only in the preamble of the Constitution and is therefore, an advisory and not a legal injunction as such – the better it would be for their future progress in Singapore's globally competitive environment.

Interestingly, even if the Malays were to accept and adopt the "meritocracy" principle just like other ethnic Singaporeans, it is still unclear if the principle would not disadvantage them. The findings and conclusion of some foreign observers of the Singapore scene must have given Malays some reasons to worry. Michael Barr, a regular commentator of Singapore affairs, noting that the position of the non-Chinese in the educational stakes has clearly deteriorated since the beginning of the 1980s, pointed to what he regarded as the charade of Singapore's meritocracy:

> According to the logic of meritocracy…the Chinese have been getting smarter, at least compared to the non-Chinese. Yet the selection of scholars does not depend purely on objective results like exam scores. In the internal processes of awarding scholarships...there are plenty of opportunities to exercise subtle forms of discrimination. Extracurricular activities (as recorded in one's school record), "character" and performance in an interview are also considered. This makes the selection process much more subjective than one would expect in a system that claims to be a meritocracy, and it creates ample opportunity for racial and other prejudices to operate with relative freedom...if Singapore's meritocracy is truly a level playing field, as the Lees assert, then the Chinese must be much smarter and harder working than the minority Indians and Malays. Consider the distribution of the top jobs in various arms of the Singapore government service. (Barr & Skrbis, 2008)

It might be plausible that perhaps, the Government had hoped that with time, the fate of the Malays' clamor for "special position" would die a natural death as that of the constitutional position of the Malay language (*Bahasa Melayu*) as the "National Language" of Singapore, first articulated in the "All Party Report on Chinese Education" in 1956, which also designated Chinese, Malay, and Tamil as mother tongue languages and encouraged the wide use of English given its status as an international language. In this latter regard, the majority of Malays, notably the younger generation, has accepted the reality that in the Republic's modernization and globalization drives, while Malay language will continue to be

their mother tongue language, it is English, not Malay, that must be *the* language for them as it is for all Singaporeans.

Conclusion

It must be conceded that managing ethnic relations in plural multiethnic societies is not an easy task. The dynamics of historical memories, primordial cravings, state neglect, the quest for power, and related imperatives have all complicated the governance of such societies. The situation is even more challenging in societies such as Singapore with sizeable ethnoreligious minorities and a legacy of ethnic tensions. In this Republic, thanks to the relative success of the city-state in maximizing its embrace of globalization in particular, and its astute management of the multiethnic polity in general, relations among the ethnic communities have been praiseworthy, especially when contrasted with the experience of many other similarly plural societies.

Still, this Republic is not exempted from the stresses and strains that are often associated with heterogeneous, multiethnic countries the world over. In fact, in spite of Singapore's success as a developed state, and positioning itself to be a future "city of excellence," the mission of transforming itself from a state to a nation, has not been without its share of problems and challenges. While the Republic's economic progress and prosperity has generally benefited all Singaporeans, it appears that such progress is not felt as much by its Malay ethnic minority. Evidences abound that the Malays, who constitute 14 percent of the population, have been lagging behind – not only the majority Chinese community but also the ethnic Indian minority, the proportion of which is even smaller than theirs. Aggravating the strain in the State–Malay ethnic narrative is the revelation that in recent decades, Malays, being Muslim, have been leaning more towards their faith, a development that the government regards as an impediment towards its national identity quest.

Given its hegemonic power as a government that has ruled, uninterrupted, since 1959, the ruling PAP political elite have been circumspect in its ethnic management. Operating under a "dominant one-party system," the government has readily made the most of the authority and control that such a system accords it – via legal, economic, and societal initiatives – to govern according to its declared ideologies and principles, that is, multiracialism, meritocracy, secularism. However, it is ever mindful that mismanaging the sensitive Malay minority predicament will derail

the many triumphs it has achieved thus far in building up the Singapore of today, a small but prosperous cosmopolis. The Malays' constitutional status as the indigenous people of Singapore, the persistence of their socioeconomic malaise since Independence in 1965, the location of this small, prosperous island-state in the midst of the "Malay World," the global fears of Muslim terrorism, and the State's determined resolve to uphold the cornerstones of its nation-building philosophies and agendas – all informed its ethnic relations scorecard in the Republic.

