ETHNICITY OR SOCIAL CLASS: AN ANALYSIS OF EQUALITY AND INTEGRATION ATTITUDINAL SCALES AMONG MALAYSIANS

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Sinopsis

Kertas ini cuba melihat pola umum hubungan antara etnisiti dan kelas sosial dalam proses pembentukan sikap persamaan dan integrasi dalam konteks masyarakat majmuk di Malaysia. Satu teknik statistik bernama regresi pelbagai telah digunakan dalam analisis ini. Dapatan-dapatan menunjukkan bahawa dalam isu-isu etnik, etnisiti didapati menjadi penentu penting manakala kelas sosial secara relatif tidak signifikan. Namun demikian, analisis multivariat seterusnya memperlihatkan status sosio-ekonomi dan tempat asal berinteraksi dengan etnisiti, menghasilkan keperbezaan kesan antara kelompok-kelompok. Bagi orang-orang Melayu, orang-orang miskin di bandar (berbanding dengan orang-orang miskin di desa dan orang-orang kaya di bandar) lebih memperlihatkan skor persamaan positif. Aliran yang sama juga diperolehi daripada orang-orang India. Bagi orang-orang Cina pula, orang-orang miskin di bandar lebih negatif skor persamaan mereka jika dibandingkan dengan rakan-rakan mereka di desa. Reaksi yang berbeza ini dihuraikan oleh sifat wujud atau tidaknya keuntungan yang mereka perolehi dari dasar kerajaan.

Synopsis

This paper explores the general pattern of the relationship between ethnicity and social class toward the process of equality and integration attitude formations in a context of a Malaysian plural society. A statistical technique known as multiple regression was used in the analysis. The findings show that in the area of attitude formations and behavioural choices regarding ethnic issues, ethnicity was found to be an important determinant while social class was a relatively insignificant determinant. However, further multivariate analyses show that socio-economic status and place of origin were found to interact with ethnicity, producing different effects between and within subgroups. For the Malays, the urban poor (versus rural poor, and urban rich respectively) were found to contribute more to the positive equality score. The same trend was also found among the Indians. For the Chinese, however, the urban poor were found to be more negative in their views toward equality than their rural counterparts. The different reactions of these subgroups have been explained by the nature of the presence or absence of benefits accruing from the Policy.

Introduction

Malaysian plural society may be broadly categorized as consisting of different ethnic communities. For the most part, differentiations in every sector of life are ethnically based. It forms the most tangible and visible mode of comparison and contrast. It is also partly a colonial legacy to identify the society as such. The New Economic Policy as Malaysia's national ideology for restructuring society, assumes the primary sources of conflict are essentially racial rather than economic or class in origin. It thus strives to eradicate poverty and restructure wealth between the communities. It emphasizes the establishment of a broad ethnic balance, and assumes that interethnic conflict will be minimized in a context of a rapidly expanding free enterprise economy. This manner of categorizing society, apparent though it may be, lacks rigour and eludes the more important facts of the modes of collective organization in society.

At the beginning period of implementation of the New Economic Policy, it was already apparent that groups differ not only on ethnic lines but also income-wise. Intragroup difference in income distribution was found to be most for the Malays than for other groups. This was a significant change from its distribution more than a decade ago where the pattern was reversed (Snodgrass, 1980: 83). Although no data are available, the emphasis of the New Economic Policy on accelerating economic development for the Malays (being the poorest) is expected to widen further intragroup differences in income distribution among them. The avowed aim and the success of the Policy in creating a class of Malay entrepreneurs on one hand, the attendant reaction from Malay peasantry protesting against economic conditions and large-scale Malay urbanization leading to the creation of an urban Malay proletariat on the other, are indications pointing to the possible continuity, if not worsening the condition, of intragroup differences in income distribution.

In the context of discussing ethnic relations and public policy formulation and implementation in Malaysia, the salience of ethnicity as forming the major basis in virtually all public policy decisions has been pointed.[1] Although a few considerations along social class lines have been forwarded as in the policy for education among the aristocratic and peasant Malays, and policy on land between the large entrepreneurs and the smallholders, by and large these consideration were submerged by the more enveloping issue of ethnicity. More

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[1]For further detail, see Mohammad Haji-Yusuf (1983: 107 — 169).

recently, however, discussions and analyses regarding the general problems of inequality and national development have been perceived and defined in terms of differences in ethnicity, rural-urban residence and social class. These variables have found official recognition in the delineation of the Malaysian socio-economic problems.[2] Our interest here represents an exploratory work regarding the relative importance of the variables, ethnicity and social class, in the context of a plural Malaysian society.

The Polarized Themes of Ethnicity and Social Class

Should ethnicity and social class be an either or question or should they be integrated in any analysis of social phenomena? The two themes — ethnicity and social class — have become polarized as each has been taken to be the major determinant of social behaviour to the exclusion of the other, and concomitantly as each has been the basis for competing principles and schools of thought. Between the two themes, ethnicity has been considered a traditional social form which would disappear with modernization and industrialization and be placed by a consideration based on the "rational" principles of mutual interest and need.

The decline of ethnicity was highlighted by the assimilation theory in which the generally accepted argument has held that the ethnic group should, in the course of a few generations, become assimilated into the total population. W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole declared that "... the future of American ethnic groups seems to be limited; it is likely that they will be quickly absorbed" (1945: 296). More than a decade later Dahl asserted that "... in the long run ethnic influences must decline and socio-economic factors correspondingly increase in importance" (1961: 59). The subsequent development saw a resurgence of ethnicity in which its proponents argue that a perspective which stresses the persistence of ethnicity as a vital force in social and political life is more realistic than one which accepts the inevitability of assimilation. The confusion has arisen, they contend, because assimilation has not been viewed as the complex multidimensional process it actually is, but rather as a simple, unidimensional, transitional model. Milton Gordon (1964: 60 — 83) presented the most widely recognized persistence argument in which he distinguishes seven basic sub-processes of assimilation, asserting the fact that what has happened in America has been the process of acculturation or behavioural or cultural assimilation and not structural assimilation.

[2]For further detail, see Malaysia (1971: 1 — 9; 1976: 1 — 11; 1981: 1 — 8).

The experiences from other societies studied by social scientists also contributed to this resurgence, notably among them are the works by M. G. Smith (1965), and Leo Kuper and M. G. Smith (1969) in which they suggested that ethnicity be placed at centre stage arguing that almost every society in the world has some degree of ethnic diversity, and for most ethnicity appears to be a pivotal point of division and conflict.

The debate over the primacy of the competing approaches not only persists to the present but also motivates the emergence of a new school of thought which attacks both the phenomena up front and tries to unravel the relationship between the two variables. The work of Bonacich and Modell (1980) is an example of this school of thought. In using the middleman-minority theory to explicate the Japanese-American experience, they state the basic theme of their endeavour as the study of the "... relationship between ethnicity and social class" (1980: 3). The study contributes a form of synthesis to the polarized themes of ethnicity and social class. The purpose of this article is related to this issue. Specifically, first we want to assess the relative importance of the two variables — ethnicity or social class — on attitudinal scales relating to the New Economic Policy. Second, depending on the significance of each of the phenomena, the different ethnic and social class subgroups would be compared so as to arrive at a more meaningful understanding of the mechanics of the differences of behaviour among the subgroups.

Methodology

The Sample

To answer the above questions, a group of 325 students from the National Universityof Malaysia was administered a questionnaire designed to tap their attitudes toward the major policy of the government as contained in the well-known blueprint called the New Economic Policy. A stratified random sample was used to arrive at the final 325 respondents so that they represent the population of the university students as a whole, if not the population of the country. The distributions in terms of ethnicity, faculties studied categorized as science and non-science, year of study from first to fourth year, sex and place of origin are among the bases considered. The final sample is to reflect the population under consideration, and the Pearson's x^2 test for goodness of fit is used to determine if a conspicuous discrepancy exists between the observed cell frequencies and those expected under the null hypothesis of no difference (Bhattacharyya and Johnson, 1977: 424 — 426). We are looking for

an agreement between the data and the hypothesis, or more precisely, we are trying not to reject the null hypothesis of no difference.

