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Representations of inclusiveness in social assistance programmes of the 10th Malaysia Plan, 2011–2015

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ABSTRACT
This article appraises constructions of inclusiveness in social assistance programmes in the Malaysian socioeconomic agenda of the 10th Malaysia Plan, 2011–2015 (10MP). Setting as context the needs-based aspirational inclusiveness articulated in documents preceding the 10MP, this study adopts a discursive approach to probe the realisations of such inclusiveness in the 10MP. The analysis reveals essentialised ethnic constructions of different communities and their needs, as well as differing degrees of commitment in initiatives proposed, thereby indicating the slippage in discourse between the aspirations of inclusiveness and their realisations in actual initiatives in the 10MP.

KEYWORDS
10th Malaysia Plan; inclusiveness; social assistance programmes; 1Malaysia; discursive approach; social actors; predication

Introduction
This article examines the representation of the discourse of inclusiveness within the context of 1Malaysia as articulated in the nation’s 5-year socioeconomic agenda, the 10th Malaysia Plan, 2011–2015 (10MP), overseen by the current Prime Minister, Najib Razak. The Prime Minister’s ruling coalition has held power in Malaysia since independence, initially as the Alliance, and then as Barisan Nasional (BN) after the ethnic riots of 1969. In Malaysia, issues of inclusiveness have been closely linked to the socioeconomic agenda of the country, as with the 2nd Malaysia Plan, 1971–1975 (2MP), which introduced ethnicised affirmative action policies in the aftermath of the riots. It is also important to note that the 10MP materialised at a critical discourse moment (Chilton, 1987; Petersoo, 2007) after the 2008 General Elections when the BN was returned to power but lost its two-thirds majority for the first time.

The outcome of the 2008 Malaysian General Elections appeared to signal an ideological divide between state and society regarding BN policies, including its race-based policies. Initial documents, such as the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) and the New Economic Model (NEM), as well as statements from the Najib administration indicated moves to accommodate this shift and to thereby close the gap. This article, therefore, asks if the socioeconomic agenda of the 10MP (1) maintained the discourse of multiethnic inclusiveness signalled in these early policy documents that preceded it; (2) took on board contemporary social and economic realities in shaping such an identity. Linking the notion
of inclusiveness to social assistance programmes outlined in the 10MP, this article, therefore, qualitatively examines the discourse of inclusiveness in the 10MP. Accordingly, the remainder of the article will introduce some relevant context to the analysis by providing some background to the link between the socioeconomic agenda of the country and the concept of inclusiveness, followed by a brief reflection of the introduction of 1Malaysia and the 10MP under the Najib administration. The methodology employed, the analysis of the discourse of inclusiveness and the summary of findings will complete the article.

**Socioeconomic agenda in fostering inclusiveness**

In the 2010 census, Malaysia’s population was about 28.3 million, comprising 67.4 percent Malays and other Bumiputeras (or ‘sons of the soil’), 24.6 percent Chinese, 7.3 percent Indians and 0.87 percent others (Department of Statistics, Malaysia). Given the diversity of its population as well as its complex socio-political history, Malaysia continues to struggle with issues of identity and belonging, a fertile ground for politicians to exploit.

A legacy of colonial rule, official essentialised narratives of race in Malaysia serve instrumental purposes of the state (Ooi, 2009). After the ethnic riots, the 2MP introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP), an ethnicised 20-year affirmative action programme to address poverty in the population. The twin objectives of the NEP were as follows:

- The first prong is to reduce and eventually eradicate poverty, by raising income levels and increasing employment opportunities for all Malaysians, irrespective of race. The second prong aims at accelerating the process of restructuring Malaysian society to correct economic imbalance, so as to reduce and eventually eliminate the identification of race with economic function.

The document goes on to specify that the second objective of the NEP would involve ‘modernisation of rural life … and the creation of a Malay commercial and industrial community in all categories … so that Malays and other indigenous people will become full partner in all aspects of the economic life of the nation’. Nation-building was therefore premised on eradicating interethnic inequality, thereby fostering social and economic inclusiveness, especially by prioritising Malay and indigenous interests (Ooi, 2009).

The 2MP was formulated when 50 percent of the country was officially classified as poor. Ethnic incidence of poverty included 64.8 percent among the Bumiputeras, 39.2 percent among the Indians, 26 percent among the Chinese and 44.8 percent among those classified as others (Zin, 2013); these figures indicate that while there were interethnic differences in poverty levels, poverty nevertheless existed in all ethnic groups. However, interethnic alleviation policies overlooked intraethnic inequalities (Gomez, Saravananmuttu, & Mohamad, 2013) and in July 2011, the lack of improvement in income inequality over two decades was highlighted (Malaysia: Millennium Development Goals at 2010, 2011).