Against the backdrop of such realities, it appears that State–Malay relations call for not only astute governance but a deeper understanding and appreciation of the interests and aspirations of the Republic's indigenous Malay minority. While admittedly Malays owe it to themselves to continue improving their educational and economic competencies and collaborate with the State and other fellow ethnic citizens to realize Singapore's vision of a "Renaissance city," arguably, it is the State that must lead the way. After all, not only have studies in many post-colonial states have shown that the State, more than any other factor, is a crucial determinant of the success or otherwise of many multiethnic plural societies, but also in the Singapore context, the State's overarching preponderance suggests that the Malay predicament would have a better chance to be redressed if the State demonstrates greater empathy and support to their perennial predicament.

The reality in this Republic is that to progress like other citizens, the Malay minority, like all minorities elsewhere, cannot be left unaided to evolve its own natural growth path. All the more so, for an indigenous minority whose special position is enshrined in the Republic's Constitution and whose socioeconomic status since Independence has persistently lagged behind other ethnic communities, a situation that will invariably accentuate given the Republic's embrace of globalization. Managed well, these minority anxieties and concerns have all the chance to be assuaged and Malays, like all Singaporeans, can look forward for a future full of hope.

NOTES

1. Retrieved March 13, 2010, from http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/relate_material/Singapore
2. For a discussion of these strategies, see Glazer (1995), Lijphart (1980), Rex (1986).

3. Retrieved April 21, 2010, from http://www.gov.sg/stats
4. See its blueprint publications, *Forging a Vision* and *Vision 2010* in 1990 and 2000, respectively, published by the AMP.
5. See Eddie Kuo and John S.T. Quah (1988). "Religion in Singapore: Report of National Survey," reproduced in the *Straits Times* of April 8, 1989, p. 20. The *Population Census of Singapore 1990* similarly confirmed such findings.
6. Speech at the "Fortune Global Forum" on November 12, 2002, in Washington, DC (MuslimMediawatch@yahoogroups.com).
7. Information about these three issues is adapted from Mutalib (2005).
8. Retrieved March 27, 2010, from http://www.muis.gov.sg/pengumuman/tudungissue.asp
9. Retrieved March 23, 2010, from http://www.pergas.org.sg/hijab-press2.html
10. See the *Singapore Parliamentary Record System* (*SPRS*) previously known as *Hansard* – being a speech by Goh about the *Singapore 21* government blueprint on May 5, 1999.
11. Some parts of this segment are adapted from Mutalib (2002).
12. This policy was later rescinded (repealed) after the Government, led by the Senior Minister of State for Education, Sidek Saniff, rallied the Malays to accept a compromise with the State: an offer of $10 million to Mendaki to help Malay education.
13. Between 1990 and 2005, the Islamic Council of Singapore (MUIS) has developed 11 new-generation mosques in HDB new towns, half of which replaced old mosques. In addition, MUIS has also upgraded 13 existing mosques. The mosque development/upgrading program over the last 15 years has provided about 43,500 more prayer spaces for the Muslim community (MCDS, *Progress of the Malay Community in Singapore Since 1980*, n.d.). It should be noted though that the actual cost of building the mosque is borne by Muslim salary contributions to the MBMF.
14. Traditionally, the title of "Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs" is given to the sole Malay/Muslim Minister in the Cabinet who will also usually double up with a concurrent portfolio as Minister of Community Development or Environment. As "Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs," he is empowered by the Cabinet to regulate much of the Muslim and Islamic activities in the Republic – such as overseeing MUIS, Malay umbrella organizations such as Mendaki, changes to Islamic law, etc. Usually serving in an acting capacity before being confirmed, he often stays in Cabinet for about four to five electoral terms. The longest to be confirmed as Minister was Dr Ahmad Mattar (about 10 years) and the shortest was Dr Yaacob Ibrahim (about three years).

15. As recent as 2010, three Cabinet Ministers again openly raised the issue of the re-assertiveness of religions in Singapore (*Today*, April 19, 2010, p. 1).
16. PM Goh echoed these points again in his dialogue with young Malay/Muslim professionals on February 2, 2002, at the CSC–IPAM Auditorium. The author has a copy of his remarks.
17. *Straits Times*, November 6, 1986, and December 15, 1986.
18. The author also has the press release from the Singapore Religious Scholars and Teachers' Association (PERGAS), condemning the State's position.
19. The SDP declaration was made by its then leader, Chiam See Tong, especially after the repeated prompting by DPM Lee Hsien Loong to get him to answer the question: "If you were the PM, would you rescind the SAF policy?" He replied, "Certainly." See *Straits Times*, March 18, 1987.