With regard to ethnicity, our sample is significantly different from the university student population. The latter distribution is found to be skewed to one ethnic group. We feel it more appropriate to base our distribution of the sample on the wider societal ethnic distribution. The test shows that chi-square is not significant indicating an agreement between the distributions in the final sample and the overall population. In terms of ethnicity, the final sample comprises 55 percent Malays, 30 percent Chinese and 15 percent Indian.

Place· of origin was not tabulated by the university, and this prompted us to use the distribution of the larger population as the basis. The distribution of the sample data is significantly different from the base distribution. This information is important to note in our discussion of the results later. 40 percent of our respondents come from rural areas while 60 percent are from urban areas.

The distributions on the basis of sex, faculty studied, and year of study are statistically similar to the university student population. The final sample is 65 percent male and 35 percent female; 56 percent from the non-science faculties (social science and humanities) to 44 percent of the science faculties; and 35 percent first year students, 26 percent second year students, 24 percent third year students·and 15 percent fourth year students.

The Dependent Variables

Eight attitudinal items of the Likert type were factor-analyzed by the principal component analysis, thereby producing a small number of coherent factors representing a clustering of several items around a single theme (Rummel, 1967: 444 — 480). Table 1 shows the unrotated and rotated factor matrices for the sample data while Table 2 shows the items grouped under each of the factors or scales. The factor analysis procedure extracted two distinct attitude factors from the data and they were called the scale of equality and the scale of integration.

As we have mentioned earlier, the attitutde items are tapping the respondents' attitudes toward the government policy called the New Economic Policy. More than what the name of the policy suggests, it is a master policy which includes in it the issues of the economy, social and education of the various groups which make up the plural population of the country. It has also been identified as Malaysia's effective national ideology (Morgan, 1971: 15). The overriding objective of the policy as expressed in the Second Malaysia Plan was

national unity. This objective was to be achieved by reducing and eventually eradicating poverty for all Malaysians irrespective of ethnic groups, and by eliminating the economic imbalances that identified ethnic groups with economic function. The economic and social functions of the policy were controversial. The two themes extracted in our analysis represent underlying themes in public debate.

Table 1
Factor Matrices for the Sample Data

Variable Code	Unrotated factors			Orthogonally rotated factors*	
	1	2	h²	1	2
008	.48	.10	.24	(.45)**	− .18
010	.29	.30	.17	(.40)	.09
011	.57	.13	.34	(.55)	− .20
012	.51	.10	.27	(.49)	− .19
016	− .59	.29	.44	− .34	(.57)
017	− .32	.35	.23	− .08	(.47)
019	.32	.30	.19	(.43)	.08
020	− .16	.43	.21	.10	(.45)
Percent total variance	18.5	7.6	26.1	15.3	10.9
Percent common variance	70.8	29.2		58.3	41.7

*Varimax rotation.
**Loadings in parentheses load more on the distinct factor shown in the column.

The equality theme deals with whether the respondent perceives government policy as exacerbating or reducing economic gaps between ethnic groups. The intergration theme deals with whether government policy creates social togetherness among the different ethnic groups.

Table 2 shows that the scale of equality consists of five items while the scale of integration consists of three items. To obtain a similar response range for purposes of comparison between the scales, factor scores were computed from the factor score coefficients. These factor scores became the new data for the two respective scales.

Table 2

Attitudinal Items Grouped by Sub-scale with Loadings on Principal Axis Factor and Rotated Factor Arranged According to Proportion of Total Item Variance Explained

Item (variable code)		Loading on Principal Axis Factor (Unrotated)	Loading on Rotated Axis Factor
1.	**Scale of Equality:**		
	1. It is biased toward the Malay ethnic group (011)	.569	.550
	2. It raises Malay expectation of what more it can do for the Malays (012)	.514	.488
	3. It creates a Malay capitalist class (008)	.476	.452
	4. The process of giving scholarship and stipend to qualified scholars depends not only on one's eligibility but more so on one's ethnicity (019)	.321	.434
	5. The big government organizations constitute a serious threat to Chinese businessmen, more than any other Malay enterprise (010)	.285	.400
2.	**Scale of Integration:**		
	1. The use of ethnic quota is only a short measure aimed at achieving proportionate representation among the various ethnic groups in areas where unequal representations are dominant (020)	.430	.447
	2. The use of Malay Language as the medium of instruction in the national education system fosters national integration and unity (017)	.355	.473
	3. The implementation of the Policy ensures that no particular group will experience any loss or feel any sense of deprivation (016)	.292	.568

The Independent Variables

The two most important independent variables in this study are ethnicity and social class. Four other variables namely sex, place of origin, year of study and faculty studied are also included in the model. As we have indicated earlier, discussion on national development and inequality has been defined, among others, in terms of rural-urban

differences, and as such we see fit to include this variable in the model. The variable sex is included because in the process of attitude formation and in the context of an Asian society, gender differences are presumed to play a significant role. The university milieu is supposed to affect students' outlook. The inclusion of year of study enables us to assess differences and changes in attitudes of students as they progress from freshman to senior year. The national education system has always emphasized a dichotomy between the science and non-science streams from the secondary school level up to university level of education. On entering the university, at least four years of a student's educational life has been streamed in either one or the other. It is interesting to examine if such a streaming has any effect on a student's attitude.

Ethnicity is here defined as the ethnic tags by which individuals describe themselves to others based on racial and cultural characteristics. Respondents were asked to identify themselves in one of the three major ethnic groups: Malay, Chinese and Indian. Many studies have pointed to the within variation in each of the major ethnic groups based on dialect and sub-cultural differences (Nagata, 1974; Gungwu, 1970; Siaw, 1981; Sandhu, 1969; Arasaratnam, 1979, 1982) but in this study the subgroups are not differentiated. Instead they are included in each of the three broad categories. For example, among the Malays there are those who migrated from Indonesia, chiefly the Javanese and Minangkabaus, but both are included in the Malay ethnic category. Similarly, the Pakistanis, the Ceylonese, the Tamils and the different caste groups are all included in the Indian category. Likewise all Chinese dialect groups are considered as constituting the Chinese ethnic group. Clear differences between the ethnic groups are easily identifiable when compared to differences between sub-cultural groups. Furthermore, most of the Malaysian societal problems are usually defined and analyzed from this broad perspective and not the narrower sub-cultural group perspective. Due to these reasons we find justification for defining ethnicity in terms of ethnic groups rather than sub-cultural groups.

The variable social class has been variously defined in the social science literature depending on the problem to be investigated.[3] Following the tradition of Max Weber (1947: 428) who includes mode of living, formal education, prestige of birth and prestige of occupa-

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[3]For a discussion on the different measurements of social class, see R. W. Hodge and P. M. Siegel (1968: 316 — 325).

tion as major components of social class, researchers have used one or the other component or a combination of them as a proxy for social class. In this study we combine three variables to index the respondents' families socio-economic status as a proxy for social class. An index comprising three variables is assumed to measure an underlying theme more rigorously and coherently than just one variable separately. The use of alpha factor procedure[4] enhances this contention.

The index is a weighted composite index constructed from the following three variables[5] obtained from the questionnaire:

1.   Father's occupation classified into eight categories ranging from jobless to the highest level of occupation.
2.   Total family income categorized into eight intervals.
3.   Father's educational level with eight categories, ranging from no education to university level education.

The distribution of the composite socio-economic index in the total sample is continuous.

Place of origin is defined from the respondents' response to the question: "Where did you grow up?" The dichotomy rural-urban is based on the size and name of the unit of administration indicated. Those who grew up in places identified as villages or plantations of less than 1,000 people are categorized as having rural place of origin, while those who grew up in areas identified as small town, city or large city with populations of more than 1,000 people are categorized as having urban place of origin. The use of 1,000 as the size that differentiates the dichotomy is based on official usage in the census (Sidhu, 1976).[6] Moreover, the use of administrative unit not only has official sanction but also represents an in-depth feeling of identification and association differentiating the mode of economic and social activities between rural and urban areas.