The emphasis of the NEP on social assistance programmes for the Bumiputera population shifted by the 1980s towards neoliberal policies, focusing on growth over redistribution, still with an ethnic emphasis. When the NEP officially ended in 1990, its successor policies such as the National Development Policy (NDP) (1991–2000), the National Vision Policy (NVP) (2001–2010) and the New Economic Model (NEM) proposed in 2010 continued the practices started under the NEP.
Criticisms of these policies were noted in the GTP including the concern among non-
Bumiputeras regarding the preferential policies for Bumiputeras. In 1969, assurances
were given by the government that non-Bumiputeras would not be affected by the NEP.
However, by the late 1980s, government intervention in economic sectors that were the
traditional preserve of the non-Bumiputeras (Gomez, 1999) only exacerbated these
concerns.

Another issue has been with poverty eradication. While the NEP was supposed to work
towards poverty eradication, poverty among other ethnic groups has been largely over-
looked (Gomez, 1999), including Orang Asli (indigenous communities of peninsula Malay-
sia), non-Malay Bumiputera poor, comprising the natives of Sabah and Sarawak as well as
the ethnic Indian population (Nagarajan, 2009). Indeed, the Malaysian Indian Blueprint
introduced in 2017 to address the ongoing marginalisation among the latter group,
especially among those in the Bottom 40 (B40) category with a monthly household
income of RM3855, may be considered an official acknowledgement of a long-standing
problem. Ooi (2013) best sums up the issue of poverty when he notes the problematic
nature of the NEP in the ‘operationalisation of “poverty” as “Malay poverty”’ (p. 326)
which thereby marginalised narratives of historical and socioeconomic inequalities in
the country.

Another contention with these policies has been the selective preferential treatment
accorded to foster successful Bumiputera businesses, starting in the 1980s. This led to pol-
itically connected individuals in the Bumiputera population benefiting from the preferen-
tial policies (Gomez, 2009; Gomez & Jomo, 1999), while those without such connections
were deprived of opportunities to excel.

Concerns were also expressed about equity distribution. In 2006, a report by a think
tank, the Asian Strategic Leadership Initiative’s (ASLI) Centre for Public Policy Studies
(CPPS) disputed the official figures of Bumiputera corporate equity ownership (Lim,
2013). The report stated that Bumiputera ownership amounted to as much as 45
percent instead of official figures of 20 percent, thereby exceeding the NEP targets of
30 percent. While questions were raised about the ASLI methodology in including Govern-
ment-Linked Companies (GLCs) as Bumiputera-owned entities, the subsequent debate also
raised questions about the methodology in deriving official figures (Loh, 2009).

In summary, growing concerns about the ethnicised affirmative action policies included
criticisms of the preferential treatment, their ethnicised definition of poverty, charges of
nepotism and questions about the accuracy in official figures of equity ownership. As pre-
cursors to the 10MP, the GTP as well as the NEM highlighted many of these as issues to be
resolved if the nation was to achieve stability and unity.

1Malaysia and the 10MP in fostering inclusiveness

1Malaysia, introduced in 2009 under the then newly appointed Najib administration, was
to purportedly usher in a new era of inclusiveness (Chin, 2010). Early references to the
concept in the state-owned English language media emphasised this inclusiveness. The
New Straits’ Times stressed that it was ‘race-blind’ (17 April 2009), further stating that
the new administration would consider ‘all Malaysians as one’. The Star also stressed its
potential for a common identity signifying a ‘nation of One People’ (Wong, 29 March
2009), where help would be given for the disadvantaged middle class as well as the
rural and urban poor, rather than for those with the right connections or for advantaged Bumiputeras. These early responses to the notion suggested a needs-based approach of socioeconomic transformation and inclusiveness for the country. However, 1Malaysia’s implicit suggestion of a common identity accommodated the reality of ethnicisation (Holst, 2012; Sani, Yusof, Kasim, & Omar, 2009), and the aftermath of the elections also saw the rise of Malay right-wing parties opposed to reforms that marginalised Malay concerns and status (Pepinsky, 2009). Therefore, while the administration’s policies suggested a move away from ethnicised identities, the resistance to such a possibility was already in place from the start.

Malaysia’s 5-year socioeconomic agenda, the Malaysia Plans, have stressed the recurring theme of inclusive development as a necessary criterion for nation-building. Tabled in parliament on 10th June 2010, the 10MP drew on earlier policy documents including the GTP as well as the NEM of the Najib Razak administration to roll out the socioeconomic agenda for the country. Aside from concerns noted in the previous section, the GTP also noted gaps between the rural–urban incomes as well as between high- and low-income earners. The NEM (Part I) too proposed a needs-based agenda of reforms, with the objective of transcending the ethnic-based distribution policies of the past that led to ‘growing separateness and dissension’ (p. 89). Overall, the discourse of exclusive ethnic inclusiveness appeared to shift to one of needs-based inclusiveness. All indications suggested that the 10MP was a crucial document of change for the country, thereby underlining the need for a closer scrutiny of the document.

The B40 was defined in the 10MP as households with a total income of below RM2300 per month. According to the 10MP, approximately 73 percent of these households were Bumiputera. While the latter term is conflated to refer to Malays, the Orang Asli as well as natives of Sabah and Sarawak (Ibrahim, 2013; Mohamad, 2009), the specific percentage breakdown of each group in the B40 was left unspecified.

