

A Malaysian Nation Brand: The Dissemination of it by Radio Malaya via the Song *Tanah Pusaka*

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ABSTRACT

A 'nation branding' project disseminates the reputation of a country, just as a company's or product's brand image is created through advertising and branding. This reputation has a profound impact on a country's image and the way it is perceived. Increasingly countries are reinventing themselves and, in each time, repackaging its symbolisms for both internal and external audiences. This is essentially a nation branding effort that utilises symbols like colours, the national flower, the national anthem, military uniforms, medallions, rituals and patriotic songs. Radio Malaya, which began broadcasting in 1946, gradually developed into an arm for the propagation public service announcements, news, documentaries, interviews apart from music and songs upon the Federation of Malaya's independence in 1957. With the establishment of Orkes Radio Malaya in 1961, popular patriotic songs began airing earnestly. This marks the beginning of the government's intent in branding a national identity and making it identifiable in a sonic manner. This paper discusses the role of the popular patriotic song *Tanah Pusaka* (1964), in the process of branding the nation through the radio. It focuses on the importance of branding disseminated through the repetition of symbols in songs via the radio. The salient symbols and narrative of collective history embodied in this song are important in maintaining the survival and resilience of the *ethnic* that share the same collective history.

Keywords: *Nation branding, branding, popular patriotic songs, radio, symbols.*

INTRODUCTION

As a newly independent state in 1957, the government of the Federation of Malaya required a method of introducing its 'national' identity to the public locally as well as internationally. Numerous efforts were initiated to brand this independent nation. Among them include competitions held for the people such as creating a national flag as well a national anthem. An event called *Pesta* was held in 1956 at the Lake Gardens, Kuala Lumpur for three days in a row in anticipation of the independence that was to be achieved the following year (Mohammad Hashim, 2014). Various types of songs and cultural performances were held and invited guests came from all over the country including those from overseas.

On the eve of 31st August 1957, for the first time the national anthem *Negaraku* was played by the Band of the Royal Federation of Malaya Police led by A. W. Croft in front of the Sultan Abdul Samad building in Kuala Lumpur. The Union Jack flag was slowly brought down as the band played God Save the Queen as a final gesture of respect (Hasliza, 2007). On that night, Radio Malaya presenter Hashim Amir Hamzah, Abu Bakar Ahmad and Siti Hawa Zain were the radio announcers and during the events the following morning at Stadium Merdeka, Bahrin Tahir and Abu Bakar Ahmad made minute-to-minute live report through the radio, of the events that unfolded (Mohammad Hashim, 2019).

Music and songs not only symbolize nationalism, they also participate in the formation of it. The modern nation-state most powerfully come into being when its citizens sing together, embodying what Benedict Anderson (1983) called *unisonance* (Bohlman,

2011). Music has been intertwined with nationalism to represent and construct the national identity in many ways. In Malaysia, during performances at national celebrations such as the Merdeka Day and Citrawarna to name a few, a diverse cast of characters gather to give voice to music and nationalism, inevitably taking part in the building of the Malaysian nation brand. Nations are collectives and music brings together a collective at the moment of performance. Anderson (2006) asserted that at precisely such moments, people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody:

There is a special kind of contemporaneous community in which language alone suggests – above all in the form of poetry and songs. Take national anthems, for example, sung on national holidays. No matter how banal the words and mediocre the tunes, there is in this singing an experience of simultaneity. At precisely such moments, people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody. The image: unisonance. Singing the Marseillaise, Waltzing Matilda, and Indonesia Raya provide occasions for unisonality, for the echoed physical realization of the imagined community. How selfless this unisonance feels! If we are aware that others are singing these songs precisely when and, we have no idea who they may be, or even where, out of earshot, they are singing. Nothing connects us all but imagined sound (Anderson, 2006).

Essentially, what the Federation of Malaya had at the time of her independence in 1957 was the implementation of a nation that was set by the government. Radio Malaya became the vehicle in this effort to create awareness of the government's policies and plans, which essentially is about branding a national identity. Olins (2001) emphasized that countries around the world are practicing branding consciously in their efforts to compete effectively in the current globalization. According to Anholt (2007), countries create their reputation and spread an image to the world through continuous advertising and marketing campaigns until a positive nation brand is developed. Popular patriotic songs are common symbols mobilised for this branding process.

