

No. Kelas: 74 Hg

No Perolchan: T 022T

Tarikh: 12/74

CLASS INFLUENCE ON POLITICAL ATTITUDES  
-CURRENT POLITICAL ATTITUDES HELD BY  
MALAY HOUSEHOLD HEADS OF HIGHER AND LOWER CLASSES  
OF SECTION 16 AND 17, PETALING JAYA, SELANGOR.

AN ACADEMIC EXERCISE  
FOR PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ANTHROPOLOGY & SOCIOLOGY

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KUALA LUMPUR  
OCTOBER 1974

PERPUSTAKAAN  
JABATAN ANTROPOLOGI DAN SOSIOLOGI

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I would like to thank Mrs. Lee Ai Yun for her guidance and advice throughout the preparation of this academic exercise, the respondents from Section 16 and 17, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, for their cooperation and last but not least, all my friends who had given assistance during the fieldwork.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### A) OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY - IMPLICATION AND IMPORTANCE

Much discussion and research had been done on the subject of social class, mainly as a result of the assumption that the individual's position in society bears a significant influence on his attitudes, values and behaviour. Previous studies have shown that social class level is related to political attitudes and voting behaviour of individuals in society.

Class membership provides potential bases not just for differences in behaviour but also for group consciousness and collective action. Marx made it clear that common experience and interests lead almost inevitably to class consciousness and political action, "The course of history therefore is shaped by the conflict of classes in the struggle for power." Like others before him, James Madison singled out class interest as the main basis of political conflict.

Thus it is almost clear that political differences do in some respect follow class lines. Workers are usually more likely to be liberal or radical in their views on economic-political issues, middle or upper classes people tend to be more conservative.

In "The Web of Government", Robert M. MacIver says, "The right is always the party sector associated with the interests of the upper or dominant classes, the left the sector expressive of the lower economic or social classes, and the centre that of the middle classes.....



Historically this criterion seems acceptable. The conservative right has defended entrenched prerogatives, privileges, and power; the left has attacked them. The right has been more favourable to the aristocratic position, to the hierarchy of birth or of wealth; the left has fought for the equalization of advantage or of opportunity for the claims of the less advantaged. Defence and attack have met, under democratic conditions, not in the name of class but in the name of principle; but the opposing principles have broadly corresponded to the interests of the different classes."

In the United States, socio-economic status has been shown to be the main factor influencing political attitudes and voting behaviour. In every election since 1936, it was noted that the proportion voting Democratic increases sharply as one moves down the occupational or income ladder. In contrast only about 6% of the heads of corporations employing more than 10,000 workers are Democrats. (1) Urban industrial, lower-income groups are the strong supporters of the Democratic Party. Studies have yet to be made on political attitudes and voting behaviour of our Malaysian communities - with social class and other socio-economic factors as the principal determinants.

In more developed societies, investigations have shown a relationship between higher class position and interest and participation in politics. This correlation can be attributed to the individual's higher education, confidence, stake in politics, exposure

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(1) Seymour Martin Lipset, "Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics" as in John Biesanz and Mavis Biesanz, "Introduction to Sociology" (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1969), p.213.



to political stimuli and relations with politically relevant individuals in middle or upper classes.

It is conventionally expected that greater anti-establishment reaction are found among lower-ranked groups; while those in the higher occupational groups tend to work within the desire to be part of the system.

In general, those who adopt the higher-class life-style are more concerned about social prestige and style than the lower-ranked groups. There is also the tendency by the higher-ranked group to support the dominant political system and take part in it, rather than advocate its destruction.

This is made possible by the fact that an individual's behaviour and attitudes occur in the inter-personal context - in a group. The behaviour is influenced by factors he brings with him to the group (his motives, attitudes and perceptions) and his group experiences in return further help determine the individual's attitudes, perceptions and personality.

Social class and other bases of social stratification tend to lead to distinct sub-cultures with different patterns of expectations, attitudes and behaviour.

Family socialization does play a vital role in political attitude formation. The child often learns about his country's current political affairs from his parents. Some children rebel against their parents' political attitudes but the great majority do not, especially in the important political aspects.

It is obvious that very little we learn from small does not affect our political attitudes and behaviour, for political attitudes are not something separate. The child is developing political attitude when he learns who and what make up the 'poor'



and the 'slum'. Thus the whole spectrum of values related to class, degree of ability to trust other people, degree of personal freedom permitted or obedience required, degree of willingness to plan beforehand and such will develop through socialization and this will undoubtedly shape political thinking and perception. Thus social class acts as a differential factor in political socialization.

In a study on turn-out in an America presidential election, it was shown that the level of political apathy was highest among the poor Americans who were subject to discrimination even though these were the people who would benefit most from making use of democratic political institution. Only 12% of those at the lowest income level fell into one of the 'active' categories while 69% were from the higher income level.

Education does play a vital role in such a situation whereby those with college education were five times more active politically than those with only elementary education. All this will fall back to the question of which class these people came from, for the highly educated were normally those who came from higher class family who could afford to pay for their children's higher educational expenses, vice versa.

It is after a careful study of the implication and importance of the subject that the writer choose to make a research study on social class influence on political attitudes of a community in Malaysia.



## B) THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The research study on class influence on political attitude concerns three main areas: (i) The Problem (ii) The Procedure and (iii) The Analysis of Data.

### (i) The Problem

The first step in carrying out a research study is that of isolating the problem, that is to find out what problem is to be investigated. The writer had specifically chosen the subject of class and political attitudes to be incorporated in the subject-title "Class Influence on Political Attitudes - Current Political Attitudes held by Malay Household heads of higher and lower Class of Section 16 and 17, Petaling Jaya, Selangor."

Next the researcher has to investigate what are the variables involved in the study. As the subject-title indicates, the variables involved in this study are 'social class' and 'political attitudes', social class being the independent variable while political attitudes make up the dependent variable.

For the purpose of this study, the writer has proceeded with relating this problem to a theoretical framework. Concepts and theories of class are being discussed, theories and ideas on class by prominent sociologists like Karl Marx, Max Weber, Reinhard Bendix and Martin Seymour Lipset are being given specially precise analysis and comparison.

The research later delve into the domain of psychology and the writer attempts to bring to light the nature and formation of attitudes to relate to the topic which concerns political attitudes. Hence, precise psychological description of the nature



and the formation of attitude is being made based mainly on the work of Krech, Ballachey and Crutchfield as brought forth in the book, "Individual in Society".

It is important to bear in mind what type of research study is being carried out. As the subject of class influence on political attitudes is very new and no known research has been made on the Malay community in Malaysia, the writer has is contented with just an exploratory study on this subject as a research study.

(ii) The procedure

The procedure is the way how the research will be carried out. In a research design (blue-print for conducting the research), several things are involved.