The needs-based shift in the discourse of inclusiveness in the GTP, NEM as well as the 10MP recalled the examination of the discourse of New Labour in Britain by Mulderrig (2012). The latter study noted the dilemma of New Labour in Britain in espousing a neoliberal agenda, thereby representing contradictory values for a left-wing party. Similarly, given BN’s race-based platform, the removal of ethnicised affirmative action policies constituted an unusual departure from the norm. Perhaps to allay concerns of right-wing Malay groups regarding the impact of new plans on the status quo, the 10MP also asserted the continuation of past policies which was, however, to be ‘market-friendly’ (p. 141) affirmative action policies. Such expressions underlined the complexity of concerns for the political establishment in formulating the socioeconomic agenda. This article probes how the language of inclusiveness of the 10MP sought to negotiate these diverse expectations.

**Theory, data and method**

Gramsci’s (1971) perspectives of hegemony, consent and coercion are relevant to the current study and is inspired by similar studies which examine issues of identity and hegemony (O’Shannasy, 2008; Simms, 2002; Sutherland, 2005). Gramsci’s definition of hegemony as the ideological domination of an elite group over a dominated group through
the co-opting of state-linked institutions to transmit the ideology of the ruling elites is instructive (Simms, 2002).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) operationalises this understanding through an examination of language and power in establishing ideologies (Fairclough, 2001). Fairclough (2003) elaborates on the role and structuring of ideologies as ‘representations of aspects of the world which contribute to establishing and maintaining relations of power, domination and exploitation’ (p. 218), thereby establishing the presence of a powerful in-group against a weaker out-group. At the same time, CDA refers to multiple and competing ideologies engaged in a process of negotiation or struggle for identity (Fairclough, 2006).

In the present study, the notion of discourse is one of recontextualised social practice (Van Leeuwen, 2008) facing contestation. Krzyzanowski (2016) refers to Bernstein’s views of recontextualisation as a process that enables a hegemonic hierarchy of discourse to emerge. This study focuses on the meaning potential (Jorgenson & Phillips, 2002) of the discourse of inclusiveness as exploited by political institutions in establishing a hegemonic perspective. However, the hegemony that emerges is not necessarily sustainable or stable, but is under constant threat from ideological diversity (Fairclough, 2001) from competing discourse types. It is within these parameters that the data collection and method of the 10MP are undertaken.

The seven chapters of the 10MP focused on economic growth, socioeconomic inclusiveness in development, talent development and retention, development of environment and government transformation. A topic related word count of the 10MP, employing the software, Antconc, found that the collectivised reference, ‘Malaysia’, was among the highest occurrences in the text of the 10MP overall, suggesting an official narrative prioritising a single identity.

However, Chapter 4 of the 10MP, referring to socioeconomic assistance programmes, was found to have the highest reference to ethnicised identities, including Bumiputera, Orang Asli, Chinese, Indian and Ethnic Minorities, with the latter term being an apparent reference to the natives of Sabah and Sarawak. Accordingly, the extracts from the chapter of specific ethnicities and the assistance to be rendered to them were singled out for attention in this study. Given the implicit suggestion of inclusiveness in the blueprint of 1Malaysia as well as in policy documents such as the GTP and the NEM, this article focused on the nature of inclusiveness in the selected extracts from this chapter. In this instance, the micro-level examination of text is influenced by research in CDA that demonstrates the constitutive nature of discourse in creating common sense. Adapting tools from CDA as well as SFL, this study examines the representation of inclusiveness in the social assistance programmes of the 10MP.

At the micro-level of discourse, references to social actors or participants in the 10MP were examined. The analysis employs Van Leeuwen’s (2008) theoretical framework for studying social actors, acknowledged for its detailed descriptions of social actors (Fairclough, 2003; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). Accordingly, the exclusion or inclusion of social actors was considered in the selected text. The former could be realised through suppression or backgrounding while the latter could be realised through genericisation, specification, assimilation, nomination and categorisation. Status, relationships and positions could also be emphasised through role allocations to social actors as ‘agents’ or ‘patients’.
SFL (Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004) provides tools for fine-grain analysis of texts. Specifically, verb processes including material, mental, relational and verbal in SFL’s transitivity system were noted. In Mulderrig’s (2012) study of political discourse, three types of material processes were found to co-occur with the social actor of government. These included verb processes depicting (1) new initiatives, in words such as develop, benchmark, tackle, drive, establish, build upon and deliver; (2) supportive actions such as help, ensure, enable, support and provide; (3) a facilitation role that enables the work of third parties as indicated in statements such as ‘we are reforming the quality of …’, ‘we will establish a new framework …’ (p. 13). This study draws on SFL as well as Mulderrig’s (2012) perspectives in appraising the contextual co-occurrence of social actors and verb processes to represent the nature of inclusiveness of 1Malaysia in the text.

Findings and discussion
The micro-level examination of the following extracts will show that contrary to the inclusiveness of documents preceding the 10MP, the extracts below point to racialised priorities apparent in the social assistance programmes proposed in Chapter 4. Specifically, the analysis below examines extracts taken from the sections on Bumiputera Agenda as well as the B40, focusing primarily on the representation of social actors as well as the processes. These subsections will be followed by a summary of the main findings of the section overall.