A nation refers to an intended community for a state that exists on the grounds of shared language, culture, religious beliefs and education. What is desired is the construction of nation that is united within the enclaves of the state. In this article, I analyse the song lyrics to *Tanah Pusaka*, a patriotic song composed by Tan Sri Ahmad Merican with lyrics written by Wan Ahmad Kamal in 1964 and how it was part of the nation branding process for Malaysia. Jordan (2014) emphasised how branding of a nation can be equated with nation-building or what some scholars prefer to call reinventing of the nation, and Malaysia as it is, through Radio Malaya, has been on this prolonged project for a long time.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND

a. The Difference Between Advertising and Branding

In general, brand making and branding would not have existed had it not been for the role of advertising that flourished in the West, due to industrial capitalism in the early nineteenth century, when Ford invented the 'line production system'. It was invented for the purpose of establishing a 'maximum production economy' which created the biggest revolution in America's capacity to produce. The rate of employment began to increase and industrial mass production extended well beyond the automobile industry. Businesses had

to re-organise their management because they have to consider their workers as consumers as well and not merely wheel horses used for the production lines. They needed to be endowed with the buying power and knowledge in this new system of consumer production. More importantly, people needed to be made aware of this 'requirement' to consume, and that is basically to buy goods. Producers had to create a sort of ideology that could bridge traditional social boundaries such as taste, class, gender biasness, in order to get potential customers to lean towards reducing prejudices in his favour (Ewen, 2001). These potential customers needed to be continuously and repeatedly psyched up to purchase.

To create customers efficiently, advertisers needed to develop notions to make people go beyond buying products for their basic household or personal needs. Producers alongside these advertisers had to create a universal appeal in order to reach a mass audience. Psychologists were employed to work alongside admen to create and generate these general conceptions. When the mere selling of products was no longer an adequate goal of advertising, eventually advertisements became broad yet strategic messages aimed at selling the way of life. Over time, advertising began playing a myriad of roles. The proliferation of mass media and the advent of media convergence (Banerjee, 2000) increases the difficulty for producers and advertisers to get messages across to consumers because the latter becomes easily distracted with the amount of noise transmitting and clashing all at the same time. Producers are constantly required to keep up with the latest trend in media communication to be able to develop more creative techniques that would make an impact thus making creativity a key factor in the production of successful advertising. Advertising helps transmit different types of market information to connect buyers and sellers in the marketplace. It helps consumers assess values of products and keeps them loyal to a particular brand by focusing on the positive attributes.

A brand, on the other hand, is a product, service or organization that is considered together with its name, identity and reputation. It is a name, term, sign, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers and advertising plays a significant role in the development and management of this brand (O'Guinn, Allen, & Semenik, 2012). Among the resilient brands that are leading the race in many disparate and changing markets include Colgate, Kellogg's, Krafts, Kodak, Apple, Mercedes and many more. They have been around for a long time despite the many worldwide changes that have affected every business and despite being managed by various people over the years (Temporal, 2000). Strong brands are durable as they endure many challenges.

The process of branding involves designing, planning, and communicating a particular name and identity in order to build reputations (Anholt, 2007). It is about creating a special meaning for a product, one that makes it distinctive in the marketplace and in its product category (Wells, Moriarty, Burnett & Lwin, 2007). According to Ghose, Cohen and Mohd Rashid (2018) in their study on branding coffee shops, a unique brand name ensure that an outlet stood out from the crowd. The brand name could act as a trigger for consumers to make associations when it represents a certain meaning. Branding is about breaking out of the mould of similarity in this world ruled by globalization where products and services are virtually indistinguishable from each other by incorporating values into consumers' perceptions of a product or service. It is the intangible values built into an ordinary product or services that help it to stand out from the crowd.

