INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON "COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSLIM COUNTRIES FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE"

SOME SOCIO-CULTURAL PHENOMENA
WHICH HINDER THE OVERALL PROGRESS
OF THE MUSLIM UMMAH: GENERAL
OBSERVATIONS RELATED TO THE MALAY
COMMUNITY IN MALAYSIA FACING THE
CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY
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The subject chosen for this paper truly demands extensive research of an interdisciplinary nature. It requires the collective input of economists, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, political scientists and theologians to adequately understand the interplay of various variables in socio-cultural phenomena of contemporary Malay community. Due to the constraints of time and paucity of interdisciplinary knowledge available to the author, this paper is but the result of the author's own perception of Malaysia's future trajectory and his understanding of what constitute some of the socio-cultural factors which impede the overall progress of his own community.

As such the contents of the paper are offered as food for thought and internal discourse within the community. The ideas are by no means conclusive and are open to correction or alterations by the more competent researchers or interdisciplinary group of scholars.

1.2 THE VISION OF COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT

"The ultimate objective that we should aim for is a Malaysia that is a fully developed country by the year 2020 .... We should be a developed country in our own mould.

Malaysia should not be developed only in the economic sense. It must be a nation that is fully developed along all the dimensions: economically, politically, socially, spiritually, psychologically and culturally....

> By the year 2020, Malaysia can be a
> united nation, with a confident Malaysian
> society, infused by strong moral and ethical
> values, living in a society that is
> democratic, liberal and tolerant, caring,
> economically just and equitable, progressive
> and prosperous, and in full possession of an
> economy that is competitive, dynamic, robust
> and resilient."
>
> Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia:
> The Way Forward (1991), pp. 4-5.

The above mission statement of Vision 2020
proclaimed by the Prime Minister on 28 February 1991, has
aroused a nation-wide focus on the government's new long-
term agenda of nation-building to steer Malaysia, past the
agrarian economy, into a prosperous industrialized nation
status by the year 2020. The 30-year perspective augments
the existing long-term planning of the Outline Perspective
Plans and the medium-term five-year development plans.
The human resource development strategies to propel the
nation towards the "ultimate objective" and to sustain a
just, prosperous and balanced development in a post-Cold
War scenarios of global changes are as crucial as they are
demanding. The Prime Minister identified in Vision 2020
nine central strategic challenges which have to be
overcome in order to attain the objective of comprehensive
development, not as an imitation of Western or Eastern
models, but as one that possesses its own unique identity
-- "a developed country", as he put it "in our own mould"[1]

These challenges may be summarized as that of:
(1)   Establishing   national   unity   and   national

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[1] Malaysia: The Way Forward, p. 4.

increase with the booming mainland China's economy currently experimenting with "market socialism" and the return of Hong Kong, as one of the "Little Dragons" to China after 1997.

The rise of the Pacific Rim as one of the megatrends predicted by John Naisbitt opens up new opportunities for ASEAN countries but the spectre of regional trade blocs and protectionist strategies dictated by the Western power looms large on the horizon. The misgivings and misapprehensions on the part of USA about the true nature of the Malaysian-initiated East Asian Economic Caucus (E.A.E.C.) is indicative of the precariousness of ASEAN-based regional cooperation.[6]

The "New World Order" proclaimed during the Gulf War and betrayed in Sarajevo seems to promise more disorder and relentless atrocities against a new target: Muslim communities living in areas where the big powers' petroleum-related interests are not affected, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia and Kashmir.[7] The 21st Century, according to several well-known futurologists, will however, be the era of Peter Drucker's "New Realities", the preeminence of information technology, the globalization of world economy and cultures, the dominance

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[6] For an example of a highly prejudiced American view of the contemporary dynamic emergence of Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia, see Steven Schlossstein, <u>Asia's New Little Dragons</u> (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1991).

[7] Cf. Chandra Muzaffar, <u>Human Rights and the New World Order</u> (Penang: Just World Trust, 1993).

of "Knowledge Society", (as predicted by Peter Drucker and others), the emergence of what Taichi Sakaiya calls "The Knowledge-Value Revolution" which is a prophesy of a new economic and social universe, the new realities of Kenichi Ohmae's "Borderless World" as well as the phenomena of "Global Paradox" projected by John Naisbitt and the creed of "Excellence" as has been preached by Tom Peters and others like him.[8] The global competition of the 21st century, the revolutionary new linkages between information, wealth and war, new forms of wealth acquisition and the shifting of power bases in the era of what Alvin Toffler calls "Third Wave" civilization, in addition to new waves of religious fanaticism and deviationist Messianic cults across the globe will also be potential sources of violence, conflicts and wars.[9]

1.4 WHAT WILL BE THE PLACE AND ROLE OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITIES?

A host of questions may be raised by Muslim intellectuals and thinkers with regard to the role that

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[8] See John Naisbitt and Patric Aburdene, Megatrends 2000, 1990; Peter Drucker, The New Realities (London: Mandarin Paperback, 1990) and Managing for the Future: The 1990s and Beyond (Oxford: B. Heinemann Ltd, 1992); Taichi Sakaiya, The Knowledge-Value Revolution (Tokyo: Kodansha Int'l, 1991); Kenichi Ohmae, The Borderless World (London: Fontana, 1991) and John Naisbitt, The Global Paradox (London: 1994); Lester Thurow, Head to Head, The Coming Economic Battle among Japan, Europe and America (London: Nicholas Brealey, 1992).

[9] See Alvin Toffler, Powershift (New York: Bantam 1990) and War and Anti-War, Survival at the Dawn of the 21 Century (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1993).

Muslim countries and communities could play in the 21st century with all their resources as well as internal weaknesses. Are Muslims, notwithstanding the world-wide Islamic resurgence, adequately equipped -- materially, economically, technologically, intellectually, morally and spiritually -- to be "khayra ummatin ukhrijat li'n-nās" ("the best of nations brought forth for mankind") or continue to be led or misled by the powerful non-Muslim nations? The impotence of the Muslim world to help Muslim communities in the case of Palestine, Kashmir, Somalia, Rohingyas, Moros and Bosnia-Herzegovina is as baffling as its propensity to engage in senseless internal feuds and wars. The embarrassing ineptness of Muslim countries to assume the mantle of world leadership in important aspects of human civilization needs in-depth analysis and profound investigations beyond the scope of a single international conference. Some of the sources may well lie in what Dr. AbdulHamid AbuSulayman calls "The Crisis of the Muslim Mind"[10], in psychological and intellectual incumbrances anchored in past misadventures, or, they may be due to a combination of certain socio-cultural variables together with inherently defective political systems and structures.

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[10] See AbdulHamid A. AbuSulayman, Crisis in the Muslim Mind (tr. Yusuf Talal DeLorenzo) (Herndon, Virginia: IIIT, 1993).

1.5   MALAY/BUMIPUTERA POSITION IN
THE NEW DEVELOPMENT POLICY

In the Malaysian context, the Malay community represents that part of the world-wide Muslim ummah which is supposed to be strong in every domain of social existence, consonant with the imperatives of Islam such as:

> "Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror (into the hearts of) the enemies and others besides, whom you may not know, but whom Allah does know."
>
> (Q. 8:60)

Before it can play an effective and sustainable leading role in regional or global platforms, the Malay community would have to overcome several long-standing internal handicaps to acquire the new culture of comprehensive excellence in the face of keen domestic competition from the non-Bumiputera, i.e. the Chinese community, particularly in the field of education as the determinant factor for the overall progress of the Muslim ummah.