Bumiputera Agenda
Significant initiatives for the Bumiputera Agenda included equity, enterprise growth, development of high-value businesses, development of entrepreneurial talent, property investments and development of traditional spaces. Some recurring trends here include a frequent agent deletion of government role which is either suppressed or backgrounded, thereby giving prominence to the government-linked bodies as well as to the specific types of assistance provided. Foregrounded references are made to the assistance as well as middle-man entities participating in the management of these different initiatives. While there are clear and decisive material processes realised in the initiatives, the time and, in some cases, the specific quantum of assistance are unmentioned. Consequently, the initiatives read as an irrealis contingency plan which neglects to provide relevant parameters for its execution.

Equity companies
A significant support to increase economic participation of Bumiputeras is through government-linked equity companies. Specific measures are stated in this regard:

During the Plan period, Ekuiti Nasional Berhad (EKUINAS) will receive RM4.5 billion of Government allocation and raise additional funding from the private sector to undertake investments in growth stage companies …

Private equity programmes in government-linked investment companies (GLICs) such as PNB, Lembaga Tabung Angkatan Tentera (LTAT) and Tabung Haji (TH) will be renewed,
strengthened and expanded to consolidate and pool various funds to expand equity ownership and control. (pp. 168 & 169)

References are made to specific Government-linked investment companies (GLICs) such as Ekuiti Nasional Berhad (EKUINAS) formed in 2009 with the stated objective of boosting Bumiputera economic participation. This agency is foregrounded and beneficialised by the allocation of RM4.5 billion from the government. The government’s role appears to be diminished through backgrounding, suggesting a symbolic reduction of government agency in equity support provided, and thereby reflecting neoliberal aspirations of reduction in government intervention.

In the second paragraph, the companies mentioned include Permodalan Nasional Berhad (PNB) or National Equity Corporation set up for Bumiputera equity acquisition, Lembaga Tabung Angkatan Tentera (LTAT) or the Armed Forces Board that provides saving schemes and retirement benefits for members and retired members of the Armed forces and Tabung Haji (TH) or Pilgrims’ Fund that provides economic support to Muslims, each one recognised as providing ethnicised support for Bumiputeras with a religious slant in the latter example. Although the role of the agent has been deleted, it may be inferred from the first paragraph that the main agent is once again the government. Such specific references to these institutions also indicate a high level of commitment to the initiatives being proposed here.

Aside from specific references to mediating agencies that oversee the initiatives, the material processes employed signal perpetuation policies. The specific material processes such as be renewed, strengthened and expanded to consolidate and pool various funds to expand equity ownership and control denote continuation of past initiatives.

**Growth of enterprises**

Aside from equity support, the growth of enterprises is stated as another target. As the next extract indicates, specific forms of support and relevant agencies are highlighted.

Loans to enable management buy-out (MBOs) and/or acquisition of businesses with positive cash flows will be provided through PUNB. This will entail significantly increasing the ceiling that PUNB can disburse and shifting its focus from funding start-ups to funding growth and consolidation of existing enterprises. (p. 169)

In this sector, Perbadanan Usahawan Nasional Berhad (PUNB), a national corporation for developing Bumiputera entrepreneurship is appointed, ostensibly by the government, in addressing the growth of enterprises. There is agent deletion of the government role here, so that the government participation in boosting Bumiputera entrepreneurship capability is de-emphasised, while the foregrounded nominalisation, loans, in the first sentence provides exact means of support given by PUNB.

At the same time, PUNB’s scope of support for the Bumiputera Agenda is enhanced as indicated by significantly increasing the ceiling and shifting its focus in the second sentence. The phrase significantly increasing the ceiling is vague and provides little clarification of exactly how much is to be allocated to enable such disbursements by PUNB. Nevertheless, the reference to PUNB as well as the use of material processes suggests perpetuation and enhancement of past policies for developing entrepreneurship.
**High-value businesses**

Another initiative for the Bumiputera Agenda is the development of businesses with high potential. The plan indicated initial government participation in this.

A demand-driven approach will be adopted to catalyse businesses in high value added activities. In targeted sectors, industry development organisations will identify areas of high potential such as molecular marker research services for agriculture (biotech), animal fat substitutes (halal industry) and oil recovery technologies (oil and gas). Government will allocate funding and invite the private sector to bid for the rights to the ventures … Over time, the Government will divest its equity to the management team and Bumiputera institutions. (pp. 169 & 170)

The first two sentences of the extract establish the overall goal of pursuing high-value businesses, with ‘industry development organisations’ foregrounded as apparent agents initiating the process. That these are government organisations is confirmed by the third sentence referring to the government’s role in activated position engaged in material processes of providing funding as well as engaging the services of the private sector.

The final sentence of the extract provides the final step in the process. The agent is again the government who is predicated by a material process in the future tense, *will divest*, to reflect the final stage in the support provided. In the latter two sentences, there is clear and specific mention of the government divesting and relinquishing control of these growth areas to private Bumiputera concerns. The initiative here is consistent with recommendations of the earlier documents such as the GTP and the NEM that the government intervention must be rationalised to introduce more free market practices. The target goals of the material process are management team and Bumiputera institutions. Here, the government’s position as an equity partner in the venture is replaced by the management team and the Bumiputera institutions. The initiative appears to be transformative in nature, particularly in relation to the government role. However, there is no timeframe yet again for the realisation of these initiatives, so once again the *irrealis* status of the contingent proposals is noted.