Firstly the researcher sees how the variables are to be measured and how validity and reliability will be checked. The writer has considered the most effective method of measurement is by using majority respondents' views. The proceeding step is to choose the sample which will be used in the project and determine the population it represents. Finally, the writer decides on the research technique to be used. Here the 'survey research' technique is chosen for it is one of the most reliable and practicable methods available for use in any sociological-scientific study. Through the survey, the researcher can obtain data from a large number of people about their attitudes, opinions, values and behaviour. The 'questionnaire' is used because it is relatively easy to get a large sample since it can be easily be distributed and can be answered by many people at one time. Its disadvantage is that the researcher



has no way of knowing whether the respondents have interpreted correctly or whether they deliberately give a false answer to suit themselves. However, careful preparation of the questionnaire has eliminated some of these snags and results with a more valid data.

### (iii) The Analysis Of Data

Before a data can be analysed, it has to be presented in some way. This may be done by charts, tables, graphs, statistical tests, briefs, essays or other means, depending on the data obtained. For this research study, the writer mainly gives analysis by using tables and essays of explanation.

As the data is analysed, the researcher has to observe that a) Was the size of the sample adequate? b) How well are the intervening variables controlled? c) How accurately has the data been observed, recorded and tabulated? and d) Will the hypothesis be rejected or not?

Lastly, the main aim of a research is to make generalisations about a population or community. A generalization is a statement about some meaningful relationships between variables under study, this is based on the data obtained in the research study. Here the writer will generalize from the data-analysis about the relationship of class and political attitudes in a selected community.

Therefore, one can say that the project involves:

- a) What is the hypothesis that will be tested in the research study
- b) What are the variables involved in the study (independent, dependent)
- c) How these variables will be measured
- d) What sample is used and what population or universe it represents



- e) What research technique is used
- f) How is the data to be presented
- g) What are the results of testing the hypothesis and
- h) What generalizations can one make on the basis of the research study.

### C) RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method employed for this project is the survey research. Survey research has been widely used in political science studies over the last two decades. This involves collecting information about a large number of people by interviewing only a limited number of people representing the large group. Hence, by collecting information from a sample of the community, one is able to make generalizations about the whole community.

The first move taken when planning a survey is to decide what is to be studied. Here, the writer is measuring the political attitudes of respondents from different classes towards the country's political affairs. Thus by the survey research, the writer is able to study the influence of social classes on political attitudes of respondents made up of the higher and lower classes Malay community of Section 16 and 17, Petaling Jaya.

The time factor must also be put under consideration. The longer the time space over which the survey is conducted, the greater is the chance of its unreliability, due to the frequent population and attitude change. So, when conducting the survey research, it has been allotted a time limit of one and a half months for an effective result.

Thus, when conducting a survey research, the planning stage involves defining the scope of the research, the hypothesis



to be tested and the exact nature of the population to be studied.

#### Sampling technique

For the sample to produce statically reliable data, the kinds of people in the sample must show a representative and unbiased picture of the whole community to be studied.

While the survey is conducted, the writer has the opportunity of applying the 'Simple random sampling' technique. A list of house-numbers are compiled, out of this the sample household heads are chosen by chance, for instance, two Malay household heads are requested to answer the survey questionnaires from every floor of the Flats at Section 17, Petaling Jaya, to represent the lower class population of the area. Similarly, two Malay household heads are selected by random sampling from each road at the Section 16 upper class area, this is to ensure that the sample would form a representative group for the community under study.

#### Questionnaire Construction

The questionnaire used in this research study is based on the questionnaire prepared by the Anthropology and Sociology Department, University of Malaya, to study the attitudes of people towards current affairs.

Contents of questions in the questionnaire vary and also their form and structure. The two basic types of questions that can be asked are the 'open-ended' and the 'structured' questions. In an open-ended question, the respondent is asked a question and allowed to answer freely about the subject. There is no set answer in an open-ended question. The advantage of such question is that it enables the researcher to determine the depth and intensity of the respondent's feelings and to state more accurately what motivated people to act the way they



do. The disadvantage of the open-ended question is the problem of coding the information for the answers may be extremely varied, drawing up a code can involve a complicated process, improper interpretation and such coding of the responses may bias the results. On the other hand, a structured question allows the respondents a choice from fixed answers which have been pre-determined by the researcher.

The order of the questions can be affect answers and smoothness of the interview. The sequence should be logical and questions should be arranged so as to prevent an answer of a question influencing the other. Personal and fact questions should best be placed at the end of the questionnaire for after answering the preceding questions some rapport may be established between the researcher and the respondent. However, it is to the researcher's advantage if the reverse order is applied when interviewing a political figure, for one may establish more rapport by asking a few personal questions before proceeding with controversial political issues.

#### Presenting the data

The last step in conducting a survey research is to record, interpret and to present the data. Normally, the data is presented in a tabular form and explanation given later in the body of the text.

#### Problems encountered in the survey

While the research survey is conducted, the writer faces two main problems. Firstly, it concerns the problem of apathy of some of the residents in the area under study. When requested to answer the questionnaires, they seem to be cooperative in



promising that they will try their best to answer but when the time comes for the questionnaires to be collected, 50% of them fail to return the questionnaires completed. Therefore the researcher faces the problem of finding other respondents from the same area to cooperate with the project.

Secondly, the researcher has no way of knowing whether the respondents correctly interpret the questions in the questionnaire and there is no trace if the respondents deliberately give false answers to suit themselves.

#### D) THE AREA OF STUDY

The area of study is the low-cost flats developed by the 'Perbadanan Kemajuan Negeri Selangor (Selangor State Development Corporation) located at Section 17, Petaling Jaya and the upper class housing area at Section 16, Petaling Jaya. The area as a whole is about a mile from the University of Malaya campus.



MAP OF SECTION 16 AND 17, PETALING JAYA, SELANGOR  
- AN EXTRACT FROM MAP OF PETALING JAYA, COMPILED  
BY THE PETALING JAYA TOWN BOARD, 1971.



## CHAPTER 2

### SOME RELEVANT CONCEPTS AND THEORIES RELATED TO THE STUDY

#### A) CONCEPT AND THEORY OF CLASS

The class concept has been widely used and with various shades of meaning. It can never be precisely termed but it is an indispensable one. The basis of the use of the concept is mainly economic.

Gideon Sjoberg focused his study of class upon pre-industrial societies. According to him, in such societies, a social class is "A large body of persons who occupy a position in a social hierarchy by reason of their manifesting similarly valued criteria."<sup>(2)</sup> These classes are viewed as the discrete aggregates of population, mutually exclusive, of which one is patently either a 'member' or not. Pre-industrial societies usually have three such divisions, an upper class, a lower class and an out-caste category. Sjoberg showed the class system proper to comprise of the upper and lower classes, with the out-castes separated from the system by what appears to be a moral cleavage. Upper and lower classes may be distinguished on the basis of kinship, achievements, material possession, moral attributes, personal attributes and influence.