Within a brand, four essential components must be understood. Firstly, brand identity is the core concept of a product that is clearly and distinctively expressed like a logo, a slogan, the packaging, the corporate colour and the design of the product itself. Secondly, a brand image is the perception of the brand that exists in the mind of the consumer or audience which includes associations, memories, expectations and other related feelings surrounding the product. Third is brand purpose which is an idea that is similar to corporate culture. The final aspect is brand equity and this is a culmination of all the previous aspects because it represents the company's ability to continue its branding effort as long as its brand image remains intact. A good brand equity is what gets a product noticed and stops it from disappearing among the thousands of competing, almost identical products. A brand name is a short cut to an informed decision to choose a particular product, service or organization.

b. Nation branding: A brief description

The term nation branding was coined by Simon Anholt (2007) in 1996 when he observed that reputations of countries are like brand images of companies and products. Anholt claims that the usual context of brand theory which are buying, selling and promoting consumer goods does not explain the nature of perception and reality, the relationship between objects and their representation, the phenomena of mass psychology, the mysteries of national identity, leadership, culture and social cohesion and much more that surrounds a nation brand. A nation brand is the reputation of a particular country and just as products and companies have brand images created through advertising and marketing, these reputations too have images that can create profound impact on the country as well as the perceptions of people. Countries create their reputations and communicate them with the rest of the world through:

1. Tourism promotions: Often the loudest voice in branding the nation as the tourism board usually has the biggest budgets and the most competent marketers.
2. Export brands: These act as powerful ambassadors of each country's image abroad. Known as country-of-origin effect, products such as Mercedes and Sony speak as loudly as tourism campaigns.
3. Policy decisions of a country's government: Both foreign and domestic policies get reported in the international media.
4. For business audience: The way the country solicits inward investments, recruitment of foreign talents and students, and influx of multinational companies.
5. Through cultural exchange, activities and exports: The recordings of a famous musician, the work of poets, authors and film-makers, and/or a world tour by a sports team.
6. The people of the country themselves: high-profile leaders, the media, sports stars and the population in general – their actions and behaviours speak volumes of the country they come from.

It is common for countries to apply the techniques from commercial sector to promote their good name and governments. American administrators have, for more than a century, been using advertising men, PR companies, speechwriters and spin doctors to

handle a mass persuasion job. The reputation of many places have been deliberately built and managed by leaders who have often borrowed expertise from others, advertising agencies among the most often, to help persuade large numbers of people to have favourable perceptions of them.

Nations today are increasingly honing their branding activities to satisfy the three key objectives, them being 1) to improve their tourism industry, 2) to encourage investment in the country, and, 3) to stimulate export of goods overseas (Chernatony, 2009). In order to achieve these goals, Olins (2001) emphasized how countries around the world are practicing branding consciously in their efforts to compete effectively in the current globalized world. A country without a good brand will face difficulties attracting international attention economically and politically. Such a situation decreases the country's potential to establish a good brand equity. On the other hand, a positive and strong nation brand will provide competitive advantage to a country that can potentially makes it better than other countries in various aspects. Kotler and Gertner (2002) described how consumers make connections between the numerous symbols and signs of a brand which can accordingly create and foster emotions as well as habits. These emotions and habits usually depend on the social values that are associated with the brand. Brand equity is achieved when consumers make positive links emotionally and habitually towards a brand.

A country's image derives from its geographical position, history, music and artistic culture as well as influential individuals to name a few. This image is meant to endure over time and scholars emphasize the importance of managing it to maintain the country's potential to compete in the global marketplace. Anholt (2009) cautioned that this branding must be a prolonged task undertaken by a country based on well-organized strategies. He also mentioned that the competing national identities between countries is closely related to the reputation of each country and thus must be well-managed to ensure and form a good country image and brand.

Jordan (2014) acknowledged that most literature and research done by scholars on the topic of branding often revolves mainly around public relations perspective that are usually inclined towards image marketing activities. He defines nation branding as a phenomenon in which a government strives to organize activities that will yield a positive image of a nation-state. Jordan raised an important question about the nation and that is, who ultimately determines what a nation should be. He added that the nation is always a 'work-in-progress' and as such, branding for it is even more complicated than it would be for commercial products. According to him further, the branding of a nation can be equated with nation-building or what some prefer to call inventing or reinventing of the nation.