**Developing entrepreneurs**

*Majlis Amanah Rakyat* (MARA) or People’s Trust Council, originally set up in parliament in 1966 to support rural Malays, has diversified into entrepreneur development and education among others. The agency reports to the Minister of Entrepreneurial and Cooperative Development.

General entrepreneurship training is currently fragmented and will therefore be rationalised. MARA will continue to be the lead agency for building general Bumiputera entrepreneurship talent … MARA’s programmes will be supplemented by sector specific technical programmes conducted by industry development organisations (IDO) such as Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation and Multimedia Development Corporation. (pp. 170 & 171)

In the second sentence, the foregrounded social actor, MARA, is mentioned as the agent in building Bumiputera talent. The use of the material process, ‘will continue’ employing a future-focused modality, reflects a high commitment to the perpetuation of programmes for the development of Bumiputera capability. This capability is further enhanced with contributions from industry development organisations such as the Biotechnology
Corporation and the Multimedia Development Corporation that is specifically mentioned. Such specific references suggest a greater commitment to initiatives proposed.

**Property investments**

The additional means to enhancing *Bumiputera* participation includes property ownership. A new government-linked foundation, *Yayasan Amanah Hartanah Bumiputera* (YAHB), is specifically mentioned.

In the Plan period, the institutional investment approach will be expanded beyond corporate equity, to include other categories of wealth such as property. Yayasan Amanah Hartanah Bumiputera (YAHB) will set up Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) to reduce the entry barrier for Bumiputera to invest in commercial and industrial properties and benefit from appreciation in their values. Initiatives will also be undertaken to strengthen the investment capability of institutions such as Baitulmal and to increase the value of their assets including land development for commercial purposes. The gains from such ventures will benefit the broader Bumiputera community by creating employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. (pp. 171 & 172)

Two social actors are prominently referred to in this extract. Nominalisation and the use of material process, ‘will be expanded’, in the first sentence once again depict enhanced dynamic action on behalf of the *Bumiputera*. The second sentence foregrounds the specific agent, YAHB, predicated by the material process ‘will set up’, indicating the means of facilitating *Bumiputera* ownership of properties through the introduction of Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs). The reference to *Bumiputera* is realised in the second sentence in a beneficialised patient position.

Another means is the strengthening of *Baitulmal*, an Islamic financial institution, to acquire investments to enhance *Bumiputera* capabilities. A nominalisation, *Initiatives*, is stated in the place of an agent, but it may be inferred that the agent is the government. The final sentence begins with the nominalisation ‘The gains from such ventures’ and is followed by a material process in the future ‘will benefit’. This is followed by the beneficialised patient, the ‘broader Bumiputera community’. Given *Baitulmal*’s religious affiliations, it may be inferred that the beneficialised patient refers to Muslim *Bumiputera* rather than the broader *Bumiputera* community. Overall, the measures introduced here appear to be government linked and focused on a specific segment of the dominant *Bumiputera* population.

**Redevelopment of traditional enclave**

Seeking to enhance *Bumiputera* wealth includes creating opportunities to profit from assets in the form of land. One example is that of *Kampong Baru* (Malay for New Village), a long-standing Malay ethnic enclave, gazetted by the British colonial administration in 1900 to preserve a Malay way of life. It is historically significant as a gathering place in various historical flashpoints, including pro-independence movements in colonial times, the 1969 ethnic riots, as well as the 1998 *Reformasi* (Reform) movement (Malaysia Factbook). Recent redevelopment plans raised some disquiet among the residents due to the possible disruption of a traditional way of life and loss of ancestral homes.
More concerted efforts will be undertaken to unlock value from Bumiputera assets such as land … The Government will establish the Perbadanan Pembangunan Kampong Bharu or Kampong Bharu Development Corporation that will work with the residents of Kampong Bharu to develop a business model whereby the gains from land re-development will be equitably shared, identify a mutually acceptable temporary re-settlement area and develop innovative funding schemes that would enable existing residents to purchase units in the re-developed areas. (p. 172)

In contrast with previous extracts, this one foregrounds the government, suggesting an assumption of responsibility, in setting up the Kampong Baru Development Corporation. According to the same sentence, the latter will then work to ensure that the residents of the village will benefit from the initiatives to be taken. In the initiatives mentioned, the use of material processes is observed as in ‘will be equitably shared, identify a mutually acceptable temporary resettlement area and develop innovative funding schemes’, signifying commitment to the initiatives proposed. Similarly, the patient role ascribed to the development corporation in charge of the redevelopment of the area positively represents their role as responsible developers attentive to residents’ welfare. The Bumiputera Agenda here suggests a two-tiered system of beneficiaries, from the government to the corporation and from the corporation to the people.