The Bumiputera community constituting the majority Malay community and other indigenous groups who are animists or followers of other religious, has indeed been struggling from the period of Independence in 1957, with governmental assistance, to catch up, educationally and economically with the generally more advanced Chinese

community.[11]   The New Economic Policy (1970-1990)
introduced after the 1969 racial riots was designed
primarily to assist the Bumiputera community to be on par
economically with the Non-Bumiputera through a process of
affirmative action on the part of the government and a
restructuring of society.   Between 1970 and 1990, the
Bumiputera portion of national corporate wealth rose from
a mere 2.4 per cent to 20.3 per cent, which was nearly 10
per cent less than the 30 per cent slice of the economic
pie targeted for Bumiputeras by 1990.[12]

The Second Outline Perspective Plan 1991-2000
(OPP2) mentions that although the economic position of the
Bumiputera has improved considerably since 1970, the
special assistance programme will continue in the nineties
"until the economic imbalances are corrected."   However
"only Bumiputera with potential, commitment and good track
records will be given assistance so that the objectives of
creating a viable and resilient BCIC [Bumiputera
Commercial and Industrial Community] under the NDP [New
Development Policy] are achieved".[13]

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[11] The total population of Malaysia at mid-1990 was
provisionally estimated to be 17,755,900 compared with
16,942,200 in mid-1988 and 13,764,352 in mid-1980.
According to 1990 estimates, the Muslim Malays in
peninsular Malaysia constituted 58% of the total
population, the Chinese 31% and the Indians 10%. The 1980
census put the Muslims at 53%, Buddhists at 17.3%,
Confucius, Taoists and traditional Chinese beliefs at
11.6%, Christians at 8.6% and Hindus at 7%.

[12] The Second Outline Perspective Plan 1991-2000
(Kuala Lumpur: 1991), p. 12.

[13] Ibid., p. 17.

The shortage of high level manpower specialized in S & T and R & D is crucial for the overall development process of the nation, but the situation of the Bumiputera community is worse off. Therefore, the OPP2 says "more Malaysians especially Bumiputera will be encouraged to pursue relevant advanced professional and technological degrees in selected universities and institutions overseas.[14] In 1970, Bumiputera enrolment in local universities was 49.7 per cent and in 1990 it stood at 72.6 per cent.[15]

The position of Bumiputera as compared to other communities in ownership of share capital of limited companies is shown in Table 1 - 1.

[14] Ibid., p. 26.

[15] Rajen Devadason, "The New Malay" in Malaysian Business, Nov. 16, 1993, p. 17.

TABLE I-1

OWNERSHIP OF SHARE CAPITAL (AT PAR VALUE) OF
LIMITED COMPANIES, 1990
($ million)

Ownership Group	1990	(%)
Bumiputera individuals and enterprises[1]	15,322.0	14.0
Trust agencies[2]	6,976.5	6.3
Chinese	49,296.5	44.9
Indians	1,068.0	1.0
Others	389.5	0.3
Foreigners	27,525.5	25.1
Nominee companies	9,220.4	8.4
Total	109,798.4	100.0

Sources: Registrar of Companies (ROC), Central Information Collection Unit (CICU), PNB and Economic Planning Unit (EPU) estimates.

Notes:

[1] The amount held by this group consists of $9,000 million owned by Bumiputera as direct investors and $6,300 million as investment in institutions chanelling Bumiputera funds.

[2] Shares held through traditional trust agencies such as PNB, PERNAS and SEDCs. It also includes the amount of equity owned by the Government through other agencies and companies which have been identified under the Transfer Scheme of Government Equity to Bumiputera.

Source : OPP2, p. 103.

On poverty eradication, "the number of poor households in the country as a whole is expected to be reduced from 619,400 in 1990 to 373,900 by the year 200... With the implementation of special programmes, hardcore poverty, now involving 143,100 households, is expected to be practically eradicated by the year 2000."[16]

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[16] *The Second Outline Perspective Plan 1991-200* (Kuala Lumpur: 1991), p. 108.

TABLE 1-2

INCIDENCE OF POVERTY AND NUMBER OF POOR HOUSEHOLDS,
1990 AND 2000

		1990			2000		
		Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
Peninsular Malaysia							
Incidence of poverty	(%)	15.0	7.3	19.3	5.3	3.0	8.0
Number of poor households	('000)	448.9	77.5	371.4	230.0	69.8	160.2
Incidence of hardcore poverty	(%)	3.6	1.4	4.8	0.5	0.3	0.8
Number of hardcore poor	('000)	107.3	14.9	92.4	23.0	7.0	16.0
Total households	('000)	2986.4	1062.2	1924.2	4327.3	2326.1	2001.2
Sabah							
Incidence of poverty	(%)	34.3	14.7	39.1	20.0	6.5	27.3
Number of poor households	('000)	99.6	8.5	91.1	84.0	9.6	74.4
Incidence of hardcore poverty	(%)	8.5	1.7	10.1	3.0	0.9	4.1
Number of hardcore poor	('000)	24.7	1.0	23.7	12.6	1.4	11.2
Total households	('000)	290.8	57.7	233.1	419.8	147.3	272.5
Sarawak							
Incidence of poverty	(%)	21.0	4.9	24.7	12.7	0.8	16.5
Number of poor households	('000)	70.9	3.1	67.8	59.9	0.9	59.0
Incidence of hardcore poverty	(%)	3.3	0.6	3.9	1.2	0.2	1.5
Number of hardcore poor	('000)	11.1	0.4	10.7	5.6	0.2	5.4
Total households	('000)	337.4	62.8	274.6	471.8	114.6	357.2
Malaysia							
Incidence of poverty	(%)	17.1	7.5	21.8	7.2	3.1	11.2
Number of poor households	('000)	619.4	89.1	530.3	373.9	80.3	293.6
Incidence of hardcore poverty	(%)	4.0	1.4	5.2	0.8	0.3	1.2
Number of hardcore poor	('000)	143.1	16.3	126.8	41.2	8.6	32.6
Total households	('000)	3614.6	1182.7	2431.9	5218.9	2588.0	2630.9

Sources: Household Income Survey, 1989 and EPU estimates.

Source : OPP2, p. 109

The OPP2 expects that of the 2.4 million jobs expected to be created, about 55.8 per cent or 1.3 million will by taken up by the Bumiputera. "In terms of job categories, about 68.4 per cent of the new additional employment in the professional and technical categories will be taken up by the Bumiputera. However, about half of these jobs will be in the teaching and nursing professions."[17]   [See tables 1 - 3, 1 - 4 and 1 - 5]

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[17] Ibid., p. 114.

TABLE 1-3

EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR AND ETHNIC GROUP
1990 AND 2000

Sector	1990									
	Bumi-putera	(%)	Chinese	(%)	Indian	(%)	Others	(%)	Total	(%)
Agriculture, forestry, livestock and fishing	1,404.6	36.7	295.1	13.5	122.8	21.8	15.1	29.8	1,837.6	27.8
(%)	76.4		16.1		6.7		0.8		100.0	
Mining and quarrying	˙19.1	0.5	15.2	0.7	4.2	0.7	0.6	1.1	39.1	0.6
(%)	48.8		38.9		10.8		1.5		100.0	
Manufacturing	649.4	17.0	475.6	21.8	157.3	28.0	7.9	15.6	1,290.2	19.5
(%)	50.3		36.9		12.2		0.6		100.0	
Construction	183.8	4.8	212.9	9.8	26.4	4.7	3.8	7.5	426.9	6.4
(%)	43.0		49.9		6.2		0.9		100.0	
Electricity, gas & water	32.1	0.8	5.9	0.3	7.6	1.4	0.3	0.6	45.9	0.7
(%)	69.8		12.9		16.6		0.7		100.0	
Transport, storage & communication	154.5	4.0	92.6	4.2	36.2	6.4	2.1	4.1	285.4	4.3
(%)	54.1		32.4		12.8		0.7		100.0	
Wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants	475.3	12.4	668.8	30.6	85.2	15.1	10.1	19.9	1,239.4	18.7
(%)	38.2		54.1		6.9		0.8		100.0	
Finance, insurance, real estate and business services	95.2	2.5	109.6	5.0	23.8	4.2	2.7	5.3	231.3	3.5
(%)	41.1		47.4		10.3		1.2		100.0	
Government services	560.3	14.6	214.8	9.8	69.3	12.3	5.8	11.4	850.2	12.8
(%)	65.9		25.3		8.2		0.6		100.0	
Other services	251.1	6.6	91.7	4.2	29.9	5.3	2.3	4.5	375.0	5.7
(%)	66.9		24.5		8.0		0.6		100.0	
Total	3,825.4	100.0	2,182.2	100.0	562.7	100.0	50.7	100.0	6,621.0	100.0
(%)	57.8		32.9		8.5		0.8		100.0	
Labour Force	4,093.0		2,304.3		595.9		53.3		7,046.5	
(%)	58.0		32.7		8.5		0.8		100.0	
Unemployment	267.6		122.1		33.2		2.6		425.5	
(%)	62.9		28.7		7.8		0.6		100.0	
Unemployment Rate (%)	6.5		5.3		5.6		4.9		6.0	