Olins (2001) contend that nation branding is increasingly becoming a popular research focus. France for example, have always been inventing and reinventing its nation consistently. From time to time each change is repackaged and symbolically presented to both internal and external audiences. These symbols, among others, include the colours of national flower, its national anthem (*Le Marseillaise*), military uniforms, great medallions, rituals and ornaments. Olins equated these activities of repackaging the nation with nation branding. The French government managed to create a homogenous brand manifestation which is vital despite constant changes happening in and around the state. These efforts were made to create a spirit of love and respect for the shared national identity. These feelings and emotions will then generate what is known as brand equity where the community will be loyal to the nation.

c. *Nationalism: It's modern origins and the role of patriotic songs*

Music has the ability to narrate long standing historical myths and transform them into accepted beliefs at the national level. Songs specifically, can become border markers; mobilizing efforts of inclusion and exclusion in a state. Music can help enhance the qualities of a nation while simultaneously making people forget selected chunks of history. Music has always been a part of the discourse of advertising and branding that enhances the quality of meanings in the various messages disseminated. It has the capacity to change accordingly to accompany the nation as it undergoes change. Music played this role on August 31st 1957, when the eager crowd at Stadium Merdeka gathered to witness and celebrate the moment Tunku Abdul Rahman began to cry “Merdeka!, Merdeka” jubilantly. During this time, England’s national anthem *God Save the Queen* was played for the very last time as the Union Jack was flown, as well, for the last time and *Negaraku* was played for the first time (Hasliza, 2007).

Nationalism as a subject of academic investigation only began to surface in the first half of the twentieth century. Scholars never really took the subject seriously and had condescending attitude towards it up until the 1970s. When it began becoming a nascent point of interest, social scientists saw the subject as a coefficient of the modernization process. This emerging interest saw the publication of several notable works such as John Armstrong’s *Nations Before Nationalism* (1982), Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (1983), Ernest Gellner’s *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger’s *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), and Anthony Smith’s *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (1986) (Özkırımı Umut 2000). Today, more recent debates have surfaced not just by historians but also from scholars in the field of sociology and political science.

Modernist theorists regard nations as historically formed constructs. According to them, nations and nationalism appeared in the wake of the French Revolution and are the products of the processes of capitalism, industrialism, the emergence of the bureaucratic state, urbanization and secularism (Özkırımı, 2010; Smith, 1995). They only become a necessity in the modern world and had for them no place in the pre-modern era. It is in the modern state that people are eager to feel a sense of belonging to a specific state and they want to proclaim a certain allegiance to a political unit. Symbols may seem banal to some point but the spirit of nationalism is everywhere around humans and remains ever so relevant. Flags for example, can be placed everywhere without any meaning to those who see it (Billig, 1995). Nonetheless, it remains as something that can have a significant impact on millions of people around the world.

Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent (Gellner, 1983). Nationalism is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle or otherwise, satisfaction from its fulfilment. These sentiments then are the cause of nationalist movements. A state, according to Gellner, exists as a state when there is distribution of power, boundaries and social division of labour. Nation, on the other hand, is felt when a community share the same culture and by culture it means a system of ideas, signs, associations and ways of behaving and communicating. A community shares the same nation when its members recognize that they belong to the same culture. For this reason, Gellner stresses that there is a very large number of potential nations on earth. Nationalism thrives on putative culture where its symbolisms are drawn from pristine images of the lives of, for Malaysia, the *kampung* people. The representations are revived, reinvented, transmitted and disseminated via song and dance. In the process, they become stylized and modern. Any process of branding or

rebranding Malaysia that is carried out and initiated by the ruling party or government is always an 'authority-defined' (Shamsul, 1996) version of a 'nation-of-intent' and must be termed as "branding the Malaysian nation". It is important for Malaysia to build this nation because of the varying competing ideas that are being put forward by various parties in the country.