**Bottom 40 percent**

The B40 mentioned included the minority Bumiputera of Sabah and Sarawak, the Orang Asli, Chinese New Village residents and Estate Workers. The omission of the largest ethnic grouping in the country, the Malays, is curious, in view of references to poverty among Malays in rural heartlands (Zin, 2013). In Orang Asli matters, agency is accorded to the government, thereby establishing the government as an obvious element of support for the Orang Asli. For the other groups, there is agent deletion, vagueness in the material processes proposed as well as a lack of reference to indications of time.

**Developing Orang Asli land**

Orang Asli concerns have been highlighted in earlier policy documents. High levels of poverty and land rights are some issues of concern.

For the Orang Asli communities, a land development and ownership programme will be implemented to enable them to become land owners and active farmers. The Government will develop Orang Asli reserve land for agriculture use. The Orang Asli communities will be able to cultivate the land and obtain land ownership upon maturity of the estate. Each eligible household will be given the right to farm and eventually own between two to six acres, with an additional 0.5 acres allocated for them to build a house. Possibility of implementing similar programmes will be considered for the ethnic minorities in Sabah and Sarawak. (pp. 162 & 163)

The Government is foregrounded as the agent in providing for the Orang Asli community followed by a material process ‘will develop’. This depicts the government as the benefactor of Orang Asli welfare, in providing them with land as well as in cultivating such land for the community. The third sentence in the extract notes that the Orang Asli would take ownership upon ‘maturity of the estate’, but without reference to a timeframe.
Similarly, the choice of verb forms ‘… will be able to cultivate … ‘ as well as ‘ … will be given the right to farm … ‘ represents a passivated, subject role for the Orang Asli, again with no time limit indicated. The prescribed actions are set by excluded social actors. In the first process, the use of the dynamic obligation stresses ability that is externally bestowed through government actions. In the second instance, the passive realisation of the material process stresses the role of the benefactor’s role once again. At the same time, the right to cultivate the land is also not inherent, rather it is bestowed by the government. These processes and phrasing raise the question as to why such conditions are being imposed for land that is supposed to be ‘Orang Asli reserve land’.

The final sentence foregrounds the beneficiary ‘Each eligible household’ as being given the right to farm and eventually own between 2 and 6 acres. There is insufficient information about the nature of this eligibility as well as the social actor involved in deciding this eligibility as well as in granting the ‘right to farm and eventually own’ the land. The exclusion of the social actor reduces commitment to the proposals here.

The overall impression here is of the Orang Asli as wards of the state with little to say over their land and rights (Idrus, 2010, 2013). Rusaslina Idrus (2013) cites Nicholas and Baer’s study from 2007 which notes the failure of such programmes in the past where the Orang Asli were relocated by the government and encouraged to grow cash crops.

Tourism-oriented business skills for Sabah and Sarawak

Sabahan and Sarawakian Bumiputera or the minority Bumiputera concerns are also placed under the B40. Measures are provided in addressing their problems.

Assistance will be provided to Bumiputera in Sabah and Sarawak, particularly ethnic minorities and Orang Asli communities to establish businesses such as home stay and eco-tourism services. Assistance will include providing entrepreneurship training and funding as well as strengthening linkages with established businesses in the identified sectors. (p. 163)

Nominalisation and the exclusion of specific social actors obscure agency, thereby suggesting a diminished commitment to this course of action. The assistance in question is spelt out in the second sentence as ‘entrepreneurship training and funding as well as strengthening linkages with established businesses in the identified sectors’. The recipients of these measures are depicted in passivated, beneficialised roles. The types of initiatives, however, lack clarity as in the reference to ‘identified sectors’.

The business ‘assistance’ to be given to the natives of Sabah and Sarawak as well as the Orang Asli is geared towards the enhancement of tourism in the states concerned. Here, essentialised identities and the commodification of these identities appear to be the priority.

Residents of new villages

The majority of the Chinese new villages’ residents are occupying land with temporary occupation licence (TOL) or leasehold tenure of 30 and 60 years. Many of them are facing impending expiry of their leases as well as difficulty in renewing their leases due to financial constraints. In addition, some of the houses have not been upgraded and are in dilapidated conditions. The residents also have lack of access to capital for new business start ups.
Efforts will be initiated to introduce loan schemes by financial institutions to finance payment of premium and leasehold tenure renewal. The loan scheme will also be made available to assist the residents to upgrade their houses as well as fund their business activities. Existing funding programmes through AIM and TEKUN will be explored to assist small entrepreneurs from Chinese new villages. (p. 164)

The Chinese are identified based on spatial markers of New Villages, a term originally referring to internment camps for civilians of Chinese origin, set up in the 1950s by the colonial government seeking to contain communist insurrection. The first paragraph of the extract presents the problems facing residents of Chinese new villages. The premodifier ‘Chinese’ is the only indication that this section may be a reference to the possible problems of the community, but the social actor does not specifically identify the Chinese community. The social actor referred to, ‘The majority’, refers to a section of the whole which is ‘Chinese new villages’ residents or pars pro toto (Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 2009), which could be any resident regardless of ethnicity residing in these villages. This material process in the present continuous tense, ‘are occupying’, highlights the currency of the problem of limited land leases facing the residents.