"Because upper-class persons usually have more opportunity for personal contact with one another (partly because less of their time is required for providing themselves with the necessities of life, partly because most of their activities require social interaction) and because they constitute the only formally

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(2) Gideon Sjoberg, "The Pre-industrial City : Past and Present", (Glencoe, The Free Press, 1960), p.109.



educated persons in pre-industrial society, their beliefs, values, customs and even speech are likely to be more uniform than they are among lower classes." (3)

For Marx, the important feature of social classes was their economic self-interest. He viewed all history as the story of the struggle for subsistence and material goods. The revolution in methods of production of material goods produced two means of securing subsistence.

- (a) owning the machines and factories and asking payment for ownership in the form of profits on goods sold, and
- (b) operating the machines, working in the factories and asking payment for labour in the form of wages from the owners.

According to Marx, the conflict between these two classes, capitalists and workers, was inevitable for both had to obtain their subsistence from the profits earned. Marx believed that the capitalists had a definite upper hand as long as they could determine the price of goods produced and thus fixed the workers' wages. He envisioned the day would come when the competitive labour market and the greed of the capitalists would result in a revolution of the workers. In this revolution, political control would be in the hands of the workers and they could divide the profits among themselves. Ultimately, there would be the withering away of the need for political government and the remaining worker-owner class in real sense would constitute no class at all.

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(3) Thomas E. Laswell, "Class and Stratum", (Florida, Mifflin Co., 1965), p.35



Marx's Nineteenth Century classes were real and discrete. The members of classes not only could be identified by objective characteristics but they also were quite aware of their class affiliations in the later days of the pre-conflict struggle.

Marx sees political power as a means of achieving privileges of ownership, economic exploitation of others, or material benefits.

For Marx, the organization of production provides the necessary but not a sufficient basis for the existence of social classes. Repeated conflicts over economic rewards, ready communication of ideas between members of a class, the growth of class-consciousness and the growing dissatisfaction as a result of exploitation are all conditions that will encourage the formation of a class-conscious political organization. Thus Marx laid down several conditions necessary for the development of a social class : conflict over economic rewards, physical concentration of masses of people and easy communication among them, the development of solidarity and political organization.

In addition to the conditions laid above, Marx put great stress on the human consequences of machine production under capitalism. The social relations which capitalist industry imposed deprived the workers of the chance to obtain psychological satisfaction from their work. This complete want of satisfaction Marx termed 'the alienation of human labour'. This he attributed to the division of labour in modern industry, which turned human beings unto the appendages of the machine.

Hence Marx did not simply identify a social class who with the fact that a large group of people occupied the same objective position in the economic structure of a society. Instead he



stressed on the significance of subjective awareness as a pre-condition of organizing successfully for the economic and political struggle. In this view, subjective awareness of class interests is an indispensable element in the development of a social class, this awareness would arise along with the contradictions existing in capitalism.

"Classes," says Max Weber, "are groups of people who, from the standpoint of specific interests, have the same position in the economic system."<sup>(4)</sup> The implication of the combination of the terms 'position' and 'interest' is that the "positions are to be regarded as the same forces and influenced in a similar way by the same circumstances - if they have, in Weber's phraseology, the same life chances within the economic system. A class system is a social structure in which stratification is dominated by this principle."<sup>(5)</sup> To Weber, class means any group of persons in a common class situation. Weber denied the 'community' of social classes. For Weber, a class is a category of population with similar 'life chances'. By 'life chances', Weber meant opportunities for acquiring or maintaining a characteristic range of material goods and property, achievement of a level of living, and life experiences. For him, a class might include a strange line up of sons of an industrialist, a mine-worker or a banker, provided each has the economic potential of attaining a specified range of wealth and experiences.

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(4) H.H.Gerth and C.Wright Mills, "From Max Weber, Essays in Sociology", (New York, Oxford University Press Inc., 1958), p.405

(5) T.H.Marshall, "Social Stratification: Caste, Estate and Class", in Eric A.Woridlinger, "Elitics and Society", (New Jersey, Prentice Hall Inc., 1970)



The use of the term 'social class' in contemporary empirical works (where it is constantly used as a distinct concept) tends to assume a population - as opposed to an abstract category - with common cultural characteristics, a range of prestige and power in the community and some kind of potential for close association and intermarriage. (6)

Studies carried out recently in several regions of the United States of America showed that social class is a major determinant of individual decisions and social actions, and every major area of individual's life is either directly or indirectly influenced by the class order and how the crucial decisions of most individuals are partly controlled by it.

To know how this basic factor in our way of life affects us and our society, it is necessary for us to have an explicit understanding of what class is and how it works and what it does to the lives of individuals in society.

The recognition of social class in this country comes as no surprise to sociology students. Previous research and studies on the social life of the tribes and civilization of the world clearly show that there is always the presence of some form of rank in most societies.

What are then the basic characteristics of social class in developed and developing societies? Economic factors are important in determining the class position of individuals and families, thus influencing the kind of attitudes and behaviour found in any class. However important, economic factors are not enough for placing a particular family or individual in any

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(6) Thomas E. Laswell, "Social Class and Stratum", (Houghton Mifflin Co., Florida, 1965), p. 15.



particular class and to explain completely the phenomena of social class. Something more than large incomes is necessary for placing an individual in a high/low social position. Economic means must be converted into socially approved behaviour and later into intimate participation with and acceptance by members of that class.

To belong to a particular class means that an individual or a family has to obtain acceptance as an equal by the members of that class.

The principle forms of class mobility in this country are through the economic means, education, occupation, talent, skill, philanthropy and marriage. Even though economic mobility is still significant, it is obvious that more people climb to higher classes through education than by other means.

## B) ATTITUDES - THE NATURE AND FORMATION

### i) THE NATURE OF ATTITUDES

The actions and behaviour of an individual to a large extent are governed by his attitudes.

"An attitude can be defined as an enduring system of three components centering about a single object; the beliefs about the object - the cognitive component; the affect connected with the object - the feeling component; and the disposition to take action with respect to the object - the action tendency component."<sup>(7)</sup>

An individual's particular beliefs, feelings and response tendencies is always present and is always ready when he is confronted by the appropriate object.

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(7) Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey, "Individual in Society", (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co.Inc., 1962), p.147.



We find that a man in his everyday life is repeatedly forced to cope with the same object, the same cognitions, feelings and response dispositions become organized into an enduring and unified system.

As an individual forms more and more attitudes, his improvisations and fresh examinations and interpretations towards this object decrease and thus his actions become stereotyped, predictable and consistent, hence enabling the individual's social life. "For where there are no enduring beliefs, evaluations and action tendencies which can be shared by a company of men, social life as we know would be impossible."<sup>(8)</sup> An understanding of attitudes is one of the significant problems of social psychology.

We can see that the social actions and behaviour of an individual reflect his attitudes which compose of the enduring systems of positive or negative evaluations, emotional feelings and pro or con action tendencies with regard to social objects.

The feelings, cognitions and action tendencies become organised into enduring systems called attitudes as the individual develops. An individual's cognition about an object are influenced by his feelings and action tendencies towards the object. Therefore, a change in his cognition about the object will tend to bring changes in his feelings and action tendencies towards it.