Sources: Labour Force Surveys, 1980-88, and EPU estimates.

Source : OPP2, p. 116

cont... TABLE 1–3

		2000							
Bumi-putera	(%)	Chinese	(%)	Indian	(%)	Others	(%)	Total	(%)
1,364.3	26.5	304.2	10.2	120.5	15.0	10.9	17.9	1,799.9	20.0
75.8		16.9		6.7		0.6		100.0	
21.2	0.4	16.3	0.5	4.2	0.5	0.6	1.0	42.3	0.5
50.1		38.5		9.9		1.5		100.0	
1,183.4	23.0	659.1	22.1	288.1	35.9	13.3	21.8	2,143.9	23.9
55.2		30.7		13.5		0.6		100.0	
300.2	5.8	317.5	10.7	40.6	5.1	6.1	10.0	664.4	7.4
45.2		47.8		6.1		0.9		100.0	
35.1	0.7	6.4	0.2	8.6	1.1	0.1	0.2	50.2	0.6
69.9		12.7		17.2		0.2		100.0	
235.3	4.6	115.7	3.9	57.9	7.2	1.6	2.6	410.5	4.6
57.3		28.2		14.1		0.4		100.0	
868.8	16.9	1,028.8	34.6	131.3	16.3	20.9	34.3	2,049.8	22.8
42.4		50.2		6.4		1.0		100.0	
133.0	2.6	138.5	4.7	32.6	4.1	2.4	3.9	306.5	3.4
43.4		45.2		10.6		0.8		100.0	
575.5	11.2	235.2	7.9	80.5	10.0	3.0	4.9	894.2	10.0
64.4		26.3		9.0		0.3		100.0	
427.5	8.3	155.9	5.2	39.2	4.9	2.0	3.3	624.6	7.0
68.4		24.9		6.4		0.3		100.0	
5,144.3	100.0	2,977.6	100.0	803.5	100.0	60.9	100.0	8,986.3	100.0
57.2		33.2		8.9		0.7		100.0	
5,433.2		3,043.5		824.1		63.7		9,364.5	
58.0		32.5		8.8		0.7		100.0	
288.9		65.9		20.6		2.8		378.2	
76.4		17.4		5.5		0.7		100.0	
5.3		2.2		2.5		4.4		4.0	

Source : OPP2, p. 117

TABLE 1-4

EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION AND ETHNIC GROUP
1990 AND 2000

Occupation	1990									
	Bumi-putera	(%)	Chinese	(%)	Indian	(%)	Others	(%)	Total	(%)
Professional and technical	350.4	9.2	178.6	8.2	44.8	8.0	7.0	13.8	580.8	8.8
(%)	60.3		30.8		7.7		1.2		100.0	
Teachers and nurses	148.7		54.9		13.7		1.2		218.5	
(%)	68.1		25.1		6.3		0.5		100.0	
Administrative and managerial	54.1	1.4	95.3	4.4	8.6	1.5	4.4	8.7	162.4	2.5
(%)	33.3		58.7		5.3		2.7		100.0	
Clerical	354.7	9.3	238.1	10.9	50.5	9.0	2.6	5.1	645.9	9.8
(%)	54.9		36.9		7.8		0.4		100.0	
Sales	274.2	7.2	429.8	19.7	49.7	8.8	7.6	15.0	761.3	11.5
(%)	36.0		56.5		6.5		1.0		100.0	
Service	473.9	12.4	207.7	9.5	81.8	14.5	6.9	13.6	770.3	11.6
(%)	61.5		27.0		10.6		0.9		100.0	
Agricultural	1,431.1	37.4	295.1	13.5	131.4	23.4	14.9	29.4	1,872.5	28.3
(%)	76.4		15.8		7.0		0.8		100.0	
Production	887.0	23.2	737.6	33.8	195.9	34.8	7.3	14.4	1,827.8	27.6
(%)	48.5		40.4		10.7		0.4		100.0	
Total	3,825.4	100.0	2,182.2	100.0	562.7	100.0	50.7	100.0	6,621.0	100.0
(%)	57.8		32.9		8.5		0.8		100.0	

Sources: Labour Force Surveys, 1980-88, and EPU estimates.

Source : OPP2, p. 118

cont... TABLE 1-4

				2000					
Bumi-putera	(%)	Chinese	(%)	Indian	(%)	Others	(%)	Total	(%)
569.4	11.1	263.7	8.9	61.4	7.6	6.3	10.3	900.8	10.0
63.2		29.3		6.8		0.7		100.0	
244.2		67.7		20.5		1.8		334.2	
73.1		20.3		6.1		0.5		100.0	
91.5	1.8	150.2	5.0	14.5	1.8	7.5	12.3	263.7	2.9
34.7		57.0		5.5		2.8		100.0	
501.0	9.7	305.3	10.3	83.2	10.4	1.8	3.0	891.3	9.9
56.2		34.3		9.3		0.2		100.0	
500.3	9.7	651.1	21.9	79.3	9.9	12.5	20.5	1,243.2	13.8
40.2		52.4		6.4		1.0		100.0	
727.6	14.1	272.4	9.1	122.4	15.2	9.1	14.9	1,131.5	12.6
64.3		24.1		10.8		0.8		100.0	
1,369.1	26.6	309.1	10.4	127.3	15.8	12.7	20.9	1,818.2	20.2
75.3		17.0		7.0		0.7		100.0	
1,385.4	26.9	1,026.0	34.5	315.2	39.2	11.0	18.1	2,737.6	30.5
50.6		37.5		11.5		0.4		100.0	
5,144.3	100.0	2,977.8	100.0	803.5	100.0	60.9	100.0	8,986.3	100.0
57.2		33.2		8.9		0.7		100.0	

Source : OPP2, p. 119

TABLE 1-5

MEMBERSHIP OF REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL
BY ETHNIC GROUP, 1990

Profession	Bumiputera	(%)	Chinese	(%)	Indian	(%)	Others	(%)	Total	(%)
Architects	231	2.0	728	3.2	12	0.2	8	1.1	979	2.4
(%)	23.6		74.4		1.2		0.8		100.0	
Accountants	627	5.3	4,524	20.0	346	6.5	77	10.3	5,574	13.8
(%)	11.2		81.2		6.2		1.4		100.0	
Engineers	7,018	59.7	11,741	51.9	1,065	19.9	342	45.6	20,166	49.8
(%)	34.8		58.2		5.3		1.7		100.0	
Dentists	406	3.5	847	3.7	396	7.4	21	2.8	1,670	4.1
(%)	24.3		50.7		23.7		1.3		100.0	
Doctors	1,951	16.6	2,430	10.7	2,410	44.9	216	28.8	7,007	17.3
(%)	27.8		34.7		34.4		3.1		100.0	
Veterinary surgeons	242	2.1	160	0.7	250	4.7	23	3.1	675	1.7
(%)	35.9		23.7		37.0		3.4		100.0	
Lawyers	705	6.0	1,575	7.0	836	15.6	37	4.9	3,153	7.8
(%)	22.4		50.0		26.5		1.2		100.0	
Surveyors	573	4.9	636	2.8	48	0.9	26	3.5	1,283	3.2
(%)	44.7		49.6		3.7		2.0		100.0	
Total	11,753	100.0	22,641	100.0	5,363	100.0	750	100.0	40,507	100.0
(%)	29.0		55.9		13.2		1.9		100.0	

Sources: Professional associations and institutions, covering both the public and private sectors.