The Design of the Study

The larger issue confronting this study is to examine the role of ethnicity and class and concomitantly their relationship in the con-

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[4,5]Interested readers can contact the author at Jabatan Psikologi, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, regarding the procedure of constructing the index, and the details of coding the three variables.

[6]There are various other "minimum sizes" used in defining an urban centre, for example, Hamzah Sendut (1962) uses 5,000 while Katiman Rostam (1983) uses 10,000.

text of Malaysian ethnic relations. To achieve the objective, we focus on examining the relative impact of ethnicity and social class on attitudes toward the New Economic Policy. To allow us to specify precisely the relative impact of these variables on the dependent variables, a statistical technique known as "multiple regression with dummy variables" was employed (Suits, 1957: 548 — 551; Nie et al., 1975: 373 — 383; Hanushek and Jackson, 1977: 101 — 106). Multiple regression is a means of evaluating both the overall contribution of the independent variables and the contribution of a particular independent variable with the influence of other independent variables controlled. The multiple regression equation yields partial regression coefficients, both unstandardized and standardized, the latter of which are called beta coefficients or beta weights, and provides useful indicators of the relative impact each of the independent variables has on the dependent variable. Another coefficient designed to measure more directly the contribution of each variable to the variation of the dependent variable is called squared part correlation (Nie et al., 1975: 332 — 334).

Each regression coefficient in the multiple regression equation represents a measure of the average change in the dependent variable when there is a unit change in the independent variable, holding the effects of other independent variables constant. The beta weights or the standardized coefficients allow us to compare the relative effects on the dependent variable of each independent variable in a model where there are two or more independent variables measured in different units. The squared part correlation coefficient is defined as the absolute increment of R^2 due to the addition of an independent variable, say X_2 to the equation already containing the independent variable X_1. It thus explains the direct contribution of each independent variable to the variation of the dependent variable over and above that explained by the other independent variable already in the equation. In our analysis, we will be using these coefficients to find answers to the questions posed earlier.

The use of dummy variables enables us to insert nominal scale variables like ethnicity, sex, place of origin and faculty studied, into the regression equation. A dummy variable is simply a binary variable that takes the value one if the observation comes from the population with the qualitative factor being considered, and is zero for all other observations. For example, with sex the value one is assigned to all males in the sample and zero to all females; since ethnicity has three categories, two dummy variables will be used to capture all the

categories (Hanushek and Jackson, 1977: 103 — 104). In general, it is important to exclude one out of each set of dummy variables representing each qualitative factor. This will prevent the existence of linear relationships among independent variables and permits estimation of the coefficients in the model. The constant term in the regression equation is interpreted as the intercept for the observations falling into the excluded category for each factor.

The general model for this study can be defined as below:

$$Y = A + B_1D_1 + B_2D_2 + B_3X_3 + B_4D_4 + B_5D_5 + B_6X_6 + B_7D_7 + e$$

where Y is the dependent variable, D_1 is the dummy variable for Chinese, D_2 is the dummy variable for Indian, X_3 represents the variable social class, D_4 is the dummy variable for male, D_5 is the dummy variable for urban, X_6 represent year of study, D_7 is the dummy variable for the non-science faculties (social sciencs and humanities), A is the constant term, each B represents the regression coefficient of the associated independent variable, and e is the error term containing the effects on the dependent variable of any excluded variable and different random effects. There are a total of two regression equations in this study: one for equality and the other for integration.

For each dependent variable, a set of three regression computations were carried out. The first included the independent variables ethnicity, sex, place of origin, year of study and faculty studied; the second included the independent variables socio-economic status, sex, place of origin, year of study and faculty studied; the third contained all the independent variables in the model. The variables sex, place of origin, year of study and faculty studied, labelled as "other variables" in Table 3, were included simultaneously into the equation. Their inclusion conformed to the general model specified for the purpose of this study. These computations enabled us to obtain the required statistics, R^2, which will be used in calculating the "increamental increase" in explained variation of the different independent variables concerned. In the case of ethnicity, its contribution to the variation of the dependent variable is derived from calculating the difference between two R^2: R^2 obtained from including all independent variables, minus R^2 obtained from including socio-economic status, sex, place of origin, year of study and faculty studied only. Similarly, in the case of social class, its contribution is calculated from the difference between R^2 with all independent variables included, and R^2 with ethnicity, sex, place of origin, year of study and faculty studied included.

Table 3

Calculation of Squared Part Correlations from Regression Output of
Equality and Integration for the Sample Data

Equality	Regression with two sets of independent variables	
	(A) Ethnicity and Other variables*	(B) Socio-economic Status and Other variables
R^{2**}	.096	.025

	Regression with all independent variables	
	(C) Ethnicity, Socio-economic Status and Other variables	
R^2	.106	

	Squared part correlation between:	
	Equality and Ethnicity***	Equality and Socio-economic Status***
	$R^2 = .106 - .025 = .081$	$R^2 = .106 - .096 = .010$

Integration	Regression with two sets of independent variables	
	(A) Ethnicity and Other variables*	(B) Socio-economic Status and Other variables
R^{2**}	.157	.057

	Regression with all independent variables	
	(C) Ethnicity, Socio-economic Status and Other Variables	
R^2	.157	

	Squared part correlation between:	
	Integration and Ethnicity***	Integration and Socio-economic Status***
	$R^2 = .157 - .057 = .100$	$R^2 .157 - .157 = 0.000$

*Other variables consist of sex, place of origin, year of study and faculty studied where all are included in the equation simultaneously.

**R^2 = Total variance explained by all factors in regression.

***The significance test to measure the contribution of a variable or a set of variables to the explained variation uses the formula given below (Nie et al., 1975: 339). To

Results and Discussion

As indicated earlier, our concern is to discern the relative importance of the contributions of ethnicity and social class to the process of attitude formation regarding the New Economic Policy. Two functional aspects of the Policy become the dependent variables of concern: equality and integration. To achieve this objective, the coefficient called "squared part correlation" is used. Table 3 summarizes the procedure of obtaining the statistics for the two dependent variables.

Squared Part Correlation: Equality

The first dependent variable, equality, measures respondent's perception of government policy as either exacerbating or reducing economic gaps between ethnic groups. The total explained variance of equality contributed by all independent variables in the model is 10.6 percent, as indicated by the value of R^2. This value is rather weak and indicates the rather complex nature of the factors that contribute to the process of attitude formation. However, within the confines of this information and our interest in examining the relative contributions of ethnicity and social class to the explained variation of equality, the statistics "squared part correlation" by far represents the most direct measure of the contributions of our concern. Table 3 indicates that the squared part correlation between equality and ethnicity is .081, indicating that ethnicity adds an increment of 8.1 percent to the variation already explained by socio-economic status, sex, place of origin, year of study and faculty studied. The squared part correlation between equality and socio-economic status is .010, indicating that socio-economic status adds an increment of only 1 percent to the variation of equality already explained by ethnicity, sex, place of origin, year of study and faculty studied.

By comparison, it appears that the contribution of ethnicity, when used in conjunction with socio-economic status, sex, place of origin,

test the null hypothesis that variables X_3 and X_4 do not add significantly to variation in Y already explained by X_1 and X_2, the test would be:

$$F = \frac{(R^2_{y.1234} - R^2_{y.12})/M}{(1 - R^2_{y.1234})/(N - k - 1)}$$

where k is the total number of independent variables in the model; $\dot{M}$ is the number of independent variables in the subset for which the significance test is being made; N is the total number of cases in the sample. Degrees of freedom for the F test are M and (N - k - 1).

year of study and faculty studied, is more substantial than the contribution of socio-economic status used in identical context. Within the model, 76 percent of the total explained variance of equality is contributed by ethnicity, only 9 percent by socio-economic status and 15 percent by the other independent variables. Furthermore, significance tests examining the contribution of a variable to the explained variation of the dependent variable were conducted separately for ethnicity and socio-economic status. The results show that the contribution of ethnicity is highly significant (F^2_{317} = 14.361) while the contribution of socio-economic status is not (F^2_{317} = 1.773). status

Squared Part Correlation: Integration

The contributions of ethncity and socio-economic status to the explained variation of integration, which measures respondent's perception of government policy as creating social togetherness among ethnic groups, follow the same pattern as that of equality. The R^2 for the model is .157 indicating that all independent variables in the model contributed 15.7 percent of the total explained variation of integration. The squared part correlation between integration and ethnicity is .100, while that of integration and socio-economic status is .000. These coefficients mean that ethnicity adds an increment of 10.0 percent to the explained variation of integration over and above that explained by socio-economic status, sex, place of origin, year of study and faculty studied, while socio-economic status adds nothing to it over and above that explained by ethnicity, sex, place of origin, year of study and faculty studied.