REFERENCES

Barr, Michael D., & Low, Jevon (2005). Assimilation as multiracialism: The case of Singapore's Malays. *Asian Ethnicity*, *6*(3), 161–182.

Barr, Michael, & Skrbis, Zlatko (2008). *Constructing Singapore: Elitism, ethnicity and the nation-building project*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press.

Brubaker, Rogers, & Laitin, David D. (1998). Ethnic and nationalist violence. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *24*(1), 423–452.

Chua, Beng Huat (1991). Race relations and public housing policy in Singapore. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, *8*(4), 343–354.

Chua, Beng Huat (2003). Multiculturalism in Singapore: An instrument of social control. *Race & Class*, *44*(3), 58–77.

Chua, Beng Huat, & Kwok Kian-Woon (2001). Social pluralism in Singapore. In Robert W. Hefner (Ed.), *The politics of multiculturalism: Pluralism and citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia* (pp. 86–118). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Committee on Compulsory Education, Singapore (2000, July). *Report of the Committee on Compulsory Education in Singapore.* Singapore: Ministry of Education.

Ganguly, Sumi (2003). The politics of language policies in Malaysia and Singapore. In Michael E. Brown & Sumit Ganguly (Eds), *Fighting words: Language policy and ethnic relations in Asia* (pp. 239–262). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

George, Cherian (2007). Consolidating authoritarian rule: Calibrated coercion in Singapore. *The Pacific Review*, *20*(2), 127–131.

Glazer, Nathan (1995). *Ethnicity: Theory and experience*. MA: Harvard University Press.

Harris, D. (1995). *Multiculturalism from the margins: The dominant voices of difference and diversity*. London: Praeger.

Hegre, Havard, Ellingsen, Tanja, Gates, Scott, & Gleditsch, Nils Petter (2001). Toward a democratic civil peace? Democracy, political change, and civil war, 1816–1992. *American Political Science Review*, *95*(1), 33–48.

King, Roger (2002). *A girl from Zanzibar*. London: Helen Marx Books.

Lijphart, Arend (1980). *Democracy in plural societies: A comparative exploration.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Mutalib, H. (2002). The socio-economic dimension in Singapore's quest for security and stability. *Pacific Affairs*, *71*(1), 39–56.

Mutalib, Hussin (2005). Singapore Muslims: The quest for identity in a modern city-state. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, *25*(1), 53–72.

Rex, John (1986). *Theories of race and ethnic relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rodan, Garry (2004). *Transparency and authoritarian rule in Southeast Asia: Singapore and Malaysia*. Abingdon: Routledge Curzon.

Rodan, Gary (2009). New modes of political participation and Singapore's nominated members of parliament. *Government and Opposition*, *44*(4), 438–462.

Shariff, Zulfikar (2002, February 4). Rising criticism of Singapore over scarves ban. *IslamOnline*.

Soh, Kay Cheng (1993). Ethnic relations in neighborhood schools. In Ooi Giok Ling, Sharon Siddique, & Soh Kay Cheng (Eds), *The management of ethnic relations in public housing estates* (pp. 1–23). Singapore: Times Academic Press; Institute of Policy Studies.

Tan, Kenneth Paul (2007). Renaissance Singapore. In Kenneth Paul Tan (Ed.), *Renaissance Singapore? Economy, culture, and politics* (pp. 1–19). Singapore: NUS Press.

Tremewan, C. (1996). *The political economy of social control in Singapore*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Walter, Barbara F. (1999). Introduction. In Barbara F. Walter & Jack Snyder (Eds), *Civil wars, insecurity, and intervention* (pp. 1–14). New York: Columbia University Press.

Hussin Mutalib is a senior academic attached to the Department of Political Science of the National University of Singapore. He has written a book and many articles about politics in Singapore, and has been a Visiting Professor/Fellow to universities such as Harvard, LSE, Oxford, and UC (Berkeley). [email: polmutal@nus.edu.sg]