Source : OPP2, p. 120

1.6 CONDITIONS FOR THE SURVIVAL AND RESPECTABLE EXISTENCE OF THE MALAY COMMUNITY BY 2020

With the nation now geared towards fulfilling the objectives of Vision 2020, many Malay leaders are worried that the Malay community as a whole -- despite having made some remarkable progress over the last two decades -- might not be able to meet the demanding goals of the New Development Policy which calls, among other things, for the evolution of a Bumiputera Commercial and Industrial Community with a new breed of Malay entrepreneurs, managers and leaders who possess qualities of excellence, competitiveness, resiliency, self-reliance, strategic thinking, integrity, professionalism, state-of-the-art knowledge and skills and, at the same time, imbued with high moral and religious values. As Dr. Nawawi Mat Awin, then Chairman of the Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry, put it in The Third Congress on Bumiputera Economy in 1992, "The finishing line keeps changing, fast and all the time ... How do we compete fairly when the players play according to different rules?"[18]

The Third Congress on Bumiputera Economy (from 10-12 January 1992), officiated by the Prime Minister and participated by prominent Malay leaders in both the public and private sector, addressed all the relevant issues pertaining to the challenges of forging a more progressive

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[18] Laporan Kongres Ekonomi Bumiputera Ketiga, 1992, p. 373.

and well-rounded Malay/Bumiputera community in the next three decades. The necessity of attitudinal, cultural and institutional changes was highlighted. The sixty-three resolutions passed by the Congress also touched on the need for a process of psychological engineering, application of Islamic values and ethics, inculcation of business culture in Bumiputera families, acquisition of technology transfer and a stronger orientation among Bumiputera towards mathematics, science and technology in schools and universities.[19]

1.7 **THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE OF OVERALL UMMATIC PROGRESS**

Since the Congress, several national-level conferences, seminars and workshops have been discussing the implications of the New Development Policy and Vision 2020 for the Malay-Bumiputera community. As a Muslim community, the Malay Bumiputera has also been reminded in some of these seminars of the holistic Islamic perspective on the overall progress of the ummah. The moral-spiritual vision of man as God's vicegerent on earth, entrusted with the mission of realizing "the good life" (hayāt tayyibah), seeking and utilizing all the goodly bounties (al-khairāt) on God's earth; striving hard and becoming strong economically, physically and morally with all the God-given resources on land, in the water and in the atmosphere to establish a humane, just, peaceful and

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[19] Ibid., pp. 3-17.

prosperous society, country and civilization for all of humanity; integrating in all these worldly activities and endeavours the values of iman in and accountability to Allah (s.w.t.) as the one and only Master of all that exist to whose will and pleasure man submits with all sincerity and humility, such that all those worldly activities and attainments become a form of ᶜibādah (worship) to Him, thereby becoming worthy of achieving true success and felicity (al-falāḥ) through "goodness in this world" (fi'd-dunyā hasanah) and "goodness in the hereafter" (wa fi'l-ākhirati hasanah).

This divinely-revealed vision is not unknown to an increasing number of Malay leaders, professionals, intellectuals and administrators.[20] But the depth of understanding of this holistic vision and the degree of its internalization within the depth of Malay psyche to the extent that it becomes the principal motivation for external behaviour which consequently transforms the quality of life and culture of the Malay people as a whole remains an open question and an issue to be further analyzed.

The notion of "overall progress" of the Muslim ummah used in this paper is based on the above holistic

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[20] Since the Congress on "Islam and Vision 2020 at the Dawn of the 21st Century" organized by the Institute of Islamic Understanding (I.K.I.M) in Kuala Lumpur in July 1992, I.K.I.M. has published several books and papers which are meant to enlighten the Malaysian public particularly the non-Muslims on the Islamic perspectives of industrialization, progress and development.

vision and refers to the positive changes and collective improvement in the life of the Muslim community as compared to the non-Muslim communities, in all fields of important human endeavour -- economy, defence, education, science and technology, research and development, politics, administration and management, literature and arts, social welfare, social relations and international affairs -- all infused and integrated with moral-spiritual values of Islam and in conformity with the principles of Islamic ‘aqīdah (creed) and shari‘ah (divine law).

In the Malaysian context, this perspective relates mainly to the Malay Bumiputera's on-going struggle to achieve a better economic and educational standing vis-a-vis their immediate competitors, while retaining and improving their Islamic identity. Therefore, when we try to identify some of the socio-cultural factors which hinder the overall progress of the Muslim-Malay ummah in Malaysian history and environment, we should not only be looking at the situation of the economically-deprived sections of the community who may appear to be more religious or pious but also at the growing middle-class and the highly fortunate upper-class Malays who are generally affluent and "economically developed" but may not be aware of the holistic Islamic vision of progress or, if they are aware, may not be enthusiastic, for various reasons, to infuse the moral-spiritual values in their professions or enterprises.

At any rate this paper does not share the view that economic progress and material wellbeing are not worthy pursuits for God-fearing Muslims, mainly because economic backwardness and material deprivation will perpetuate the community's dependency on the non-Muslim world to meet basic needs and overcome hunger, disease and ignorance and make them easy targets of exploitation, suppression and oppression by their enemies, within the country or from overseas. At the same time, this paper regards economic progress, material wellbeing and affluent life-style which are not inspired and guided by the transcendent and holistic vision of Islam as highly undesirable because they contribute to serious social injustices, chronic social problems, moral degeneration, pursuit of selfish pleasure and the "worship" of material glory.[21]

1.8   THE NEW MALAY

The issue of the so-called "Melayu Baru" (The New Malay) which has triggered interesting debates in the last few years is therefore pertinent to this paper and merits

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[21] In the opinion of Dr. M. Noordin Sopiee, Director General of I.S.I.S., Malaysia cannot become a fully developed society without becoming fully moral and ethical. The present writer shares his view that morality is relevant and germane to virtually every aspect of Vision 2020. See his paper, "Inculcating Moral and Ethical Values in Business Towards Achieving the Objectives of Vision 2020" presented in National Seminar, "Towards a Developed and Industrialized Society: Understanding the Concept, Implications and Challenges of Vision 2020" organized by the Socio-Economic Research Unit of Prime Minister's Department, from 5-7 December 1991, at Genting Highlands.

some elucidation before we move to the subject of socio-
cultural hinderances to Muslim progress.

Dr. Mahathir's call on November 8, 1991, during the
annual UMNO General Assembly for the evolution of "a new
Malay and bumiputera race" to meet the challenges of the
next century, to be sure, received mixed reactions, but
that did not discourage the Menteri Besar of Selangor
Darul Ehsan, Tan Sri Muhammad Taib to publish a book on
the subject or Dr. Siddiq Fadil to continue writing a
series of articles on "The Mind of the New Malay" which
ultimately were compiled into a book.[22] To dispel some of
the misgivings about the idea of "the New Malay", Dr.
Mahathir explained in 1993 that "The New Malay should be
an all-rounder, with a wider vision and be more respected.
But he should have his religious belief and spiritual
strength intact."[23] The criticism against the idea of the
New Malay or the "Global Malay" as used by Datuk Seri
Najib Tun Abdul Razak seems to emanate from some Malay
intellectuals and professionals who view the meteoric rise
to wealth, fame and influence of some Malay corporate
players in the 1990s with apprehension and some degree of
cynicism, because they appear to be turning their backs on
important aspects of Malay culture, such as the promotion
of Malay language and Islamic moral values of humility,
transparency, generosity and moderation.