Here again the contribution of ethnicity to the explained variation of integration is more substantial than the contribution of socio-economic status. The former contributes 64 percent of the total explained variation of the model and the latter almost none. The results of significance tests show that the contribution of ethnicity is statistically significant (F^2_{317} = 18.884) while the contribution of socio-economic is not (F^2_{317} = .049).

Standarized Coefficient: Equality and Integration

Another way of assessing the relative impact of ethnicity and social class on equality and integration is to compare the standardized regression coefficients of these variables on each of the dependent variables. Tables 4 and 5 show the beta coefficients resulting from the regressing of equality and integration against ethnicity, socio-economic status, sex, place of origin, year of study and faculty studied.

Comparing the magnitudes of the beta coefficients, we find ethnicity to have the most important impact on both equality and intergration. Socio-economic status has a weaker effect on both occasions. Furthermore, the coefficients of ethnicity in both equations are found to be highly statistically significant while the coefficient for socio-economic status is statistically significant at the 10 percent level for equality equation only and insignificant for integration equation.

No matter which way the data are analyzed, ethnicity seems to be the better predictor of the perception of equality and integration than social class. The beta coefficients for ethnicity are larger than the beta coefficients of socio-economic status in both equations with all independent variables specified in the model included (see column 3 of Tables 4 and 5). The amount of unique variances attributable to ethnicity (7.2 percent for equality and 14.1 percent for integration) is greater than the unique variances attributable to socio-economic status (1 percent for equality and less than 1 percent for integration). What

Table 4
Regression Coefficients (and Standardized Regression Coefficients) of Ethnicity, Socio-economic Status, Sex, Place of Origin, Year of Study and Faculty Studied on Scale of Equality

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Chinese	− .416** (− .246)		− .509** (− .301)
Indian	− .422** (− .193)		− .442** (− .202)
Socio-economic Status		− .073* (− .098)	− .083* (− .113)
Sex (male)			− .173* (− .106)
Place of Origin (urban)			.163 (.103)
Year of Study			− .072* (− .099)
Faculty Studied (Social Sciences and Humanities)			.063 (0.040)
Constant	.188	.192	.574
R^2	.072	.010.	.106

*Significant at the 10 percent level, using a two-tailed t-test.

**Significant at the 5 percent level, using a two-tailed t-test.

Table 5
Regression Coefficients (and Standardized Regression Coefficients)
of Ethnicity, Socio-economic Status, Sex, Place of Origin, Year of Study
and Faculty Studied on Scale of Integration

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Chinese	− .576** − .363)		− .536** (− .338)
Indian	− .484** (− .236)		− .450** (− .219)
Socio-economic Status		− .067* (− .096)	.013 (.019)
Sex (male)			0.022 (.015)
Place of Origin (urban)			− .154* (− .106)
Year of Study			− .064* (− .094)
Faculty Studied (Social Sciences and Humanities)			− .033 (− .022)
Constant	.245	.177	.430
R^2	.141	.009	.157

*Significant at the 10 percent level, using a two-tailed t-test.

**Significant at the 5 percent level, using a two-tailed t-test.

this means specifically is that knowing an individual's socio-economic status adds very litte to our ability to predict equality and integration, once ethnicity is known. Any knowledge about socio-economic status not only is a poor determinant of equality but also a completely insignificant determinant of integration.

Ethnicity over Social Class: Possible Explanations

It has been refered earlier that in our analysis of public policy, ethnicity was found to be more important in determining the formulation and implementation of policies. Based on these observations, the above results are to a large extent as expected. However, the relatively weak contribution and thus the lack of explanatory power of socio-economic status is disappointing. Some possible explanations for the strong effect of ethnicity and the weak effect of socio-economic status on equality and integration may be noted.

First, the trend of historical evidence has indicated that decision-making considerations in many policy areas have been based largely

on the differences in ethnicity. The issues on what constitutes a fair and equitable share and on what constitutes the basis of national unity have occupied the political scenario for many decades, and since these issues are ethnicity specific, it is not unexpected that the contribution of ethnicity in explaining equality and integration is strong and significant as indicated by the above results.

A second possible explanation is related to the society's level of industrialization or socio-economic development. In the context of industrialized societies, objective measure of socio-economic status based on achieved characteristics like education, income and occupation is a common practice in many research areas especially those that concern inequality and stratification. The variable is found to be of significant interest to researchers for the main reason that it mirrors the dynamic of the society in which the process of status stratification and crystallization is based on "achievement" criteria in education, income and occupation. In non-industrialized countries like Malaysia, the usage of similar variables is probably on an exploratory basis.

Contrary to the practice of the industrialized societies, the process of status stratification and crystallization is based more on "ascriptive" characteristics like ethnicity, sex or region than on "achieved" criteria. There seems to be a linkage between the usage of such a variable and the level of industrialization and modernization of a society. The pattern that emerges seems to indicate that there are two polarized systems as indicated by the non-industrialized and industrialized societies, and that as the former societies progress into the industrialized periphery, there may be a breaking down of ascriptive bases of stratification or there may even be a coalescence between both ascriptive and achieved criteria of stratification. In this context, the results of our analysis which show the primacy of ethnicity over socio-economic status are as expected because Malaysia is a non-industrialized country. The significance of socio-economic status in equality equation may be interpreted as a sign of the progress the society is making towards industrialization and socio-economic development with the concomitant social stratification beginning to be based on the "achievement" criteria of education, income and occupation.

Third, a great deal of the variance in equality and integration remains to be explained. This may be partly due to the model specifica-

tion defined for this study which may have excluded variables yet unknown to influence the dependent variables. It may also be partially due to measurement errors. In light of the latter possibility, we may relate the weakness of socio-economic status to the possible errors in measuring parental education, income and occupation. Not only may the respondent misreport his parental education, income and occupation, but even accurate information about last year's parental income is not precise information about a man's lifetime or permanent income, which is the theoretically appropriate variable. Moreover, compared to the measurement of ethnicity which can easily be verified, the measurement for socio-economic status is more susceptible to errors.

To summarize, our analysis of the data has found the relative impact or contribution of ethnicity to be more substantial and significant than that of socio-economic status in both equality and integration equations. In spite of the fact that the model could explain about 11 and 16 percent of the variances of equality and integration respectively, the contributions of ethnicity only form 76 percent of the total explained variance of equality (compared to 9 percent for socio-economic status) and 64 percent of the total explained variance of integration (compared to none for socio-economic status.)

Subgroup Differences in Equality and Integration

To make the contributions of ethnicity and socio-economic status more meaningful, it is necessary to compare in each phenomenon the subgroup differences as they relate to the dependent variables under consideration. For example, within ethnicity there are three subgroups — Chinese, Indian and Malay, while for socio-economic status, the continuous property of the variable allows us to view it in terms of a continuum from low to high socio-economic status.