The object of an attitude may be anything that exists for the individual. Hence an individual has a wide array of attitudes towards objects in his everyday life.

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(8) Ibid., p.137.



The cognitive component of an attitude is made up of the beliefs of the individual about the object. The most significant cognitions in the attitude system are the evaluation beliefs which consist of the attribution of desirable or undesirable, favourable or unfavourable, good or bad qualities to the object. The cognitive component does include the beliefs of the individual about appropriate and inappropriate ways of responding to the object. Hence, the cognitive and action tendency components may be closely linked.

The feeling component of an attitude can be taken as emotions connected with the object. The individual feels the object either to be pleasing or displeasing, liked or disliked.

The action tendency component of an attitude consists of all the behavioral readiness connected with the attitude. If an individual holds a positive attitude towards a given object, he will act accordingly to help, reward or support the object, if he holds a negative attitude, he will harm, punish or destroy the object.

Now let us delve further into the characteristics of the components of attitudes. First of all, each of the three components of an attitude may vary in valence and in degree of multiplexity.

By valence we mean that an attitude may either be described as favourable or unfavourable. Therefore, it is often necessary to derive a quantitative measure of valence, that is to specify the degree of favourability or unfavourability.

Valence may be applied to each of the three components of an attitude system. The cognitive component of an individual's attitude may be greatly favourable - he may think of the object as extremely good. The cognitive component may also be very unfavourable - he may take the object as an evil. The feeling component can also vary from unconditional love to unconditional hate. The action



tendency component can vary from tendencies to help and support or protect the object in the most possible ways to extreme tendencies to attack or destroy the object.

Different methods for securing quantitative measures of valence have been found. The objective of these measurement methods is to place individuals on a linear continuum which starts from extreme unfavourableness to extreme favourableness.

The second characteristic of the attitude component is the multiplexity of it. Each of the components of an attitude may vary with regard to the degree of multiplexity. By this we mean the variety of elements or parts making up a component. The cognitive component may vary from the least knowledge about an object necessary to recognise it from other objects to an exhaustive set of beliefs about the object.

The feeling component of an attitude can vary from the extreme undifferentiated positive or negative affectivity about the object to a highly multiplex set of emotions about it.

The action tendency connected with an attitude may vary in degree of multiplexity from a single arrangement to attack and tackle the object (or to help it) to a highly elaborated arrangement towards the object.

We carry on further to view at the methods and problems in the measurement of attitudes. One of the most popularly used methods is called the 'attitude scale', consisting of a set of statements or items through which the person shows his approval or disapproval. From his pattern of responses to the items, the social psychologist more or less can deduce something about his attitudes. There are five main scaling methods usable, the method



of equal -appearing intervals, the method of summated ratings, the social distance scales, the cumulative-scale method and the scale-discrimination technique.

The reliability of attitude scales can be tested by means of 'test-retest', the split-half or the equivalent-form method.

The validity of the scales may be estimated by comparing the attitudes of groups known to vary in their attitudes towards an object.

Other than those mentioned above, there are special techniques used by social psychologists to measure attitudes, namely the disguised techniques and the semantic differential. Among the disguised techniques, the more oftenly used are projective tests and error-choice technique. The evaluation factor in the semantic differential technique measures the valence of the belief and the feeling components.

The use of attitude scales is restricted to situations where persons being measured are available to the researcher and are motivated to cooperate. Unfortunately, few attitude studies using scales and special techniques have been based on representative sample of the whole population of the community or society. Hence, the development of 'survey' interview' technique for measuring the distribution of attitudes is the closest attainment of representative samples of the population thus overcoming the representative limitation. With this in mind, the writer of this research study has considered the use of 'survey interview' as the principal method in the research project.



## ii) THE FORMATION OF ATTITUDES

One significant factor in the formation of attitudes is want satisfaction. Not only do attitudes give meaning to the person's world, they help in his attempted attainment of various other goals. An attitude may serve a number of goals and different wants can produce the same enduring attitudes.

The attitudes of the individual are shaped by the information to which he is exposed. The person who has high goals that must be fulfilled by the development of appropriate attitudes will obtain his facts where he can. He is exposed to the various authorities for much of the cognitive content of his attitudes. Through purpose or ignorance, these authorities may sometimes be unreliable. Furthermore, an individual may also be disillusioned by superficial appearance and when he obtains facts all by himself, he may be at the danger of being deviated.

Hence, we can relate the incidence of delusions, prejudices and superstitions to the reliability of the authority which passes on the information (newspapers, books, broadcasts, telecasts and teachers), the past experiences one has undergone and the degree to which our goals are adequately fulfilled.

The group affiliations of the individual too help to determine the formation of his attitudes. An individual's group affiliations do play a significant role in the formation of his attitudes. In determining his attitudes, the membership groups a person affiliates and the non-membership groups to which he intends to belong to are equally as important.

However, the individual does not readily take in the existing attitudes in the groups which he associates himself.



with. His attitudes are formed through the selective process of goal satisfaction. He will choose from the prevailing attitudes those which can fulfill his goals. As a person associates with various groups, his congruent and incongruent attitudes will be confirmed. Hence, the part played by groups on the formation of attitudes is complex and indirect.

In a study by McClosky (1958) regarding personality make-up of the extreme political conservatism in America, it was found that conservatism is not the political doctrine of the intellectual elite. Contrarily, conservative political attitudes characterized the uninformed, the poorly educated and the unintelligent.

### C) WHAT IS POLITICS?

Whether he likes it or not, practically no one is completely beyond the reach of some kind of political system. An individual encounters politics in the process of government of a country, town, school, business concern, trade union, clubs and associations, political party and various other organizations. As Robert A. Dahl puts it, "Politics is one of the unavoidable facts of human existence. Everyone is involved in some fashion at some kind of political system."<sup>(9)</sup>

A leading political scientist, Harold Laswell, defines political science as "an empirical discipline, (as) the study of the shaping and sharing of power" and "a political act (as) one performed in power perspectives."<sup>(10)</sup>

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(9) Robert A. Dahl, "Modern Political Analysis", (New Delhi, Prentice-Hall of India (Pte) Ltd., 1965), p.1.

(10) Harold D. Laswell and Abraham Kaplan, "Power and Society", (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p.xiv.



Max Weber describes politics as "striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state."<sup>(11)</sup> Speaking among of international politics, Hans J. Morgenthau says, "like all politics, it is a struggle for power." Hence undoubtedly, the predominating description of politics in the academic arena today is that of "the struggle for power." Power is the factor easily distinguished in almost all political examples ever brought to light. Even Franz Neumann insisted that politics is empirically nothing more than a manipulation of power. D.W. Brogan views politics as "First of all and, perhaps, last of all, the study of the means whereby liberty and authority may be best combined, whereby the dignity of the free man is compatible with the highest forms of cooperation."<sup>(12)</sup>

Therefore we can say that a host of all these things - power, control, influence, authority are all connected with politics and these are either used for formulating policy, legislation or administration. Now comes the question of whether power is involved with politics, or are power, control, influence and authority make up the essence of politics. Even if they are only indispensable instruments of politics, they should not be mistaken for politics itself.