Anderson (2006) believes that nation-ness and nationalisms are cultural artefacts and constructions of a particular kind, and in order to understand them, it is imperative that we consider how they have come into being throughout history. In the course of its development through history, meanings have changed in various ways to the point that today they command such profound and emotional legitimacy. Anderson defines nation as an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. The nation is imagined because the members will never know most of their fellow members, meet them or even hear them. Nonetheless, in the minds of each of them lives the image of their communion. For Anderson, there is a particular mechanism that makes it possible for communities to 'think' themselves as a nation. The birth of the imagined community occurred in Europe in the eighteenth century with the emergence of print capitalism in the form of book publishing and the newspaper. They provided the technical means for representing an imagined community's nation. Members of a society may never meet up yet they have confidence in their anonymous and simultaneous activity with the help of the media.

Anderson (2006) asserts further that for these imagined nations, people are willing to die. This is because nations inspire love, and in this case, a more self-sacrificing love. The various cultural productions of nationalism like poetry, prose fiction, arts, music, with the help of the print and electronic media, show this love clearly in different forms and styles. Expressions of national feeling in songs for example, do not contain any elements of hatred; only love. This is true despite the fact that the nation has for a long period of time, been under the power of their imperial and colonial rulers. Anderson explains how sentiments of love for the nation is expressed in patriotic songs using a common language that the community shares. These languages describe objects like kinship in words like motherland, *Vaterland* and *patria* or home in words like *heimat* or *tanah air*. Nationness is assimilated to 'natural ties' that one cannot help like gender, skin color, parentage and birth era, all of which are related to the certain beauty of a nation's *gemeinschaft*.

Language has the criteria of being rooted to the past and for this reason creates a certain contemporaneous community in singing. The act of singing a national anthem, regardless of how banal the words can be, creates an experience of simultaneity. This, according to Anderson, is the image of *unisonance*, a condition that when it happens, people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody. When people sing anthems such as the Marseillaise, Waltzing Matilda and Indonesia Raya, these songs provide the occasion of unisonality and that is the physical realization of the imagined community. A community is thus imagined through this specific language in songs. Language makes it possible for people to preserve the past, imagines comradeship as well as dream for future fellowships.

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this article, meaning in the language of patriotic songs is discussed by conducting a close textual analysis on the lyrics of Tanah Pusaka. In addition, key informant interviews were also done. The signs and codes that emerge as the song is studied, using social semiotics approach, contain meanings. These signs and codes are generated by myths that function to naturalize the dominant cultural and historical values, attitudes and beliefs (Chandler, 2007). Tanah Pusaka is chosen because firstly, it represents an understanding of what Malaysia is an independent state by the government. Secondly, it is also well accepted as popular among Malaysians back in the 1960s until today. A recent similar study was conducted looking into the songs New York New York and Empire State of Mind as they represent what New York means (al Makmun & Nuraeni, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Radio Malaya and the broadcast of a 'national brand' in Tanah Pusaka

The development of radio which was introduced by the British in the early 1920s, changed the musical performance landscape of the country. Radio enabled music and songs to be heard far into areas of the country not reachable before. When the Federation of Malaya acquired its independence in 1957, Kuala Lumpur was declared as the state's capital. Radio became the tool for disseminating ideas and this was a new starting point for Radio Malaya. National radio is an arm of the ruling party when it comes to spreading campaigns to the whole nation. In 1959, Radio Singapore parted with Radio Malaya and Kuala Lumpur became the headquarters of the Broadcasting Department under the supervision of Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman.

It was in Radio Malaya that the initial idea of an orchestra begun with the establishment of Orkes Puspahati, that began with only eight members. This became the impetus for Ahmad Merican (Head of Music Division), and Dol Ramli (who was Head of Malay Services Division and eventually Director General of Broadcasting) to officially set up Orkes Radio Malaya in 1961 (Hamzah, 2016b; Malaysia, 2010, 2013; Rastam, 2017). Patriotic songs, though various have been written even before the independence, with the advent of radio, began being aired throughout the nation like never before. This marks the beginning of the government's intent in constructing a national identity and making it identifiable in a sonic manner. For Malaysia, patriotic songs began slowly burgeoning in the 1950s leading up to her independence in 1957. Borrowing much from the *Melayu Asli* genre, its meaning and significance which were relevant then eventually becomes amended and appropriated over the years to remain being germane in the present contemporary multi-ethnic state. The history of the nation's independence saw the Federation of Malaya (1957) become Malaysia in 1963. Along this historical and sociopolitical path, salient shared cultural symbols and narratives of the state's collective history becomes continuously embedded in patriotic songs. Tunes such as *Sekapur Sireh Seulas Pinang* (1956), *Pahlawan Tanah Air* (1956), *Bahtera Merdeka* (1957), *Tanah Pusaka* (1964), *Berjaya* (1964), *Perwira* (1965), and *Keronchong Kuala Lumpur* (1968) to name a few of the more popular patriotic songs, are riddled with mentioning symbols of shared meanings within the *nusantara*.