1. **Equality and integration among ethnic groups.** Table 4 shows the coefficients when equality is regressed against ethnicity (column 1), socio-economic status (column 2), and all independent variables in the model (column 3). A positive regression coefficient indicates respondent's perception of government policy as creating more equality. A comparison of the simple association between ethnicity and equality among the three ethnic groups shows that there are significant differences between Chinese and Malays, and between Indians and Malays. Between Chinese and Indians, however, there

is no significant difference (t = 0.039) in their perceptions.[7] In comparison with the Malays, the Chinese perceive government policy as producing less equality. A similar comparison also shows that Indians perceive government policy as producing less equality than the Malays. The pattern persists in the final model where socio-economic status, sex, place of origin, year of study and faculty studied controls have been introduced. To put it in a continuum, the Malays regard the implementation of the Policy as creating the most equality in terms of reducing economic gaps between ethnic groups, followed by the Indians and least of all the Chinese, as indicated by the numerical values of the standardized regression or beta coefficients.

The results are generally as expected with Chinese and Indians scoring differently from Malays although among non-Malay groups, we would expect Indians to score lower than Chinese. The expected lower score for Indians is based on historical evidence in which they were generally given less attention in public policy decision-making processes probably because of their lack of solidariy and representation. Although the results of our analysis do not show the mean scores of the two non-Malay groups to be significantly different, the beta coefficients seem to indicate the Chinese scoring lower in the equality scale than the Indians. This may probably be attributed to the pronounced mention of the Chinese in one of the attitude statements (variable 010 in Table 2), giving the Chinese more attention and focus than the Indians. Another probable explanation may be related to the fact that the sample representing the Indians is more closely knit than that of the Chinese, as evidenced by the smaller standard deviation of the former group. What this implies is that the Indian sample is more homogeneous and probabaly has a lesser spread in their attitude scores than the Chinese.

Turning to the question of whether ethnic groups differ in their mean integration attitude scores, Table 5 shows the coefficients of

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[7]In column 1 of Table 4, the regression coefficient for Chinese is interpreted as the difference in predicted mean equality score for cases that are classified as Chinese as compared to those that are classified as Malay, the reference or base category. The coefficient is found to be significant and so is the difference in the mean equality scores between the two groups. A similar interpretation is used for the Indian-Malay comparison. The comparison between Chinese and Indian groups, however, uses the following formula:

$$= \frac{b_1 - b_2}{(S.E_{b_1})^2 + (\tilde{S}.E._{b_2})^2}$$

a simple association between integration and ethnicity (column 1), and a multivariate association between integration and all the independent variables in the model (column 3). A positive coefficient indicates that the respondents perceive the Policy to produce more integration. An examination of the coefficients in column 1 shows that the mean integration score for Chinese is significantly different from the mean score for Malays, the mean integration score for Indians is also significantly different from the mean score for Malays, while a comparison between the mean integration scores for Chinese and Indians produces no significant difference. The Chinese, on the average, scores the policy as producing less integration (indicated by the negative coefficient) than the Malays (indicated by the positive coefficient of the constant, the base category). The Indians on the average, similarly score it as producing less integration (as indicated by the negative coefficient) when compared with the Malays. Both non-Malay groups score the policy negatively in terms of producing integration with the Chinese scoring the least.[8] The same trend persists in the final model. Putting all three ethnic groups together, Malays perceive the Policy as producing the most integrative function, followed by the Indians while Chinese perceive it as producing the least integration, as indicated by the size of the beta coefficients for these groups.

It is interesting to note the direct relationship between equality and integration in that each ethnic group perceives the Policy as either positively creating both equality and integration or negatively creating them. For examples, in the equality equation, Malays have the highest equality score, followed by Indians and Chinese respectively. If integration has a direct relationship with equality, we would expect the ethnic ordering to be parallel in the integration equation with Malays having the highese score, followed respectively by Indians and Chinese. The above results do indicate that this is so. The direct relationship between the two dependent variables will be observed in subsequent comparisons of the three ethnic groups.

2. **Effect of socio-economic status on equality and integration among ethnic groups.** Table 4 shows the effect of socio-economic status on the scale of equality. The coefficients for both the simple and partial associations between socio-economic status and equality are only significant at the 10 percent level. We included this for two reasons: the variable is theoretically important in this study, and since

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[8]Similar tests are conducted here as in the equality equations. For a description of the tests used to compare different subgroups, see footnote 7.

our study is exploratory, the analysis would be used as a basis for further research. The coefficient for the simple association indicates that as socio-economic status increases, the perception of equality decreases. This association follows the same trend in the final model. Put another way, the low socio-economic status respondents perceive the Policy to create more equality than the middle socio-economic status respondents, who in turn perceive the Policy as creating more equality than the high socio-economic status respondents.

The effect of socio-economic status on integration is shown in columns 2 and 3 of Table 5. Only the bivariate relationship is significant at the 10 percent level. The negative coefficient indicates that as socio-economic status increases, integration score decreases. More specifically, the low socio-economic status respondents have the highest integration score, followed by the middle socio-economic status respondents, while the high socio-economic status respondents have the lowest integration score. The results reported here are consonant with what are expected if integration is considered to have a direct relationship with equality.

The regression coefficients reported in Tables 4 and 5, however, do not allow us to compare the effects of socio-economic status on equality and integration between the different ethnic groups. One way of dealing with the possibility of comparing behavioural differences among different subpopulations of the sample is to stratify the sample into different subsamples relating to each group (Hanushek and Jackson, 1977: 101 — 103). We have stratified the sample into three subsamples: Chinese, Indian and Malay. Using the same model, two regression computations, one for equality and the other for integration, were carried out for each group. The regression coefficients are summarized and reported in Table 6.

2a. Equality. Comparing the effects of socio-economic status on equality between the three ethnic groups in Table 6 we found the trend reported in Table 4 to sustain for the Indian and Malay groups. For these groups, as socio-economic status increases, equality score decreases. The reverse is however true for the Chinese group. As socio-economic status increases, their score on equality increases correspondingly.

The regression coefficient for the Malay group (− .12) indicates that the low socio-economic status Malays view the Policy as creating more equality while the high socio-economic status Malays view it as producing less equality. The reason for this difference may be found in the overall focus of the New Economic Policy on helping the poor

in the rural as well as urban areas. For the rural poor of which the majority are Malays, development has been focused on providing public amenities in terms of improving and constructing roads, schools, providing electricity and water supply. The urban poor are probably recent migrants who have secured jobs in the expanding industries where ethnic quotas enabled them to be employed and thus reaped directly the benefit of the policy. As a result of these indirect and direct benefits, the low socio-economic status Malays may have perceived the policy as reducing economic gaps between the groups (i.e., producing equality). The high socio-economic status Malays, on the other hand, have also been the focus of attention of the Policy. Unlike their lower counterparts, however, they tend to compare themselves with successful Chinese businessmen, traders and industrialists. The Policy's intention of increasing the number of Malays in business and industry, creating a class of Malay entrepreneurs, and letting them have a meaningful share of the economic pie are welcomed by the Malays while at the same time it makes them realize that they are still behind in these areas compared with their already established Chinese parallels. This realization may have compelled them to assess the Policy as not doing enough to eradicate inequality between the groups. They feel that a more drastic and effective policy is urgently needed. In the professions likewise, the Malays are breaking into many areas traditionally monopolized by non-Malays like medicine and engineering. Since these specializations require substantive preparatory work, their numbers are slowly being filled. The Malays feel that a more aggressive policy is needed not only to increase the numerical representation but also their quality in these areas. These trends of thinking may have contributed to the negative equality score of the high socio-economic status Malays

It is interesting to note that in comparison with their Indian counterparts (beta coefficient $= -.28$), the high socio-economic status Malays (beta coefficient $= -.17$) perceive the Policy as creating higher equality scores than the Indians. This may be attributed to the fact that the higher socio-economic status Malays, in spite of their need for a more aggressive policy, generally feel that they are better off than the Indians because the quota system in recruitment to the higher-rank public services especially in the Indian dominated postal, railway and road transport sectors, has seen more Malays replacing the over-represented Indians. Although the rate of recruitment into these services may have been considered by the Malays as slow, they nevertheless feel the benefit of the Policy.