The definitions cited above indicate that politics is "a struggle for power". This definition of politics is too broad a term to be used for it can be applied to too many things that may not even be political. Strive for success in business is

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(11) Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation", a speech at Munich University, 1918; published in "From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology", translated and edited by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 78.

(12) Harold D. Laswell, "Politics: Who Gets What, When, How", (New York: McGraw, Whittlesey House, 1936), p. 1.



a struggle for power, labour-management conflicts too may be a form of struggle for power. In fact, it can be seen that in almost any sphere of human relations can be cited as a struggle for power. Are we justified in considering these struggles for power as political struggles?

It should not also be forgotten that power is not an end in itself, it is only a means of obtaining something else. Power for its own sake is useless. So, until power is used, it is only a potential force. Therefore if politics is a struggle for power, the struggle must be for real, not only potential. But real powers are always carried out for some other purpose beyond the exercise of power.

Now, let us come to as how the word 'politics' was first derived at. Its main source of derivation is from the Greek word 'polis' which means 'city'. It was in the social structure of the city that they achieved conditions favourable for the good life. 'Polis' for them was what the nation-state is for us now.

"It was a local territory, a group of inhabitants, a group of subordinate organizations, a complex entity operating under the direction of a systematized control administered by certain men. Those men, who devoted the greater part of their time to managing or planning or determining the affairs of the city as such were called politicians. The set of relationship established as a fixed order between those ruling and their subjects was referred to as the polity. The focal point of all political thoughts was the city-state."<sup>(13)</sup>

It cannot be denied that the most essential notion of politics is that they are human action. Thus politics is not something detached

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(13) Paul S.J. Weelfl, "Politics and Jurisprudence", (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1966), p.4.



and abstract

and abstract, but particular actions of particular individuals.

"In this primal sense there is no such thing as city politics or party politics or international politics apart from the political actions of certain individuals in cities, in parties, or in foreign governments. Nations and cities do not act; men do. Institutions, circumstances, organizations, and machines ought not to be praised or blamed for political conditions; but individuals acting singly or collectively can be held responsible."<sup>(14)</sup>

Therefore, if politics concerns human actions, they must be regarded constrained by all the limitations and obligations as found on all types of human action. "Politics must be considered responsible, moral, contingent, imperfect, and regulated."<sup>(15)</sup> Hence, it is not right to say that they are something instinctive, spontaneous or intuitive. In fact, as Woelfl puts it, they are deliberate, supposedly rational and ultimately purposeful. As they are the results of human actions and activities, they cannot be ruled out from being judged right or wrong or punished according to moral judgement.

But what actions in an individual's everyday life are considered to be political actions? Woelfl suggests, "In general political actions are assumed to be concerned with the societal organization commonly called the state." Many activities are closely related to the state but they are not considered as political in nature. To give an example, the service of a public administrator done in line with governmental policy is not listed in the usual conception of politics. Thus one can say that political action is not political just because it is directed to the well-being of the

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(14) Ibid., p.5.

(15) Ibid., p.6.



state. Here we have to be more specific in trying to distinguish which are actually political actions.

One might have come across the type of control a military personnel exercises on his men of the lower rank, the control of a teacher on his pupils and the submission by the soldiers and pupils to the military personnel and teacher can depict actual politics from other things that might be mistaken for it. These controls might not serve the good of the society as a whole, but only a segment of the society. They may serve the definite interest of the community (for example, education), but not the community as a community. Therefore they cannot be termed political actions because their purpose is not directly the common interest.

Referring to the kind of obedience submitted by the soldiers and pupils, the soldiers have to obey with unquestioning loyalty and the pupils must submit to the teacher's wants because they wish to remain soldiers and pupils for they cannot refuse to accept the orders unless they are prepared to be excluded from their places as soldiers and pupils.

On the other hand, the citizen of the state's relationship toward the government. There is no compulsion for him to submit to the government on the base of blind obedience. The citizen and the government enjoy a certain basic equality. They are free men in a society of free man. Such relationship exists on the basis of mutual consent and common agreement.

"It is the mutual cooperation of the rulers and the ruled which makes this society what it is. Therefore, their relationships are characterized by the essential features of freedom, equality, consent, and peace."<sup>(16)</sup>

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(16) Ibid., p.10.



Woolf here describes that political order

"Presupposes some degree of free acceptance on the part of the people of the laws, institutions, and actions of their officials. It also implies a relative state of contentment. A community whose members are enslaved - regimented and exploited for someone's else's advantage - is not a political society. To be political, the social order must be based on an interdependence between the governors and the governed; and a mutual benefit must accrue to both from their interactions."<sup>(17)</sup>

Hence, from the above, one can conclude that political actions in the correct sense of the word are connected with the maintenance of individual's liberty and peace in the government of a society of men committed to uphold freedom and equality.

The writer's objective where politics is concerned is to study the relationship between the ruling government and the lower and upper class urban Malay community of Section 16 and 17, Petaling Jaya. The project also attempts to study the attitudes of this community in the votes cast for particular parties and their attitudes towards the country's political situation by analysing their relations to the main variable, 'class'.

Table 1 - Data showing class and votes of respondents

Age (in years)	Male	Female
21 - 30	10	10
31 - 40	10	10
41 - 50	10	10
51 - 60	10	10

(17) Ibid., p.11.



ANALYSIS OF CLASS AND POLITICAL ATTITUDES

As the domain of political attitudes is very wide, to make the study feasible, the writer tries to limit the research on two main areas, the attitudes of the people towards the government and the voting behaviour. This chapter deals with class differences and whether it affects political attitudes and behaviour.

Firstly, the writer will discuss the major determinants of class level.

a) Occupation and Income as Class Determinants

A great majority of the lower class respondents are employed as technicians, safeguards, drivers and small-scale hawkers.

Table 1 - Data showing Class and Age of Respondents

<u>Age (in years)</u>	<u>Lower Class</u>	<u>Higher Class</u>
21 - 30	60%	10%
31 - 40	30	
41 - 50	10	60
51 - 60		30
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

Their over-all income grouping is between \$100 and \$500. On the other hand, the majority of the higher class respondents work as administra

Table 2 - Data showing Class and Income of respondents

<u>Age (in years):</u>	<u>Lower Class</u>	<u>Higher Class</u>
21 - 30	30%	10%
31 - 40	30	
41 - 50	10	
51 - 60	30	20
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>



Table 3 - Data showing Class and Occupation of respondents

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Lower Class</u>	<u>Higher Class</u>
Administrative officers (super-scale Grade)		50%
Executives		15
Armed Forces Personnel		10
Businessmen		15
Clerks	10	
Retired government officers		10
Technicians	20	
Small-scale hawkers	10	
Industrial workers	30	
Safeguards	15	
Drivers	15	
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

-tive officers (super-scale), executives, armed forces personnel; a few are involved in business concerns and the rest are retired administrative officers. They belong to the \$1000 - \$3000 income category.

b) Class and Attitude towards the government

In Malaysia, the Alliance party has won five successive national elections. In 1955 Legislative Council elections, the Alliance obtained 51 out of the 52 seats. In the 1959 general elections, it won 74½ out of the 104 contested Parliamentary seats (18) and 207 out of the 282 State Assembly seats. After the formation of Malaysia, in 1964 the Alliance once again managed to retain its control of the Government by winning 89 seats in Parliament and its representation in the State Assemblies had increased to 240 seats.