The second paragraph refers to actions proposed to alleviate the problems highlighted in the first paragraph. The first sentence of the second paragraph foregrounds the nominalisation in the passive voice, ‘Efforts will be initiated to introduce loan schemes’. This construction dispenses with the need to refer to an agent responsible for overseeing these efforts.

Additionally, the clause ‘Efforts will be initiated … ’ indicates a two-step initiative. The actual introduction of the loan schemes appears to be a secondary step as the primary focus of the 10MP here is that of initiating efforts; but no timeframe is specified for such initiation of these efforts. In the first two sentences of the paragraph, the agent responsible for processes is suppressed.

Similarly, in referring to support for start-up businesses, there is reference to funding programmes offered by Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM) and Tabung Ekonomi Kumpulan Usaha Niaga (TEKUN) which were both developed to support Bumiputera entrepreneurial efforts. While there is a suggestion of support from these agencies for start-up businesses that may be Chinese, the material process ‘will be explored’ indicates tentativeness to realising these plans. Again, the use of the passive voice excludes the agents in charge of these initiatives. Nor is there any reference to time frames for the achievement of these proposed objectives.

Overall, the problems facing residents of Chinese New Villages are represented as being basic needs relating to shelter and livelihoods. However, initiatives to address these inequalities and foster inclusiveness have low levels of commitment.

**Estate workers**

**Estate workers, of whom a significant number are Indians**, employed in rubber and palm oil estates throughout Malaysia, face challenges such as low income and educational attainment as well as poor living conditions and access to public amenities.

In order to improve the living standards of the estate workers, a total allocation of RM109 million will be provided between 2011 and 2012 to supply treated water to estates that are 1,000 acres in size or smaller and are located less than five kilometres distance from the main pipeline. A total of 182 estates have been identified for this programme. In addition,
Jawatankuasa Kemajuan Keselamatan Kampung will be established to foster closer ties between residents of estates and nearby villages with district offices. (p. 164)

The phrasing, ‘Estate workers, of whom a significant number are Indians’, in referring to ethnic Indians demonstrates a similar pattern of representation to that of Chinese problems in the *pars pro toto* (Wodak et al., 2009) with the main group being the functionalised identities, *Estate workers*. In the late nineteenth century, the British brought in large numbers of indentured labour from South India to work on the plantations in colonial Malaya. Needy Indians are essentialised here as estate workers, a characterisation that ignores the high rates of urban poverty among Indians. With the nationalising and closing of estates in the 1980s, the urban migration of this community has led to the creation marginalised urban poverty among Indians (Lim, 2016; Nagarajan, 2009). In their place, migrant workers were recruited for plantation work (Sundara Raja, 2012).

In the second paragraph, the passive voice and exclusion of social actors are employed. The specific action to be taken includes ‘RM109 million will be provided between 2011 and 2012’. The time limit of 1 year for the water supply raises questions as to how this problem will be attended to post-2012. Similarly, there is an area limitation that indicates that assistance is directed at estate workers in smallholdings only. The foregrounded phrase ‘In order to improve living standards of estate workers … ’ at the start of the sentence suggests that treated water supply is the only problem to be addressed to improve living conditions on estates.

Another solution proposed is the *Jawatankuasa Kemajuan Keselamatan Kampung* (JKKK). The material process in the passive voice ‘will be established’ suggests a new solution to the problem of a lack of communication. However, this initiative was previously proposed in the *4th Malaysia Plan, 1981–1985*, to link ‘development agencies and the people to ensure their greater involvement in the decision-making process affecting their livelihood’ (p. 147). So, nearly three decades later, two observations may be made in relation to this issue: first, the objectives of the original proposal appear not to have been met and second, it is unclear what attempts are made to revisit problems to find improved solutions when proposed initiatives fail to achieve intended objectives.

**Table 1** summarises the various ethnic groups mentioned in the social assistance programmes, the social actors, the initiatives proposed as well as the type of capacity to be developed for each group. The table highlights not only the differentiated types of social assistance, with business development programmes being targeted at the *Bumiputera* grouping, while other communities are given primarily welfare-oriented support. This rigid demarcation of differentiated social assistance and its silences presume that no other Malaysian community requires business development assistance of a similar type accorded in the section, *Bumiputera* Agenda and at the same time, that B40 problems are non-existent among the Malay community. The silences may raise questions as to how the needs of such diverse groups may be acknowledged and given assistance.

Also, in terms of social actors identified, important intermediary agencies are named in overseeing the *Bumiputera* initiatives, while for communities under the B40, aside from the mention of the government in relation to *Orang Asli* initiatives, there are no equivalent agencies given responsibility to attend to the communities. For the remaining B40 communities, collectivised and general intermediaries are identified as sources of assistance, thereby raising questions about commitment to addressing the stated problems.
Conclusion

Overall, the emphasis on a needs-based form of assistance emphasised in policy documents such as the GTP and NEM (Part I) is not given the same treatment in the discourse of inclusiveness of the 10MP. Instead, Chapter 4 has addressed the needs of citizens through an ethnicised hierarchy of social assistance, with the dominant majority being targeted for entrepreneurial support, while a comparative vagueness is seen in initiatives for the B40. In doing so, the 10MP demonstrates a prioritisation of the former group over the latter. Such prioritisation as well as a failure to acknowledge historical inequalities (Gomez, 1999; Gomez et al., 2013; Nagarajan, 2009; Ooi, 2013; Zin, 2013) may only create situations where some may find relief while others continue to struggle for support. This also indicates a backtracking of the concerns about class differences raised in the GTP and the NEM.