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[22] See also Rustam Sani, <u>Melayu Baru dan Bangsa
Malaysia</u> (1993).

[23] Rajen Devadason, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 15.

The proponents of the Melayu Baru concept explain that the Melayu Baru's religious identity remains firmly rooted in Islamic culture. He has to acquire,however, new skills, knowledge and attitudes commensurate with the new global challenges of the 21st century. The idea "is a manifestation of the need to actualize a Malay race which possesses a culture that is consonant with changing times, able to face the challenges and to compete without depending on assistance, educated, knowledgeable, sincere, disciplined, efficient and trustworthy."[24] According to the executive chairman of Securities Commission, Dr. Munir Majid, the "Global Malay" has to have five critical characteristics: "technical ability, an efficient and industrious work ethic, language ability to facilitate global communication, social adaptability and cultural and religious strength." Expounding on the last characteristic, he says: "Belief should give rise to confidence rather than become an impediment and a reason to distance oneself from the concerns of the world."[25] One can add other values to be strengthened in the personality of the New Malay: integrity, discipline, diligence, excellence, creativity and innovation, competitiveness, perseverance, self-reliance, thrift, commitment to knowledge and technology acquisition, good

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[24] Johan Jamal Yazli, "Ketika Menentukan TEAM Yang Mantap," in Harmoni, Bil. 1, Nov. 1993, p. 10.

[25] Rajen Devadason, op. cit., p. 17.

corporate citizenship, etc.[26]

In the arena of public administration and management, the leaders of contemporary Malaysian civil service and bureaucracy have also emphasized the importance of inculcating appropriate ethical values and, lately, the necessity for "paradigm-shifts".[27] The Chief Secretary of the government, Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji b. Abdul Hamid has elaborated twelve key values which, he said, ought to be internalized and practised by administrators in order to realize a high quality civil service.[28] Since most public administration officers are Malays, they represent an important wing of the New Malay community comprising both the private and public sectors, although the private sector is expected to be "the engine of growth" to sustain the efforts of accelerated industrialization.

1.9   THE NEW PREDICAMENTS

In spite of remarkable achievements in several aspects of the life of the Malay community, such as the reduction of the incidence of poverty, the emergence of a

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[26] See Mohamed Nordin Sopiee, op. cit., pp. 5-8.

[27] See Sari Adab Pentadbiran (Kuala Lumpur: INTAN, 1992); Nilai dan Etika dalam Perkhidmatan Awam (Kuala Lumpur: 1991).

[28] See Tonggak Dua Belas: Penerapan Nilai, Norma dan Etika Perkhidmatan (Kuala Lumpur: INTAN, 1992). See also M. Affandi Hassan, The Tawhidic Approach in Management and Public Administration (Kuala Lumpur: INTAN, 1992).

more educated and more affluent middle class, the rise of prominent Malay corporate leaders exercising new powers of influence, the increase in the number of Malay professionals and Ph.D. holders over the last two decades, as well as the continued dominance of Malay political leadership in the delicately balanced Malaysian political system, the challenges and uncertainties of the 21st century demand an acceleration of the process of overall progress of the community while governmental assistance is simultaneously being reduced along the way to the point that one day it would have to rely completely upon its own resources and strengths. Investment in education and skills acquisition is no doubt increasing quantitatively but the signs on the wall seem to indicate problems of acute shortages in the requisite manpower of the Malays quantitatively and qualitatively as compared to their Chinese fellow-citizens.

The existing and anticipated shortage of Malay professionals, scientists, technocrats, technicians, highly skilled workers, doctors, researchers, mathematicians, information technology experts, university lecturers in the fields of science and technology, competent business managers and entrepreneurs continue to haunt the leaders of the community, while the bitter truth remains that the majority of drug addicts, school dropouts and failures in the universities, hard-core poor, factory workers, poor fishermen and peasants on the East Coast, popular singers and artists, lovers of cheap amusement and

popular fiestas as well as thousands who loaf around aimlessly in shopping complexes of the city are Malays.

Many serious juvenile delinquents involve Malays children and the divorce rate of Malay couples seems to be high. Their younger generation also seems to be the best consumers of "pop" culture and they are apparently the most prone to emulate the trash elements of Western life style as depicted in Hollywood-dominated films. The belief in the efficacy and power of evil spirits and sorcerors has not vanished in some sections of the community and the resort to the practice of vicious slander through "poison letters" to discredit business rivals or political opponents seems to be perpetrated by the few evil-minded persons but tolerated and enjoyed by many who are prone to believe the letters of _fitnah_ (slander). It is also said that jealousy and rancour, and bad perception (su' al-zann) of people continue to flourish in the subconscious minds of some Malays, such that if another Malay happens to attain remarkable success in business or politics, then it is not uncommon for some other Malays to start discrediting him behind his back or smearing his reputation in evil ways until he is thrown out of his fortunate position.

These above-mentioned phenomena are not new in the history of the Malay community. They represent remnants of socio-cultural problems in Malay society which, despite increasing education and modernization, are not easily

eradicated. It is highly probable that the Qur'anic worldview regarding man's orientation to nature, the remarkable Islamic civilizational achievements in human history and the all-embracing ethical system of Islam have not anchored very deeply or spread widely in Malay culture. Those "areas" or "locations" where the impact of the dynamic action-oriented and highly ethical Qur'anic worldview has been insignificant or superficial may be responsible for perpetuating the socio-cultural impediments to the overall progress of the Malay ummah.

P A R T   2

SOCIO-CULTURAL HINDERANCES

In this part the paper highlights some of the socio-cultural phenomena in contemporary Malay community which, in the opinion of the present writer, hinder the overall progress of the Muslim ummah in Malaysia. They are by no means exhaustive or based on any in-depth empirical research. Each phenomenon is treated in a general way as symptoms or manifestations in the Malaysian environment. Some probable causes are offered, albeit in a tentative manner, with the hope that other studies based on scientific methods would later verify or otherwise the real underlying causes. The first five phenomena relate more to the Malay elites, while the rest involve the younger generation and the Malay masses.

2.1   THE LIBERAL-SECULARISTIC MIND-SET

Some symptoms:

==>   The bottom-line is profit. Religious norms and values have no place in the organization or profession unless they enhance the future wellbeing of the organization.

==>   Cynicism towards religiously-based ethics.

==>   Business, the professions, politics, diplomacy, pleasure and the arts are not to be mixed with religion or high ethical values. The proper place for religion or divine norms is the mosque and the five pillars of Islam are all that one should be concerned with, if at all.

==>   Multi-national corporations selling liquor or cigarettes with Muslims on the Board of Directors or as Chairmen, use the electronic or print media to entice the younger generation by advertising nation-wide concert extravaganza without in the least, being concerned about the effects of their efforts on the moral standards of the youth. The end justifies the means.

==>   Conglomerates with political connections strengthen their corporate culture without regard for the national cultural values.

==>   Gambling is one way of getting rich and provides an outlet for "hot money".

Some probable causes:

==> Influence of secular professional education.

==> Misunderstanding the scope and nature of Islamic religion.

==> Impact of non-Muslim's secularistic life-style.

==> Demands of the owners and stake-holders of the corporations.

==> Pressure from overseas headquarters.

==> Lack of conviction and will power to resist environmental pressures.