(18) Selvarajah s/o Nadarajah, "Current Racial and Political Attitudes Held by the 'Head of Household' Middle-class people in the Area, Section 17, Petaling Jaya, ( Anthropology and Sociology Department' University of Malaya, 1973), p.70.



In 1969, the Alliance won 66 out of 103 contested Parliamentary seats and it was immediately followed by the May 13th. racial and political strife in the country. In the last 1974 general elections, the Alliance had, for the fifth time, retained power with a comfortable majority in Parliament and the State Assemblies under the banner of the National Front (Coalition Government).

The Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, once said,

"Governmental authority flows from the will of the people. We are in Parliament only because we have won their trust and confidence : We are no more than their trustees." (19)

With this we proceed with the analysis and hope to see what the people think or have to say about the present government.

Political apathy is greatest among poor Americans in the United States. A study on turnout in an American Presidential elections has shown that the level of political apathy was greatest highest among the poor Americans. Only about 12% of those at the lowest income level fell into one of the active categories, while 69% were from the higher income level.

Selvaraj Nadarajah in his study of political and racial attitudes of middle class people of Section 17, Petaling Jaya, has this to say, "

"Generally speaking, however, 59% of my respondents think that Malaysians are politically conscious. The development of higher education, the general elections procedure, self interest of racial groups, the existence of many political parties the development of mass communication, racial politics, the May 13th. incident, and publicity given to politics were the major reasons put forward to explain why Malaysians are politically conscious." (20)

(19) Quoted from part of a speech Tun Razak made in moving the second reading of the Constitution Amendment Bill at Dewan Rakyat on 23rd. February, 1971.

(20) Selvaraj Nadarajah, op. cit., p. 69.



Table 4 - Data showing relationship between Class and interest in politics and government

	<u>Lower Class</u>	<u>Higher Class</u>
Do you keep up with matters concerning politics and the government?		
No	30%	25%
Yes	70	75
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

Regarding the relationship between the respondents and matters concerning politics and the government, a majority of 70% from the lower and 75% from the higher class category claim that they keep up with such matters. It is rather surprising to note that these Malaysians, who are noted for their passiveness in the country's political development are conscious and interested in matters concerning politics and government. It should be noted too that there is no marked difference in percentages of respondents from the two classes in their answers, showing clearly that class has played no part in determining their political interest. This too proves a point, that the Malay community is not apathetic towards matters concerning politics and the government.

Alan F. Westin in his book "Politics and government in the United States" writes about the American citizens,

"Commentators have suggested that many citizens feel ineffective in politics because they have concluded that it is impossible to dislodge entrenched machines and organization candidates. Some believe that the political structure is outdated and unable to cope with complex contemporary problems, in consequence many wonder whether there are political solutions for their great anxieties."<sup>(21)</sup>

(21) Alan F. Westin, et al., 'Politics and Government in the United States', (New York : Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1965), p.61.



With this, the respondents in the study are exposed to the question of what the chances are that the government can improve existing conditions in the country. Fifty percent from the lower class group and 90% of the higher class group are very positive that the present government is capable of improving existing conditions, 25% of the lower and 10% from the higher class are not that sure, while a small minority from the lower class think otherwise. They give

Table 5 - Data showing Class and Opinion whether Government Could Improve Existing conditions

	<u>Lower Class</u>	<u>Higher Class</u>
Most probably	50%	90%
Somewhat probably	25	10
Not at all	20	
No Answer	5	
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>Why?</u>		
a) Because government actions not effective	20%	
b) Because the majority of the influential	25	
only care for their own interest and corruption		
c) The pressure from the people and to	50	10
face the coming elections		
d) We are having an active government		25
e) Better leaders		40
f) Has always been their policy and has		25
attained good results so far		
g) There are many things to be done		10
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

reasons for doubt at the government's capability as, " Because the actions the government take are not effective," and " Because the



majority of the influential only care for their own interests and corruption." Those who are positive of improvements by the government reason out thus: "The pressure from the people and to face the coming elections, we are having an active government, better leaders, has always been their policy and has attained good results so far, and there are many things to be done." This portrays that the majority of respondents from both classes think positively of government's ability to change and improve existing conditions in the country.

Table 6 - Data showing relationship between Class and the Effect of Central and State Governments on their daily life

<u>Central Government</u>	<u>Lower Class</u>	<u>Higher Class</u>
Affects very much	30%	20%
Not affect much	45	40
Not affect at all		40
No answer	25	
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>State Government</u>		
Affects very much	30	10
Not affect much	60	40
Not affect at all	10	50
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

It is important to know if these respondents think the activities of the Central and State Governments in one way or the other affect their daily life activities. Seventy-five percent of the lower class and 60% of the higher class think that the Central Government either affects very much or does not affect much their daily life patterns. Where the State Government is concerned, 90% of the lower class and 50% from the higher class find that the State government does affect their daily activities.

What do these respondents think of the Coalition



Government, the latest political phenomena that occurred a few months before the last 1974 general elections. Of the Coalition Government, Selvaraj says,

"The greater majority of my respondents think that it is good to have Coalition governments. Eighty-eight of my Malay respondents together with 54% and 60% of my Chinese and Indian respondents respectively confirm this. The main reasons put forward in support of the present tendency of having coalition governments are that it unites the people and thereby development programmes can be carried out more smoothly.

Those who say coalition governments are bad give reasons such as 'betrayal to the people who voted them', 'helps to strengthen the Alliance party only', 'opposition made use of only' and 'reflects weakness of the political structure' in order to substantiate their claims."<sup>(22)</sup>

According to him, some even said that the Alliance formed the Coalition government so as to uplift the standard of living of the people through economic development in various states and some mentioned the reason was to get stronger footings in other states. Of the opposition parties agreeing to the formation of the Coalition Government, the respondents accused them thinking of their own benefits and others said, 'their chances of being voted will be enhanced if economic development is carried out in their respective states.'

From the writer's own respondents, 10% from the lower class respondents are against the Coalition Government and the majority 80% favour the formation of such governments, substantiating their support with, "Opinion the same as the Alliance party, government can carry out projects smoothly, politicians in the Coalition Government would not bring division amongst the people, good for the people, without it the opposition parties would not be able

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(22) Selvaraj Nadarajah, op. cit., pp. 94-95.