The regression coefficient for Indian (− .28) in Table 6 indicates that low socio-economic status Indians perceive the Policy more positively than high socio-economic status Indians. Since the majority of the Indians sampled are from the urban areas (77.1 percent), it is probably the urban poor Indians more than their rural poor counterparts that contribute to this positive score. Most urban poor Indians are employed by the government as semi-skilled or unskilled manual labourers. The overall emphasis of the Policy on helping the poor includes the provision of better and cheaper living facilities for government employees. Old quarters have been replaced by high-rise, modern and more comfortable flats or apartments. The increased awareness of unionization for this category of Indian labour force and the amiable policy of the government toward legally organized labour unions in general have benefited this group. The rural poor Indians are concentrated in the estates. The focus on rural development improves transportaion, education, electric and water supply facilities. Like the rural poor Malays, they benefit indirectly from these provisions of public amenities in a sense different from the direct benefits of better and more comfortable accommodations accrued by their urban counterparts. These benefits, differentially experienced by the urban and rural poor Indians, may have been the contributing factor for the positive equality score by this group.

The pattern of the effect of socio-economic status on equality for Chinese as shown in Table 6 reverses the overall pattern reported in Table 4. The positive regression coefficient (.15) shows that as socio-economic status increases, equality score increases likewise. This can be interpreted as indicating low socio-economic status Chinese perceiving the Policy as exacerbating economic gaps between groups or alternatively as creating less equality, while high socio-economic status Chinese perceive it more positively in terms of reducing economic gaps between groups or creating more equality.

The low equality score for the poor Chinese who are mostly urban settlers (50 percent of Chinese sample) may be explained by the nature of their occupations. In the urban setting, like the poor Indians they are mostly semi-skilled or unskilled manual labourers, but unlike the Indians who are government employees, they are working independently as fishmongers, hawkers, or canteen caterers among others and in the privately owned factories. The overall Policy intended to raise the standard of living of the poor does not directly affect them because of the unattached nature of their occupations to any government institution. In addition, unlike the poor urban Malays, there is no

preferred recruitment policy for Chinese to get employment in the expanding industries. In the rural areas, on the other hand, the low socio-economic status Chinese experience the benefit of public amenities accorded the rural sector by virtue of the Policy's focus on rural developmet. Despite this positive showing, the overall picture for the poor Chinese as a whole shows that they perceive the Policy more negatively than higher socio-economic status Chinese. Two reasons may be given for the insignificance of rural poor Chinese contribution. First, their number is small (12 percent of Chinese sample) compared with the poor urban Chinese; and second, the benefit of the Policy is not directly experienced by this group only, for the provisions of rural public amenities are consumed by all. This experience is unlike those that directly benefited the poor urban Malays as a result of preferential recruitment system, and the poor urban Indians as a result of the provision of housing facilities. In total, the combined effects of the above reasons may have contributed to the overall negative equality score for the poor Chinese, urban as well as rural.

The reason for the positive equality score of high socio-economic status Chinese may be found in the Policy's intention of accelerating the pace of commerce, trade, industry and business sectors. Although the main group targeted to participate in these activities is the indigenous group, the Chinese, by virtue of their preoccupations in these sectors, are either concomitant beneficiaries or required to aid the process as their technical, industrial, business and commercial knowhow are indispensible to the sound development of these sectors. In this way, they consolidate their position, realize their contribution and worth to the country, and simultaneously reap the benefit of the Policy. These experiences may have been instrumental in influencing their positive reactions toward the Policy as creating equality.

To summarize, the effects of socio-economic status on equality for the Malay and Indian groups are similar with the poor perceiving the Policy more positively than the rich. The main difference, however, is found in the reasons attributed to these perceptions. For the poor, the positive reaction may have been due to a combination of the experiences of both urban and rural Malays, while for the Indians the weight may be heavier for the urban dwellers. The rich Malays reacted negatively due to a feeling of inadequacy of the Policy while the rich Indians reacted likewise due to the seemingly discriminatory practices of the Policy. For the Chinese, the trend is reversed. The poor Chinese seem to perceive the Policy more negatively than the richer Chinese. The negative reaction of the poor Chinese may have

been due more to the experiences of urban settlers than their rural counterparts, while the positive reaction of the rich is due to the concurrence of the focus of the Policy in business, trade, industry and commerce sectors and the Chinese preoccupations in these areas.

2b. Integration. Table 6 shows that none of the socio-economic status coefficients for the three subsamples is significant. The only observation that is worth noting is probably the signs of these coefficients which indicate the direction of their effects. For each group, the signs are consistent as either indicating positively or negatively for both integration and equality.

3. Effects of other independent variables on equality and integration among ethnic groups. Four other independent variables have been included in the model. Tables 4 and 5 report the effects of these variables on equality and integration respectively for the total sample while Table 6 summarizes their effects on equality and integration for the three subsamples.

For the total sample, the regression coefficient for sex is significant for equality (– .17) and not significant for integration (.02). In each of the groups, none of the coefficients is significant. The results seem to indicate no consistent pattern of the effect of sex on equality and integration for the whole sample as well as for the subsamples.

Place of origin provides an interesting topic for discussion. Its positive effect on equality and negative effect on integration for the whole sample persist when each ethnic group is analyzed separately. For the Chinese, both coefficients (– .06 and – .14) are not significant though the signs show a consistency, indicating urbanities to be more negative in their equality and integration scores than rural settlers. Despite its insignificance, the trend may be explained by the negative reactions of the urban poor Chinese who form the majority of the Chinese sample (50 percent). The urban rich is relatively small (9 percent of Chinese sample) to effectively pull the overall score of the urban Chinese.

For the Indians, its coefficient for equality is significant (.41) while for integration it is not significant (– .15). These coefficients may be interpreted as showing urban Indians to be more positive in their equality score and more negative in their integration score when compared with their rural counterparts. Two possible explanations may be posited for the equality score. First, in our discussion of the effects of socio-economic status on equality, we have indicated the diverse reactions of the urban Indians, with the rich negatively reacting and the poor positively reacting to the Policy. The positive

Table 6

A Summary of Regression Coefficients of Socio-economic Status, Sex, Place of Origin, Year of Study and Faculty Studied on Equality, Integration and Social Proximity for Chinese, Indian and Malay

	Equality			Integration			Social Proximity of Opposing Groups			
	Chinese	Indian	Malay	Chinese	Indian	Malay	Malay with Chinese	Malay with Indian	Chinese with Malay	Indian with Malay
Socio-economic Status	.15	− .28**	− .12**	.12	− .08	− .01	− .16	− .13	− .25	− .10
Sex (male)	.04	− .38	− .12	.15	.15	− .02	− .16	− .13	− .25	− .10
Place of Origin (urban)	− .06	.41*	.18	− .14	− .15	.13	− .26	− .31	.36*	− .03
Year of Study	− .12	− .04	− .17	− .17**	.02	− .04	− .02	.03	.01	− .01
Faculty Studied (Social Sciences and Humanities)	− .24	− .12	− .00	.12	− .10	− .09	.04	.22	− .36**	− .30**
R2	.07	.25	.04	.08	.05	.02	.08	.11	.07	.04
(N)	(98)	(48)	(179)	(98)	(48)	(179)	(98)	(48)	(179)	(179)

*Significant at the 10 percent level, using a two-tailed t-test.

**Significant at the 5 percent level, using a two-tailed t-test.

reaction of the urban group as a whole may have been due to the larger sample size of the poor urbanities (38 percent of Indian sample) when compared with the rich urbanities (15 percent of Indian sample). Second, among the poor Indians, the experience of benefiting from the Policy is directly felt by the urban dwellers from the provisions of comfortable living quarters but indirectly felt by the rural settlers through the provisions of public amenities. Though both reacted positively as members of low socio-economic status, there is a difference in degree in their reactions, with the urban poor having a stronger positive reaction and the rural poor a weaker one. These differentials may have double effects when urban and rural groups are compared. While the urban poor pulls up the score more toward positive reaction, the rural poor may have pulled it down to give a milder reaction. Coupled with the small size of the rural poor (15 percent of Indian sample), the resultant score shows the rural Indians negatively reacting to the Policy.