2.2 CONSPICUOUS AND OSTENTATIOUS LIFE-STYLE

Some symptoms:

==> Craving for excessive luxury without concern for the plight of the poor and the sufferings of the under privileged.

==> The more the materials or decorative objects are imported the better they are.

==> The desire to keep up with the life-style of the affluent community.

==> Striving to maintain the newly-acquired status symbols with the effect that the gap between the haves and the haves-not is widened.

==> Accumulation of wealth with little awareness of the obligation to pay _zakat_ (the poor due).

==> Spending huge amounts of public funds for birthday

celebrations of prominent public figures.

==> Widening of social cleavages.

Some probable causes:

==> Ignorance of the egalitarian principles and social justice in Islam through formal or non-formal education.

==> People attach social value to material affluence and status symbols.

==> The moral-spiritual virtues of moderation, humility and concern for the less-privileged members of society have no appeal.

==> The idea of striving or sacrificing with one's wealth in the cause of Allah (s.w.t.) to earn His pleasure may appear to be too idealistic, or utopian.

2.3 "MONEY POLITICS" SYNDROME[29]

Some symptoms:

==> The practice of buying votes for various positions in the political party elections has been rampant over the last few years.

==> This corrupt practice threatens to undermine the

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[29] See letter of Dr. Abdul Rahim Ghouse, "Moral values way to fight money politics" in New Straits Times, 6 July 1994. He appeals for the inculcation of "moral politics" to stamp out the disease of money politics in UMNO.

credibility of leaders and the party. UMNO leaders were alarmed by this widespread practise and publicly amended its constitution on June 19, 1994 to curb money politics and abuse of power in the party.

==> Leaders can buy potential supporters and followers can also buy potential leaders if the amount is right. Millions have been spent in the process of buying political favours.

==> The corruption of politics by interest groups in the private sector can lead to national scandals and destroy the confidence of the people in the political leaders or system. The recent examples in Japan are good reminders.

==> The decay of the idealism to put service before self will lead to the triumph of unethical pragmatism and Machiavellian politics.

Some probable causes:

==> People join political parties not really to serve society but to obtain influence and material gain for themselves.

==> Lack of highly principled leaders as role models.

==> Relationship between big business and politicians may be too close.

==> Some aspiring for leadership need strong financial backing to gain support and ensure loyalty.

2.4 WEAK MORAL FIBRE SYNDROME

Some symptoms:

==> As managers and leaders climb the corporate ladder, opportunities for self aggrandisement and abuse of power are opened up. Lacking the moral fibre to withstand temptations, some businessmen, professionals, civil servants, bankers, doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects and ministers have indulged in unethical practices such as fraud, graft, patronage, nepotism, influence peddling, insider-trading, etc. Several serious financial scandals have resulted from this phenomenon.

==> Government leaders, realizing the extent of corrupt and unethical practices in both the public and private sector, have been calling for the implementation of codes of ethics and emphasizing the need to inculcate high moral values in business and in the civil service.

==> Many professional groups have already tightened up their codes of ethics, but in the absence of a deeper sense of accountability and trustworthiness (amanah), corrupt practices may continue to grow.

==> Many cases of "white-collar" crimes have alarmed the public. There is the fear that more sophisticated white-collar crimes or "hi-tech" crimes may increase in the future.

Some probable causes:

==> Secular professionalism does not provide for the principle of trusteeship and ultimate accountability to God. No real deterrence to criminal acts.

==> The concept of trustworthiness (<u>amanah</u>) in the eyes of God has not found a strong footing in private or public organization.

==> The inability to overcome greed and to resist temptation of power or wealth or sexual pleasure.

==> Not many corrupt people or smart criminals have been caught and convicted.

==> Corporate values in business seem to tolerate acts of small and petty bribery. This may encourage bigger briberies and fraud.

2.5 **THE SLAVE-MASTER AND PATRON-CLIENT COMPLEX**

Some symptoms:

==> In traditional Malay culture, the Ruler is viewed as the absolute master who must be obeyed at all times by all the subjects. The feudal system which preceded the advent of Islam was responsible for evolving a culture of bondage by which all subjects were subservient to the Lord and their life was in the hands of the monarch. Dissent tantamounted to treason and was often punished by death. So a

culture of absolute obedience and self-debasement before the traditional ruler was nurtured. The emergence of parliamentary democracy has reduced the power and the aura surrounding the Malay ruler. However, he is still being formally accorded with great honour and respect by the masses. In some instances the desire of the ruler, however unreasonable, is fulfilled without much questioning and the circle of state dignitaries and close associates would ensure that no one defies the wishes of the Malay ruler. The recent constitutional amendments which removed the legal immunity of the Malay rulers and provided for a special court in which they could be brought to trial have further undermined the traditional relationship between the Malay and his Ruler. The residual slave-master psychology of the people may now be transferred to the civil power holders or the corporate barons to reinforce the already existing patron-client relationship in which the clients strive to the best of their ability to please the highly influential patrons either in the public or the private sectors. The forms of human bondage may have changed but the spirit of slavery which is debasing and humiliating lingers on.

==>   There are members of political and non-political organizations who have developed their admiration or adulation of the exceptional leader to the point

of losing their objectivity and rational judgement such that he is seen to be always right and rival to be always wrong. The loss of objectivity and abandonment of rational analysis among educated and the youth would not augur well for political progress of the Muslim ummah.

Some probable causes:

==> The culture which nurtures a slavish mentality begins in the home where parents assert their overbearing authority over the children discourage their freedom of expression

==> The home or social environment which instils fear and awe before human authority and discourages critical thinking.

==> The perpetuation of feudalistic traditions symbols which confer the aura of charisma unquestionable authority to traditional Malay rulers.

==> It pays to be an "obedient servant" of the powerful bosses

2.6   **THE "LEPAK" (LOAFING OR LOITERING) SYNDROME**

Some symptoms:

Youngsters and teenagers, mostly Malay, like to wander around at shopping complexes, loitering

aimlessly at bus terminals or entertainment centres, either alone or with friends, idling away the time or chatting with no apparent purpose in mind. This is a new form of urban social problem which has caused much concern to the government authorities as well as the parents.[30]

==> A 70-page report commissioned by the Ministry of Youth and Sports on the "lepak" syndrome revealed the following startling facts: A total number of 6110 youths aged between 12 and 25 spent an average of one month a year loitering in shopping complexes. Respondents interviewed comprised 83% Malays, 11% Chinese and 4% Indians.

==> The report also revealed that about 70% of the youths smoked, some admitted taking drugs (14%), consumed liquor (25%), viewed blue films (40%), read pornographic materials (39%), engaged in premarital sex (18%), gambled (28%) and committed theft (16%).[31]

==> The country's drug problem worsened last year (1993) with the number of addicts rising to 24,023. The number of knew addicts increased from 7,750 in 1992 to 9,727 in 1993 while the number of rehabilitated addicts who returned to the habit

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[30] See A. Kadir Jasin, "Worrisome causes of 'lepak' habit", New Straits Times, 19 June 1994; Alina Ranee, "Immoral side of lepak culture", New Straits Times, 27 April 1994.

[31] Revathi Murugappan, "Finding answers to the lepak issue", Sunday Star, 19 June 1994.

rose from 12,486 to 14,296. The number of addicts under treatment and rehabilitation in 1993 rose to 36,687 from 35,300 in 1992. Selangor registered the largest number of new addicts with 1,403 followed by Federal Territory with 1,330 and Penang with 1,210.[32]

==> The statistics on juvenile delinquency in schools also show a rise in underdisciplined behaviour and provide enough reason to be worried. According to the Deputy Minister of Education, Datuk Leo Michael Toyad, 138,358 or 9.82 per cent of the 1,408,672 pupils of secondary school throughout the country have been identified as being involved in criminal misdemeanour ranging from theft, rape, fighting, extortion, threatening teachers, involvement in secret societies and immoral behaviour.[33]

Some probable causes:

==> Lack of sound religious and moral education.