This meaning is discussed by conducting a close textual analysis on the lyrics of *Tanah Pusaka*. In addition, key informant interviews were also done. The signs and codes that emerge as the song is studied, using social semiotics approach, contain meanings. These signs and codes are generated by myths that function to naturalize the dominant cultural and historical values, attitudes and beliefs (Chandler, 2007). *Tanah Pusaka* is chosen

because firstly, it represents an understanding of what Malaysia is an independent state by the government. Secondly, it is also well accepted as popular among Malaysians back in the 1960s until today. A recent a similar study was conducted looking into the songs New York New York and Empire State of Mind as they represent what New York means (al Makmun & Nuraeni, 2018). As follows, the discussion on Tanah Pusaka:

Tanah Pusaka (1964)

Composer: Ahmad Merican
Song text: Wan Ahmad Kamal
Singer / year: 1. Sandra Reemers (1964). With Orkestra by Frans Kerkhof Bossanova. Record: Radio Malaysia PE 433211 – Philips 2.28 – 45EP.
2. Jamaluddin Alias
3. Samad Haroun. Rekod Radio Malaysia Kuala Lumpur 45 PSM RMEP 13-B
4. Julie Sudiro

<i>Sungguh gemilang negri-ku</i>	So brilliant is my country
<i>Yang ku puja oh Tanah Melayu</i>	The one I worship oh Tanah Melayu
<i>Di-merata dunia</i>	All around the world
<i>Harum semerbak nama mu oh Malaysia</i>	Your name fragrantly sweet oh Malaysia

<i>Aman ma'mur kaya raya</i>	Safe, prosperous and rich
<i>Sudah lama hidup maju jaya</i>	You've been peaceful and rich for a long time
<i>Ohh tanah pusaka</i>	Ohh my inherited soil
<i>Negaraku yang berdaulat dan merdeka</i>	My sovereign and independent nation

<i>Tanah pusaka bertuah</i>	Such rich inheritance
<i>Berbagai bangsa di-dalam-nya</i>	In it people of various backgrounds
<i>Hidup aman dan berjasa</i>	Living in peace and good deeds
<i>Bertekun kerja untuk M'laysia</i>	Working diligently for Malaysia

<i>Musoh melanggar ku gempur</i>	Enemies I shall attack
<i>Sungguh rela ku gugur kerana</i>	And I shall die willingly
<i>Kau tanah pusaka</i>	For you my homeland
<i>Biar puteh tulang jangan puteh mata</i>	Lest I regret not sacrificing

(Wan Ahmad Kamal 1964)

Tanah Pusaka praises the newly formed nation that is to be passed on to the coming generations. Wan Ahmad Kamal wrote this song reminding its people the importance of a land bequeath by generations before them. Note that in 1964, songs explicitly referred to the land as *Tanah Melayu* which means Malay land. Nonetheless, the song eventually explicates a sense of a multi-ethnic state in the third phrase and line "*Tanah pusaka bertuah ... Berbagai bangsa di-dalam-nya*" (Such rich inheritance ... In it people of various backgrounds). It refers to a bigger idea of inheriting a piece of land belonging to a larger *nusantara* (archipelago) that was once a part of grand empires.

Wan Ahmad Kamal urged listeners to appreciate and praise Malaya as an inherited nation that has made her name throughout the world in the line “*Harum semerbak nama mu oh Malaysia*” (Your name fragrantly sweet oh Malaysia). After independence in 1957, the world came to learn more about the state. Malaysia began having embassies in many countries throughout the world which meant that the country is recognized worldwide (Mohammad Hashim, 2014). When *aman makmur* (peace and harmony) is mentioned, this is an indication of the acceptance and acknowledgment of cohesion amongst the various ethnicities in the state despite differences. So, although the land is that of the Malays, a high level of integration is proclaimed in this song since it portrays that there has long been harmonious development within the land.