With regard to integration, the urban Indians' negative score may be attributed to their unwillingness to accept government policy, for example, the use of Malay language, as a tool for creating social togetherness among groups. Despite more contacts which lead to more face-to-face interactions between the groups due to increased Malay migration to urban centers, voluntary activities that transcend ethnic barriers are limited. This limitation may be further exacerbated by the fact that social stratification and differentiation of Indian community in the urban areas are found to be greater and more clear-cut than in rural areas (Isahak Haron, 1977).

Among the Malays, the urban group reacted positively toward equality (.18) and negatively toward integration (– .13). Both coefficients are insignificant. The positive sign for the equality score shows that urban Malays reacted more positively than rural Malays. However, from our discussion on the effect of socio-economic status on equality, we found poor Malays, rural and urban, reacting positively while the rich Malays (mostly urbanities) reacting negatively. In view of the above result of rural-urban comparison, the difference may be attributed to the direct and indirect benefits of the urban and rural poor respectively, and to the relatively mild negative scores of the urban rich. Like the Indians, the direct benefit experienced by the poor urban Malays may have a far-reaching positive effect on equality than the indirect benefit gained by their rural counterparts, thus explaining the relatively more positive reactions of urban Malays. Another possible explanation may be found in the responses of the

urban rich. Their negative reactions are realtively milder than the
Indians, as discussed earlier, and coupled by their small number (11
percent of Malay sample), they are unable to make substantial effect
as urban dwellers.

The negative integration score of urban Malays may be explained
in the same manner as the urban Indian case. Since voluntary
activities are reciprocal in nature, the absence of any one group could
render the cause ineffective. (The negative effects are similarly shown
for all ethnic groups). However, the issue of the use of Malay language
as a tool for creating social togetherness among groups would be
expected to get favourable response from Malays. The negative
coefficient seems to indicate otherwise. This may be explained by the
fact that English is still widely used, and vernacular languages con-
tinued to be prominently exhibited in front of stores belonging to
Chinese and Indians. The urban Malays more than their rural
counterparts, directly observed the lack of usage of the Malay
language. This may have prompted them to demand a more aggressive
policy to replace the present one which they feel is insufficient.

The variable "year of study" was found to have consistent signifi-
cant effects on both equality and integration (Tables 4 and 5) when
the whole sample is analyzed. The negative coefficients indicate that
the respondents progressively reacted negatively toward government
policy. We would expect the university experience and environment
to contribute positively toward ethnic relations. The negative
coefficients do not corroborate our contentions. The findings may be
explained by the fact that the university milieu offers an opportunity
for freer and more open discussions. Two possible outcomes may result
from this environment. One, the students may become more ethnically
polarized. Two, they may become champions of egalitarianism. Either
way, the effect is common in that they tend to react negatively toward
the present Policy which they construe as ethnically biased and
imbalanced. When each subsample is analyzed separately, only the
coefficient for Chinese is significant. The trend for the whole sample
persists for the Chinese case.

For "faculty studied," the comparison is between students in the
social sciences and humanities, and the pure sciences. There is no
discernible relationship of interest because none of the coefficients,
either for the total sample or for the subsamples, is significant.

As a summary, among the four independent variables included in
the analysis, place of origin contributes significantly to our understan-
ding of intergroup differences. In combination with socio-economic

status, we are able to delineate differences between urban poor and rural poor among the Malays and Indians. This differentiation is imporant for it helps us understand the otherwise contradictory effects of socio-economic status taken alone, or place of origin taken alone on equality and integration for the Malay and Indian groups.

Putting all independent variables together, both discussions on equality and integration have pointed to a pattrn whereby socio-economic status and place of origin have been found to explain significant differences between and within ethnic groups, while sex, year of study and faculty studied as explanatory variables have been relatively weak in doing so. The two former variables are indirect measures of the respondents' present status and milieu, for socio-economic status is measured by parental occupation, income and education, while place of origin inquires the context the respondents grew up in. As such these two variables explain more about the respondent's subgroups than the direct attributes of the respondent, such as sex, year of study and faculty studied. Despite affirmative action policies to improve Malays and the poor in general to achieve better economic representation, and government educational policy aimed at unifying the various groups and raising intergroup understanding, kind of education and number of years educated seem to have little effect. The results of our analysis seem to indicate that in racially defined situations, as represented by the equality and integration themes contained in government policy, people tend to respond, not neutrally or by year or kind of education, but very much by family's and subgroups's interest.

Subgroup Differences in Behavioural Perspective

So far our attention has been focused on the discussions of whether government policy exacerbates or reduces economic gaps between groups, and whether it creates social togetherness among them. These themes have been extracted from attitudinal statements regarding government policies. Another interesting avenue for discourse would be the behavioural perspective. Data for this purpose were collected from respondents' reactions to the question on whether he or she would be willing to marry, be a friend, a neighbour or just an acquaintance to another person from each of the ethnic groups. Three variables may be identified: social proximity of Chinese, social proximity of Indian, and social proximity of Malay. Table 6 reports the results of the analyses when social proximity of opposing groups were regressed against socio-economic status, sex, place of origin, year of study and faculty studied. Table 7 summarizes the squared part

correlations between social proximity scales and ethnicity or socio-economic status.

Table 7

Calculation of Squared Part Correlation from Regression Output
of Social Proximity Scales for the Sample Data

Social Proximity	Squared part correlation between:	
of Chinese	Social Proximity and Ethnicity	Social Proximity and Socio-economic Status
	$R^2 = .335 - .049 = .286$	$R^2 = .335 - .331 = .004$

Social Proximity	Squared part correlation between:	
of Indian	Social Proximity and Ethnicity	Social Proximity and Socio-economic Status
	$R^2 = .265 - .054 = .211$	$R^2 = .265 - .260 = .005$

Social Proximity	Squared part correlation between:	
of Malay	Social Proximity and Ethnicity	Social Proximity and Socio-economic Status
	$R^2 = .181 - .053 = .128$	$R^2 = .181 - .170 = .011$

Turning to Table 7, for each dependent variable the squared part correlations show that ethnicity adds a substantial increment to the variation of the dependent variable than socio-economic status. Ethnicity is found to be highly significant in all equations while socio-economic status is significant in only one equation. These results seem to support our earlier findings on the relative importance of ethnicity as compared to socio-economic status on equality and integration.

The regression coefficients in Table 6 allow us to compare the reactions of opposing groups. We are able to compare Chinese reactions when Malay is the object of reference with Malay reactions when Chinese is the object of reference. Similarly, we can compare Indian reactions when Malay is the object of reference with Malay reactions when Indian becomes the object of reference.

The effect of socio-economic status on social proximity of opposing groups is only significant when Malays reacted to Chinese as object of reference. The negative coefficient ($-.19$) indicates that high socio-economic status Malays are less willing than their low socio-econnomic status counterparts to marry a Chinese. This may be explained by the fact that the relatively more frequent contacts

between them in several settings may have led the richer Malays to consider Chinese as business rivals and competitors in educational, occupational as well as cultural spheres. As such they may be seen as incompatible permanent life partners. (A crosstabulation shows that none of the high socio-economic status respondents expresses a desire to marry a Chinese compared with 17 percent of the low socio-economic status respondents expressing such a willingness). On the other hand, the poorer Malays' contact with the Chinese are limited in scope, confined to the working environment for the urban and to the "market place" (Furnivall, 1948) for the rural. This lmited sphere of contacts may have led the poor Malays to perceive the Chinese as an additional asset to the family especially when intermarriage between Malays and non-Malays in general would mean the conversion of non-Malays to the Islamic faith.

Comparing the reactions of opposing groups, the coefficients though insignificant seem to indicate the Chinese to be more willing to interact with Malays than the Malays with them, and that the interactions between Malays and Indians are negatively reciprocated.

None of the coefficients of sex is significant despite the consistency in the direction of their effects. Among males, the Malays are as negative toward the Chinese as the Chinese toward them. A similar trend is found in the relationship between Malays and Indians.