Table 7 - Data showing relationship between Class and Opinion on Coalition Government

Opinion:	Lower Class	Higher Class
a) Do not like the coalition government	10%	
b) Opinion the same as the Alliance party	15%	
c) Government can carry out projects smoothly	15%	
d) Politicians in the Coalition Government would not bring division amongst the people	20	
e) Good for the people	25	
f) Without it, the opposition parties would not be able to carry out reforms, the Central Government would get in its way	15	
g) Should be improved according to situation and time	10	10
h) It is good provided cooperation exists		25
i) Good for the country, racial harmony should override other considerations		25
j) It may work		25
k) It may be good for the country as a whole but not as a system		15
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

To carry out reforms, the Central Government would get in its way, and should be improved according to situation and time."

All the 100% of the higher class respondents give their solid support for the formation of the Coalition Government, substantiating it with: "It's good provided cooperation exists, good for the country - racial harmony should override other considerations, it may work, it may be good for the country as a whole but not as a system," and 10% of the respondents agree with the lower class's last suggestion of 'should be improved according to situation and time'.

Selvaraj summed up the attitudes of the people towards the Coalition Government: "Attitude towards the Coalition



Government held by the majority of my respondents is characteristic what of/one particular respondent said: 'For the present moment Coalition Government is good in view of the need to cut down politiking to carry out Second Malaysia Plan more effectively.'

Table 8 - Data showing Class and Opinion on the Alliance Party

<u>Vote for Alliance because:</u>	<u>Lower Class</u>	<u>Higher Class</u>
a) Established, old organisation	10%	
b) Malay Malays in it, does not harm my race, religion and Culture	10	
c) The rule can be taken pride of, only one dissatisfaction, self-interest of the higher class	10	
d) Party does not have racial characteristics, that's why formed the National Front.	10	
e) Theoretically, the indigenoud' future is said to be guranteed	10	
f) Sense of fairness	5	35
g) Prosperity of the country	5	
h) Their strength of purpose		35
i) The only government the country can hope for at present		30
<u>Vote Against because:</u>		
a) Because of the leadership before Tun Razak	10	
b) Because of other Alliance party compositions other than UMNO	10	
c) Self-interest of the rich who become more rich	10	
d) Policies and theories not implemented to the fall.	10	
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

As one of the objectâves of this study is to study the people's attitudes towards the government, it is only fair if the the respondents are approached with the question concerning their



views why they vote for or against the Alliance Party. About 40% of the lower class respondents admit that they voted against the ruling party, the reasons being: "Because of the leadership before Tun Razak, because of the Alliance composition other than the UMNQ self-interest of the rich who become more rich and the policies and theories not implemented to the full." The majority of the lower class respondents voted for the ruling party because they think it is 'An established- old organisation; many Malays in it therefore does not harm my race, religion and culture; the rule can be taken pride of, only one dissatisfaction, the self-interest of the higher class; party has no racial characteristics, that's why formed the National Front (Coalition Government); theoretically the indigenous' future is said to be guaranteed; and for prosperity of the country."

The higher unanimously admit their support for the Alliance, substantiating it with: "Because of their strength of purpose, they have a sense of fairness, and it is the only government the country can hope for at present."

It is interesting to note that even though some of the lower class respondents are dissatisfied with self-interest of the higher class in our present political system, they still show support for the Alliance.

Selvaraj too comes to a conclusion that despite the fact that the great majority of his respondents felt dissatisfied as to what the Alliance had done for them, they still thought that the Alliance was the only party that could do the best job in the Government. Thus he stated: " Eighty eight percent of my Malay respondents together with 86% and 80% of my Malay Chinese and Indian



respondents think that the Alliance is the political party that will do the best job in the government."<sup>(23)</sup>

### c) Voting behaviour

A study on political attitudes is not complete if the research omits the discussion on voting behaviour for it is an integral part in any conceptual framework on political attitudes.

"The outcome of an election may be viewed as the result of the interplay between a number of factors: the characteristics of candidates, the activities of the competing party organisations, the process of communications and influence involving the mass media and informal groups, and, finally, the social and psychological characteristics of individual voters. The role played by the social and psychological characteristics of individual voters have received the largest amount of attention in systematic research on voting behaviour."<sup>(24)</sup>

Studying the voting behaviour of individuals and society, one cannot escape from the three questions: How involved/apathetic, how and who does one vote.

In a study on turnout in an American Presidential elections, the level of political apathy was highest among the poorer Americans for only 12% of those at the lowest income-level could be categorised in one of the active categories while 69% were from the higher income-level.

"The discharge of political duties appears to Americans to be a troublesome impediment, which diverts them from their occupation and business. These people think

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(23) Selvaraj Nadarajah, Ibid., p.89.

(24) See Phillips Cutright & Peter H. Rossi in Welson W. Polsby, 'Politics and Social Life', (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1963), p.774.



they are following the principle of self-interest but the idea they entertain of the principle is a very crude one." (25)

In his study of respondents' voting behaviour, Selvaraj Nadarajah found that the percentage of turnout among his respondents for the last elections (1969) was 56.7% of the Malay respondents.

Of the writer's own respondents, a majority of them are of the opinion that they went to vote because they felt it was their responsibility to vote, 10% of each lower and upper classes felt satisfied while another 10% admit that they had no feelings at all when going out voting.

Table 9 - The Relationship between Class and Voting Consciousness

	<u>Lower Class</u>	<u>Higher Class</u>
Satisfied	10%	10%
I felt I have the responsibility	80	60
Waste of time		10
No feelings at all	10	10
No answer		10
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

The majority 70% of the lower class and 50% of the higher class think that the coming elections is very important and only

Table 10 - The relationship between Class and Importance Attached to the coming Elections

	<u>Lower Class</u>	<u>Higher Class</u>
Very important	70%	50%
Not quite important	20	20
Don't care very much		20
No answer		10
Don't care at all	10	
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>



30% from the lower class and 40% of the higher class admit that they either don't care or put so much importance in the coming elections. This shows that political involvement level is considerably very high in both the higher and lower classes.

Next comes the question of how they vote, that is, what criteria do they base on when it comes to choosing of political representatives.

Table 11 - Relationship between Class and Voting Criteria

<u>Vote according to:</u>	<u>Lower Class</u>	<u>Higher Class</u>
Class	10%	
Race	30	
Own self interest	10	30
Party	40	50
Other factors	10	20
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

As Alan F. Westin notes in 'Politics and Government in the United States, the determinants of votes cast in the United States are Class, ethnic grouping and geographical location of voters, the most significant being social class. "....Income remains a critical determinant, and other factors explaining voting are often simply expressive of income....!"