Ohh tanah pusaka

Negaraku yang berdaulat dan merdeka

Ohh my inherited soil

My sovereign and independent nation

The lines above proclaims how the state is a precious inheritance for its people today. What is inherited is specifically its independence and its state of sovereignty. By this the songwriter is including the fact that the Constitution establishes that the Federation (Federation of Malaya and then Malaysia) is a constitutional monarchy having the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* as the Head of State.

The integrated-ness amongst its people mentioned earlier in the lyrics are emphasized further in the line “*Tanah pusaka bertuah ... Berbagai bangsa di-dalam-nya*” (Such rich inheritance ... In it people of various backgrounds). This land that is inherited is a prosperous place as it holds within it people of various historical backgrounds, affinities, beliefs and ethnicities. Being the maritime land that the peninsular is, it was already a multi-ethnic state before the formation of Malaysia and the inclusion of Sabah and Sarawak in 1963 has helped to broaden this further. Malaysia has more than 70 ethnic groups. There are also other groups representing other sub-ethnicities with different languages and dialects. If totalled, the number will reach over 200 groups (Shamsul, 2012).

In the line “*Hidup aman dan bersama, Bersatu kerja untuk M’laysia,*” (Living in peace and good deeds ... Working diligently for Malaysia) the songwriter pictured how all these varying groups of people are striving and working together for one goal, and that is the progress and development of the country. There is a particular sense of emotional attachment to the nation that makes listeners feel a strong connection and belonging. This connection is strong and suggests that one is willing to die for the nation in a battlefield against enemies. In the line “*Kau tanah pusaka, Biar puteh tulang jangan puteh mata*” (For you my homeland ... Lest I regret not sacrificing) Wan Ahmad Kamal stressed again how this is an inherited land and that is has to be protected at whatever cost.

There was an increasing proliferation of popular patriotic songs for Tanah Melayu during the 1950s and 1960s. These were the years within which the government was working particularly hard to build for the nation a national identity and it has to be identifiable not just visibly but as importantly, audibly.

CONCLUSION

Songs are useful tools that can be used to understand the culture of a particular society. It can be said that the type of music a certain community is inclined towards reveal and express various types of social, political, economic, language, religious, and other societal behaviours. These behaviours, in turn, develop and shape the type of music the community

eventually produce. This continuous process ultimately projects the identity of the community. In addition, apart from the melody and rhythm of a song, its lyrics reveal many things about the society because it is a language that is distinctly different from any other type of linguistic discourse. Individuals and organizations are able to express deep-rooted feelings with the words in lyrics of patriotic songs, otherwise not allowed elsewhere. Song lyrics can be infused with specific sentiments or even impressions from current issues in the society. The ethos of a society can be understood through the study of the texts of the songs.

Smith (1995) asserts that the survival capacity of ethnic elements for a community rests on attitudes, sentiments and perceptions that are embedded in the myths, symbols, and values of a society. *Tanah Pusaka* played the role of disseminating, through repetition via Radio Malaya, the idea of a collective and shared national identity. This is essentially what branding is and in this case, branding the Malaysian nation. The *Melayu Asli* melody, Malay language, customs, traditions, military, religion are all shared collective symbols of the local community. What was manifested in *Tanah Pusaka* was particularly a Malay centric nation brand which belong to the national elites of the ruling party in the era they were composed (Hamzah, 2016b, 2016a). The symbols identified in this song are reproduced to be repeated over the radio. According to Yoshino (1999) national elites keep inventing traditions to establish a sense of continuity with the past. Nonetheless, these elements are embedded in the traditions and collective culture of the community. Smith (1995, 2008) contended that the character of a certain population is coloured by its various forms of tradition that are embedded with myths, memories and symbols. Even when changes are bound to occur and affect these myths and traditions from time to time, its importance and relevance will remain alive and they will be handed down to generations to come.

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BIODATA

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