==> Low self-esteem, lack of meaning or purpose in life, lack of parental love, guidance and counselling.

==> Learning disabilities resulting in poor academic

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[32] Bernama report The Star, 9 March 1994.

[33] Report published in Berita Harian, 4 April 1994. See also papers presented at the Seminar on Juvenile Delinquency, organized by the Malaysian Crime Prevention Foundation, Dept. of Social Welfare and the Royal Police Force in Kuala Lumpur on 11-13 May 1993.

performance.

==> Broken homes, uncaring families, pressures from daily life and poor living conditions.

==> Peer-group pressure.

==> Influence of the electronic media which stress violence, sex and sensual pleasure.

==> Influence of hedonistic entertainment sub-culture glorified, among others, by some multinational cigarette companies.[34]

2.7   MEDIOCRITY SYNDROME

Some symptoms:

==> Low quality productivity, without motivation to excel among low achievers, resulting in the attitude of "tidak apa" ("never mind") or satisfaction with average passes in examinations.

==> Resignation to second class or third class positions while the Non-Bumiputeras strive to obtain first class or second class (upper) degrees.

==> Taking the line of least resistance or going for the less risky subjects in studies, work, business or competition.

==> Poor work ethics in the job place.

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[34] See the papers of the Seminar on "Invasion of Hedonistic Entertainment Culture at the Dawn of the 21st Century" organized by P.K.P.I.M. in cooperation with the Religious Affairs Division of Prime Minister's Department and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in Kuala Lumpur on 24 July 1994.

==>   Resistance to new ideas and changes.

==>   Poor finishing touches to material products.

==>   Shy to go forward in competitive situations.

Some probable causes:

==>   Ignorance of the fact that Islam extols striving
       hard to attain excellence in one's work, that
       Muslims are required to be the "best community" to
       be emulated by the rest of mankind and that the
       Muslim civilization contributed to the Renaissance
       in Europe.

==>   Family upbringing and environment which do not
       emphasize competitiveness and accept the status quo
       with resignation.

==>   School environment in the rural areas without
       adequate facilities and amenities.

2.8   **DEPENDENCY SYNDROME**

Some symptoms:

==>   Since the government has committed to provide many
       kinds of assistance to the Bumiputera community for
       the last three decades, in the form of subsidies,
       loans, grants and scholarships, a mentality of
       always wanting to depend on the government known as
       "subsidy mentality" has developed. This mentality,
       though gradually diminishing, inhibits

innovativeness and creativity in thought and action. The Malay community in South Africa and Singapore, on the other hand, have learned to survive by their own boot-straps and have made impressive gains economically and socially.

==> Many Muslim organizations usually expect to get aid and donations from oil-rich countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and U.A.E. to launch their development projects or programmes. Some of these organizations or individuals, due to their dire needs, go to the extent of becoming propaganda tools and servants of their wealthy or influential patrons -- another manifestation of their deep-seated slave-master cultural baggage.

==> In turning Malaysia's face towards Japan or South Korea, under the "Look East" policy of the last decade, Malaysian leaders were expecting that the Malaysian people would emulate the productive work ethics of the Japanese and speedy transfer of technology from Japan's industries would take place. Realizing that the technology transfer from Japan is not easily forthcoming and is more expensive than expected, Malaysian leaders are now looking to Europe and America for possible partnership in the automobile industry.

Some probable causes:

==> Lacking self-confidence to stand on one's own feet.

==>   Inferiority complex.

==>   Economically deprived family background.

2.9   **MATHEMATICS - SCIENCE PHOBIA**

Some symptoms:

==>   Although the number of Malays going into the
        science stream has increased over the years,
        compared to the Non-Bumiputeras, particularly the
        Chinese, the number is frighteningly small, whereas
        it is necessary for the Malaysian education system
        to put more emphasis on mathematics and science to
        prepare adequate manpower for the industrialized,
        scientific and hi-tech society of 2020.

==>   Many Malay students, notwithstanding those who go
        overseas to pursue science-related courses are
        generally reluctant to specialize in economics,
        accountancy, mathematics, engineering and science-
        oriented subjects, either because of fearing stiff
        competition from the Chinese students or favouring
        less quantitative courses in which the chances of
        passing are relatively easier.

==>   There has been a high failure rate of Malay pupils
        in mathematics in the schools.

==>   The number of Malay students in S & T courses has
        always been much less than their Chinese
        counterparts.

==>   The ratio of Malays to Chinese professionals is in

the region of 1 : 3.

==> Some Malay parents, realizing the quality of Chinese schools, have sent their children to study in Chinese schools to acquire better quantitative ability and Chinese language. The number, though, is very insignificant.

==> In some privately owned religious schools in the rural areas, science is not taught at all and the teaching of mathematics, if available at all, is poorly handled. This has resulted in several thousand Malay pupils from the rural communities being deprived, every year, of a very important thinking tool and skill.

Some probable causes:

==> Rural and agrarian-based cultures as compared to commercial-oriented cultures depend less on quantitative skills and abilities. Therefore Malay families do not generally provide the necessary ambience for creating lasting interest in mathematics or science. The environment seems to be more favourable for arts orientation.

==> Science is taught in the national schools from a naturalistic or non-religious perspective.

==> The necessity of science and mathematics for understanding God's laws in the universe is not very widely appreciated in the traditional and conservative religious community. The Qur'anic

exhortations to scientific investigations in the universe are not widely taught or disseminated.

==> The spread of Islam to the Malay Archipelago exposed the Muslim Malays mainly to basic Tawhid (knowledge of Islamic creed), basic Fiqh (Islamic law) and Tasawwuf (Islamic Mysticism).

==> Science is usually not regarded as part of the knowledge of Islamic religion in Malay religious outlook.

2.10 SHORT-TERM GAIN PROPENSITY

Some symptoms:

==> The well-known practice of "Ali-Baba" or "Ali-Samy" in which the Non-Bumiputera buys Bumiputera licences, privileges or names to do business with the public sector while the Bumiputera becomes a mere sleeping partner. The government has been encouraging more active partnerships of the Malay Bumiputera so that there is a real transfer of skills and technology. The Third Bumiputera Economy Congress in 1992 called for Non-Bumiputera enterprises to accommodate Malay partners in the efforts to create the Bumiputera Commercial and Industrial Community which is more competitive, resilient and self-reliant.

==> Several government sponsored statutory bodies and Malay-owned privatised agencies which were meant to

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help Malays venture into business have had to close down in the last few decades due to bankruptcies or corruption or mismanagement at the hands of incompetent but greedy top Malay officials.

==> Squandering of company assets or wealth due to lack of _amanah_.

==> Thousands of common people in the Malay community have been influenced to share the collective mania to invest in "Get-Rich-Quick" schemes only to be cheated by the fly-by-night operators such as in the notorious Pak Man Telo case, two years ago.

==> The Kuala Lumpur Stock Market has opened up new opportunities for wealth creation and many greedy Bumiputera speculators are devising ways and means of getting rich quickly through feverish speculation and investment. Many have had their fingers burnt in the new collective frenzy.

Some probable causes:

==> Greed and selfishness.

==> The attitude of avoiding the necessity of acquiring professional competence and experience through the hard way.

==> Lack of knowledge, skills and ethics to handle business enterprises, yet desiring to attain status symbols of apparent economic success such as expensive bungalows, BMWs or a fleet of Mercedez Benzs.

==> Business as a means of "leap-frogging" into political prominence.

==> Desire to show off newly-found wealth, power or influence.

2.11 LOW REGARD FOR THE VALUE OF TIME SYNDROME

Some symptoms:

==> Spending too much time talking, smoking or sipping tea on the job or in coffee shops, club houses or office cafeterias.