Foregrounded activated social actors are selectively indicated. In the Bumiputera Agenda, the government as a primary agent is mainly suppressed, except in instances such as the redevelopment of traditional spaces. The apparent suppression underplays the role of the government in policies for the dominant ethnic group, suggesting some consciousness of criticisms of these policies. Managerial roles are instead allocated to intermediary agencies, specifically mentioned, in overseeing the agenda, underlining commitment to proposed initiatives. However, while the foregrounding of these intermediary bodies and the material processes reflect perpetuation of policies, the agent deletion as well as the lack of reference to a time frame may raise questions about the irrealis status of these proposals. It may also denote an ongoing commitment, deferring time limits. The eventual beneficiaries of these initiatives and, therefore, those accorded patient roles are the Bumiputeras. The initiatives of the Bumiputera Agenda point to economic empowerment of the community through the development of business capability as aspirational, future-focused legitimations. However, while inclusiveness and change may be signalled, the transformational nature of changes is limited and cautious, especially in the 10MP’s silence in addressing similar needs and forms of support for the remaining

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic group</th>
<th>Social actor</th>
<th>Initiatives</th>
<th>Building capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bumiputera</td>
<td>EKUINAS</td>
<td>To undertake investments</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GLICs (patient)</td>
<td>To actively venture and diversify</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PUNB (prep phrase)</td>
<td>To enable MBOs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>To bid for rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MARA</td>
<td>For building general Bumiputera entrepreneurship talent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YAHB</td>
<td>To reduce entry barrier for Bumiputera to invest in commercial … properties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PPKB</td>
<td>To develop a business model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom 40 percent</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>For agriculture use</td>
<td>Agricultural and service-oriented capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orang Asli</td>
<td>Bumiputera (patient)</td>
<td>To establish businesses such as homestay and ecotourism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Bumiputera</td>
<td>Financial institutions</td>
<td>To finance payment of premium and leasehold tenure renewal; to upgrade their houses; to assist small entrepreneurs from Chinese new villages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents of Chinese New Villages</td>
<td></td>
<td>To improve the living standards of the estate workers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estate workers</td>
<td>JKKK</td>
<td>To foster closer ties between residents of estates and nearby villages with district offices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Summary of social assistance programmes for the different ethnic groups.
Malaysians. Unlike Mulderrig’s (2012) finding of a new political identity for New Labour, the status quo seems the preferred route with the policies of the 10MP.

In the case of the B40, there is direct mention of the ethnic groupings of Orang Asli and the minority Bumiputeras who are the natives of Sabah and Sarawak. However, these are conflated terms that suppress the diversity and differences of language, cultures, needs and socioeconomic status of the various indigenous groups on the peninsula as well as in Sabah and Sarawak. The lack of reference to the Malay community, especially given references to their presence among the B40 (Zin, 2013), is curious. The reason for this omission is left to conjecture, but it suggests a deviation from NEP focus on Malay poverty (Ooi, 2013) to a silence on this matter, thereby suggesting a lack of priority to this concern.

In terms of initiatives, the aspirations pertain to building agricultural capability for the Orang Asli while for the minority Bumiputera, small-scale businesses with specific mention of those with tourism potential are identified. The use of passive constructions may be observed in a number of these extracts. These allow for agent deletion, thereby lowering the commitment to these proposed initiatives. In the B40 grouping, a hierarchy is also discernible with some state support being articulated for Orang Asli and minority Bumiputeras, while the representation of minority Chinese and Indian communities is notable for the vagueness of their identity reference as well as initiatives. Specifically, the marginalised treatment of Chinese and Indian problems is evident in the use of pars pro toto (Wodak et al., 2009), downplaying issues faced by these communities.

More crucially, the spatialised and functionalised identities of Malaysians of ethnic Chinese and Indians descent activate a collective memory of colonial Malaya and the role of migrant cultures, especially the Chinese and the Indians, as part of the political economy of that history. It also raises questions regarding the second objective of the NEP pertaining to the link between race and economic status. More than four decades after the formulation of the NEP, the primary identity of a Malaysian lies in the link between their ethnic identity and their economic function suggesting a failure of the second objective of the NEP for some Malaysians.

While the GTP and NEM represented an ideological shift in perspectives of inclusiveness, suggesting a post-NEP era of transformation, the 10MP extracts of the 10MP social assistance programmes here indicate an ideological slide backwards to the past. In doing so, unlike the GTP and the NEM, the 10MP avoids acknowledging the complexities and multiple realities of needs of Malaysians. Essentialisation of needs and identities leads to boundaries to inclusiveness in social assistance programmes. Consequently, such representations could result in Malaysia Plans failing to acknowledge the deficiencies of the past and being incapable of responding to the needs of the present.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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