The urban Malays are found to be significantly different from their rural counterparts in their reactions toward marrying or befriending Chinese. They seem to be more willing to take Chinese as a life partner or a friend. In our discussion of the effect of socio-economic status on social proximity of opposing groups we indicated the rich Malays, most of whom are urbanities, as reacting negatively toward marrying or making friends with Chinese. Deductively, it is not this group that contributes to the positive reactions indicated above. The explanation for the more positive reactions of urban dwellers may be found in the responses of the urban poor group, and indirectly from the milder responses of the rural poor. We have already argued for the urban rich that contacts with Chinese as competitors may have contributed to the negative reaction. Similarly, we can argue for the urban poor that their contacts with Chinese in the work setting are not as competitors but as fellow factory or industrial workers who are more or less united and fighting for their rights against employers. Such a perception may have influenced their reactions toward Chinese. As for the rural poor, the meetings at the "market place" may have led them to view the Chinese retailers, shopkeepers, rubber and copra

buyers as being in a class different from themselves. They do not consider Chinese as rivals the way the urban rich did, neither do they consider them the way the urban poor did. However, the overall fairly negative reactions of the rural dwellers may have been considerably affected by the rural poor consideration of the Chinese.

The urban Chinese reactions toward Malays, though insignificant, are also positive. The urban Malays and Indians reactions toward each other also seem to be reciprocal, though negatively.

The coefficients for ''year of study'' do not show any relationship or pattern in determining the reactions of opposing groups in their choice of a marriage partner, a friend, a neighbour or an acquaintance. ''Faculty studied'' coefficients are significant for the Malays when they reacted to both Chinese and Indian as objects of reference. This finding is not as expected. We would expect the more liberal subject matter and orientation taught and adopted in the social sciences and humanities to produce more liberal-minded graduates who in turn would be more positive in their choice of other groups as their life partners or friends. The coefficients for the Chinese and Indian, though insignificant, seem to follow the expected trend.

To summarize, our discussions on social proximity for the whole sample have shown ethnicity to have a more important contribution in explaining the differences in the dependent variable than socio-economic status. However, when we analyze the groups separately we found socio-economic status and place of origin to have significant effects for the Malay group.

In our earlier analyses of attitudinal items, we found, among Malays and Indians, the urban poor responding positively toward government policy as reducing economic gaps between groups and creating social togetherness among them, thus contributing to the positive overall scores for low socio-economic status and urban dwellers when they were compared with high socio-economic status and rural dwellers respectively. The direct benefits gained by the urban poor as opposed to the indirect benefits experienced by their rural counterparts have been demonstrated as contributing to the above differences. With the Chinese however, we found the reverse to be true where the urban poor respond more negatively toward the themes of equality and integration than their rural couterparts. This has been attributed to the absence of benefit accrued to this subgroup because of the unattached nature of their occupations as hawkers, fishmongers or canteen caterers, to any government institution. The analysis of social proximity of opposing groups found similar differences between urban and rural poor Malays, where the nature of their contacts have

been assumed to contribute to the differences in reactions. Here again, it is the urban poor who contribute more to the overall positive reactions of low socio-economic status and urban dwellers when they were compared with their opposite counterparts. These findings seem to enhance the earlier findings from the analyses of attitudinal items. More importantly, however, the results from the analyses of both attitudinal and behavioural aspects seem consistently to indicate that in racially defined situations people tend to retreat to their ''ecological niche'' by responding not neutrally or by kind or year of education but very much by family's and subgroup's interest.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to explore the general pattern of the relationship between ethnicity and social class in a context of a Malaysian plural society. We have examined the relative contributions of each variable toward the process of equality and integration attitude formations, compared differences between ethnic groups for the whole sample, and stratified the samples into three groups to compare the effects of socio-econonmic status, sex, place of origin, year of study and faculty studied on equality and integration between the three ethnic groups and within subgroups in each ethnic group. Finally, we have replicated the same procedures and analyzed the behavioural perspective concerning respondents' reactions on the issue of selecting a married partner, a friend, a'neighbour or an acquaintance. This analysis is intended to diversify and enrich the study so as to get supporting evidence or otherwise for our main analysis.

We have indicated throughout, for a number of reasons such as the possibility of making errors in sampling, in measuring variables due to imprecise operationalization, and in model specifications, the results and findings reported in the previous section should be treated with caution. In addition to this, the exploratory nature of this endeavour should indicate that the results and findings should be regarded as suggestive, to be used as a basis for further related studies more specific in nature, rather than as concrete evidence for specific policy purposes.

With the above qualifications in mind, some important conclusions could be made based on the general pattern that emerges from the results and discussions in the previous section:

1. Ethnicity is an important determinant of attitudes concerning ethnic policy. There are differences in perceptions between ethnic groups. Malay and Chinese perceptions constitute different ends of the continuum. Malays perceive government policy in a more positive

manner by indicating that it reduces economic gaps between ethnic groups and creates social togetherness among groups. Chinese, on the other hand, perceive government policy differently. It exacerbates economic gaps between ethnic groups and creates very minimum social togetherness among groups. Indian perceptions follow the Chinese trend. In terms of social proximity, differences between groups are also discernible. The number of significant regression coefficients seem to indicate the Malays react more negatively toward Chinese than Indians. The reactions of Chinese and Indians toward Malays however do not show any clear patterns for none of the coefficients is significant.

2. Social class alone is a relatively insignificant determinant of attitudes concerning ethnic policy. There is a slight tendency for low socio-economic status respondents to view government policy as reducing economic gaps between ethnic groups and creating social integration among groups, while the high socio-econmic status respondents perceive it as exacerbating economic gaps and creating less integration between groups.

3. The analyses for the separate groups provide more information for intergroup and within group differences. Socio-economic status and place of origin have been found to interact to produce different effects between and within groups. For the Malay group, the urban poor were found to contribute more than the rural poor to the positive equality score for low socio-economic status. It is also this group that contributes more than the urban rich to the positive equality score for urban dwellers. The same trend was found for the Indian group, in which the urban poor subgroup more than their rural counterpart or the urban rich contribute positively to the equality scores for low socio-economic status, and for urban dwellers, respectively. For the Chinese group, however, the urban poor perceive the Policy more negatively than their rural counterparts. For all groups, the different reactions of the urban and rural poor subgroups have been explained by the nature of the presence or absence of benefits accruing from the Policy. Direct benefit or the absence of it is either extremely enjoyed or bemoaned by the subgroups concerned, while indirect benefit is mildly appreciated. The analysis of social proximity of opposing groups also found supporting evidence of interaction for socio-economic status and place of origin especially for the Malay group.

4. Theoretically, the above results are consistent with the plural society framework where. ethnicity is found to be an important determinant while class is an insignificant determinant of attidues concerning ethnic policy. However, a caveat is necessary because in the

empirical data on group attitudes toward government policy, social class was shown to have some relationship with variations in individual attitudes. Even though the relationship was insignificant, there is reason to believe that class as a factor in intergroup relations may become more important as the society undergoes increasing industrialization. Although the data from this study indicate no declining significance of ethnicity, it does suggest the possibility of greater interaction between class and ethnicity even in a plural society like Malaysia. Accordingly, an approach which incorporates both class and ethnicity and examines their relationships and contributions will probably best capture the changing dynamics of intergroup relations accompanying industrialization.

The findings from this study, discussed in the previous section, have also pointed to the fact that differences in socio-economic status and place of origin are important axes for differentiating groups of people. The results of the study also indicate that in racially defined situations, people tend to retreat to their "ecological niche" by responding not neutrally or based on personal attributes but very much by family's and subgroup's interest as reflected in their economic and demographic differences. An appreciation of inequality, and consequently any variable approach to the task of economic and political development in Malaysia, would be more comprehensive and meaningful if it incorporates these differential factors. In light of this orientations, Malaysian society may be meaningfully seen as consisting of different ethnic groups, each with different subgroups based on socio-economic status which are located in different ecological backgrounds.

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