==> Coming in late to work but wanting to leave early.

==> Little value or concern for punctuality as a way of life, thus people are expected to come late to social functions and guests do not feel the sense of urgency to arrive early.

==> The loitering and loafing habits of adolescents at urban shopping complexes.

==> Addiction to T.V. or video viewing for long stretches of time.

Some probable causes:

==> Lack of discipline in the home or in the school.

==> Efficient time management is not strongly emphasized in Malay culture.

==> Extension of rural and agrarian culture in which work and leisure are often blended together and

people are encouraged to go about their work in an unhurried manner.

2.12 **EXCESSIVE OTHER-WORLDLY ORIENTATION**

Some symptoms:

==> The attitude among some religiously-inclined Malays that there is no religious virtue in trying to raise one's living standards or acquire more wealth for individual and community's betterment.

==> The belief among the masses that salvation in the Hereafter depends primarily on practices of purely devotional nature such as preoccupation with verbal dhikr (remembering God) to the extent that worldly responsibilities and activities assume very little significance. In this perception Ꜥamāl (work or action) is narrowly defined as purely spiritual devotion.

==> Poverty and deprivation are accepted as God-given conditions.

==> Not inclined to think of finding ways and means to improve the living conditions of the community.

==> Obsession with personal piety and mystical knowledge resulting in little concern for the quality of physical wellbeing, environmental degradation, economic and political conditions of the ummah.

Some probable causes:

==>   No proper understanding of the spirit of Qur'anic equilibrium between spiritual humility, simplicity and modesty and the imperative for Believers in God to be strong, clean, healthy, to lead others in all fields of useful knowledge, to manage resources efficiently, to explore the bounties in nature and to maintain human dignity and manliness.

==>   Lack of role models to emulate the balance and harmony between individual spiritual purification and collective wellbeing.

==>   Lack of exposure, either in the home or in the school, to the holistic Islamic perspective of ^cibādah, khilāfah, tazkiyah, ^camāl sālih, al-khairāt, hayāt tayyibah, ^cimarah al-kaun and quwwah.

2.13 SUPERSTITIOUS MENTALITY

Some symptoms:

==>   The residual influence of pre-Islamic worldview existing in the minds of some Malays, particularly in the rural areas, that major mishaps, tragedies or serious diseases may be due to the power of malevolent spirits and therefore the solution lies in appeasing those spirits through sacrificial offerings, such as white buffaloes or white cocks. This worldview undermines the role of reason and

Some probable causes:

==> No knowledge or appreciation of Islamic interpersonal _adab_ (etiquettes) and _akhlāq_ (morality).

==> A culture or tradition or environment which suppresses dissent or disagreement with high authorities.

==> Influence of political party culture. of "I am always right and my opponents are always wrong".

==> Fear of reprisals and consequences for coming out openly with criticisms.

==> Authoritarian leadership style which makes people afraid to speak the truth or voice discontentment.

==> The government-owned mass-media rarely give adequate coverage of the views of opposition parties.

==> Sheer devilish inclinations in the hearts of men.

2.15 **DEVIATIONIST CULT SYNDROME**

Some symptoms:

==> Research by the Islamic Centre in Kuala Lumpur has indicated that there have been more than a dozen major deviationist religious cults among Muslims in different states of Malaysia over the last two decades. Various alarming claims were made by the leaders of these cults, including that of being the

reincarnation of Abu Bakr (<u>radiyallahu</u> ^canhu), the unnecessity of praying five times a day, the advent of the Tamimi youth to herald the emergence of the <u>Mahdi</u> (the rightly guided one) or the temporary occultation of supposedly saintly figures in the Malay community. Some of the early members and supporters of these deviationist elements have, fortunately, left and denounced the leaders.

==> Leaders of these cults are believed by their followers to be endowed with certain supernatural powers and are therefore highly venerated. Followers have been psychologically programmed to be absolutely loyal to the charismatic leader of the cult. The relationship with the family is very strained.

==> Followers of deviationist cults are made to believe that their group enjoys God's protection because they apparently are the only group that is sincerely following the <u>sunnah</u> of the Prophet and sincerely working to spread the religion of Islam.

Some probable causes:

==> Some men and women, disillusioned by this overly materialistic society, are looking for an effective religious panacea and a seemingly straight-forward and fastest way to wash away the sins and enter Paradise.

==> Many people believe that Doomsday is just around

the corner.

==> Some people need to fill their own spiritual void and attain inner peace by entering a manifestly different social group to undergo the purification process away from the maddening crowd and the corrupt external world.

==> The hope in Messianic movements to bring truth, justice and peace in this corrupt and degenerated world is engendered by the widespread belief among Muslims in the emergence of the Mahdi. The masses and the elites are, however, completely ignorant of the blood-stained history of many false Mahdis in the Muslim world who misguided the innocent and gullible people for their own selfish and twisted visions. The Muslim masses or elites are therefore not in a position to distinguish the thin line which divides the false from the true, particularly when mysterious teachings are presented in traditional religious terms and familiar symbolism. The cult practices are, at the same time, mixed with acceptable religious forms and commendable economic initiatives and programmes.

==> Misguided vision of spiritual leadership of the Muslim ummah in the light of the existing Javanese mythology of the awaited Ratu Adil (Prince of Justice) to come at the end of time to restore justice.

3.   **CONCLUSION**

The comprehensive socio-cultural transformation expected of the Malay community has to involve the energies and commitment of all institutions in Malaysia -- the family (as the most important institution), the school, the technological institute, the university, the communication media, the civil service, the chamber of commerce, the corporation, the small and medium industry, the NGO, the mosque, the political party and the royalty. The Malay community of the year 2020 has to be characterized by the quality of excellence in imān (religious conviction), ᶜilm (knowledge), ᶜamāl (work, action) and akhlāq (morality) if it is to play a leading role.

It is in dire need of excellent leaders who combine moral-spiritual integrity and deep religious convictions with worldly wisdom, good intercultural communication skills, profound understanding of global forces and the uncanny ability to consolidate the various human resources within the community. The tendency to be morally corrupt and to corrupt others in a materially-oriented environment has to be reckoned with and those aspiring to be the leaders of the future have to make sure that they possess the inner qualities to withstand and subdue the temptations of power, wealth and sensate pleasure.

The present day political leaders of the Malay community, looking into the grave social problems and serious educational handicaps of their own people, have ample justifications to be truly concerned about the capacity of their community, particularly the younger generation which is going to be the leaders of tomorrow, to reach the goals of overall progress within the stipulated time frame. They have therefore formulated plans and strategies to actualize the envisioned educational, spiritual, psychological and sociological transformation.

The Malay branch of the world Muslim ummah, therefore, has gigantic hurdles to overcome because, on home ground, it faces stiffer competition from the encroaching non-Muslim world as well as the vigorous Chinese community, while on the international front it has to contend more and more with regional and global forces of increasing strength and capability to dominate small countries. Notwithstanding some of the noteworthy achievements of the Malays over the last two decades, the Malay community will be forced to "leap frog", so to speak, in order to keep abreast with the achievements, productivity, creativity and innovativeness of the "big" as well as "the little dragons" of Asia.

It is not impossible for the new Malay generation to fulfil the above agenda of qualitative changes and civilizational transformation, provided it adheres to the

God-given formula of integration -- that of material wellbeing with spiritual values, action with inward reflection, human sciences with revealed knowledge, politics with divine guidance, science and technology with accountability to God, and professional skills with moral-spiritual virtues. It has to be deeply ingrained in the minds of the present and future generations that it is a divine imperative for the Mu'minūn (Believers) to attain al-ᶜizzah (honour and dignity), overall strength (al-quwwah) and leadership status. Wa'Llahu aᶜlam.