"To focus on income is not to postulate a rigid 'class' theory of voting. At the same time it would be a mistake to answer, in a dogmatic manner, that America is somehow a 'classless' society. Classes do exist, in the United States as elsewhere, and much of our voting is class voting."<sup>(26)</sup>

As indicated in table 11, the lower class respondents

(26) Alan F. Westin, op.cit., p.252.



prefer to vote according to 'race' and 'party', while the higher class respondents think it is appropriate to vote according to 'party' and 'self-interest'. Here, there is a common majority choice of 'party' as their voting determinant.

Last, but not least, is the question of whom these people vote to hold office.

"In the United States and Britain, the blue-collar workers who identify themselves as 'working class' tend to vote ~~few~~ differently from those who identify themselves as 'middle class'." (27)

Alan F. Weston further states that people with lower incomes in America 'tend to' vote the Democratic Party.

"Income is one social factor that is clearly associated with support for the two parties. Citizens with lower incomes for eg. Negroes and unskilled workers tend to vote Democratic. More affluent voters, such as office workers and people with college education are more apt to support a Republican. This ought not to be surprising, for when it comes to economic matters, Democratic candidates tend to favour 'redistributive' policies to a greater degree than do Republicans." (28)

"Generally speaking data collected show that in Section 17, Petaling Jaya, Malay votes in the last general elections were 'split' between Alliance and PAS with the Alliance capturing the greater share of the votes (78%). Similarly, Chinese and Indian votes were split between the Alliance, the Democratic Action Party (DAP) and the Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia with the greater majority of the Chinese (67%) and Indians (55%) voting for the Opposition." (29)

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(27) John Bonham, 'The Middle Class Vote', (London: Faber and Faber) p.180, and Angus Campbell, et al., "The American Voter", (New York: Wiley, 1960), p.371.

(28) Alan F. Westin, op cit., p.252.

(29) Selvaraj Nadarajah, op cit., p.79.



Table 12 - Data showing Race and breakdown of Choice of political Party (from Selvaraj's study on Racial and Political Attitudes, Section 17, Petaling Jaya', p.120)

Whom did you vote for ?

<u>Malays</u>	<u>Chinese</u>	<u>Indians</u>	<u>Others</u>
2 said PAS.	9 said Alliance	3 said Alliance	1 said Alliance
2 " UMNO	1 " MCA	1 " MIC	
9 " Alliance	1 " Gerakan	3 " DAP	
3 " Secret	8 " DAP	1 " Gerakan	
1 " Opposition	1 " Tan Chee Khoo	1 " Opposition	
	1 " Goh Hock Guan	1 " Secret	
	5 " Opposition		
	2 " Secret		

As can be seen from Table 13, the breakdown of parties voted by the writer's respondents clearly show that the Alliance

Table 13 - Relationship between Class and Parties Voted during the last elections.

<u>party:</u>	<u>Lower Class</u>	<u>Higher Class</u>
ALLIANCE	70%	85%
PAS	10	
NONE	10	
NO COMMENT		10
NO ANSWER	10	5
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>



party is still popular among the respondents from both classes, 70% of the lower class voted for the ruling Alliance Party, while a slightly higher majority of 85% of the higher class respondents chose the same party. Here, class has not in any way managed to demarcate the choice of political party by the Malays of the lower from the higher class of the area under study.

Community of two different classes in the selected area of study is to examine whether this generalization applies to the Malay community too, for from the writer's own observation, the generalization about class influence on political attitudes is insufficient empirical evidence to substantiate it where the Malay community is concerned.

As had been mentioned in the introductory chapter, the generalization to be explored is in 'social class influences political attitudes', social class being the independent variable and political attitudes being the dependent variable. In this concluding chapter, the writer intends to sum up the political attitudes from the specific sample household heads and see what generalization can be arrived at after going through the data analysis.

Here, the political attitudes involved are the people's attitudes towards the government and their voting behaviour. Generally, as had been empirically proven, both classes hold almost similar attitudes regarding factors that are related to the government, the majority of both classes are positive of the government's ability to provide them with a desirable type of rule and development and they are almost similar in their positive attitude towards the Coalition Government. Regarding



CHAPTER 4CONCLUSION

The idea of class influence on political attitudes has been the subject of studies in America and most of these studies depict the accepted generalisation that class to some extent does influence political attitudes. The purpose of this study on the Malay community of two different classes in the selected area of study is to examine whether this generalisation applies to the Malay community too, for from the writer's own observation, this generalisation about class influence on political attitudes lack sufficient empirical evidence to substantiate it where the Malay community is concerned.

As had been mentioned in the introductory chapter, the generalisation to be explored on is 'Social class influences political attitudes', Social class being the independent variable and political attitudes make up the dependent variable. In this concluding chapter, the writer intends to sum up the political attitudes from the specific sample household heads and sees what generalisation can be arrived at after going through the data analysis.

Here, the political attitudes involved are the people's attitudes towards the government and their voting behaviour. Generally, as had been empirically proven, both classes hold almost similar attitudes regarding issues that are related to the government, the majority of both classes are positive of the government's ability to provide them with a desirable type of rule and development and they are almost similar in their positive attitude towards the Coalition Government. Regarding



voting behaviour, both classes too are involved with voting activities for they cite the reason for such action as due to the feeling of responsibility.

Both classes attach importance to the coming elections and the majority of both classes say that they vote according to party. It is interesting to note that even though some of the lower class respondents have misgivings at the higher class in the present political system, a great majority of them still choose the Alliance Party to head the government. As can be seen from the data, the higher class respondents are solidly in support of the ruling party.

As Selvaraj Nadarajah sees it,

"....Malaysian politics is still basically racial. Although the 'lower class' irrespective of race are still poor and the 'upper class' irrespective of race are becoming richer and richer, we still have a long way to go in the development of what may be called the 'politics of class' in the replacement of today's racial politics."<sup>(30)</sup>

As the main objective of this study is to explore the generalisation that 'class influences political attitudes,' the study proves, from the specific sample and data analysis that 'class does not influence political attitudes of urban Malay household heads from the lower and the higher classes of Section 16 and 17, Petaling Jaya.' This result may be attributed to the general nature of the Malays who are known for their contentedness in life.

It cannot be claimed that the study is a solid evidence that can be taken to prove things. The writer is aware that the limitation of this research study is the small sized sample (twenty respondents from each class) used due to inadequate time available

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(30) Selvaraj Nadarajah, Ibid., p.102.



to be concentrated on this project.

Among the few suggestions the writer would like to bring forth is the question of length of questionnaires. From experience, the respondents are reluctant to answer long questionnaires for they claim they do not have the time to answer them (especially those from the higher class category who claim that they have a lot of meetings to attend to and don't have the time to answer the survey questionnaires). The questionnaires should be made as short as possible so that on-the-spot interview can easily be made. If the researcher leaves the questionnaires intending to collect them later on, the tendency is that the questionnaires would not be touched or returned completed.

The basis of political thinking among these respondents is still racial, therefore the government has to work hard to eliminate racial feelings ~~is~~ still predominant in the people's political attitudes in order to develop a harmonious and healthy Malaysian society.

A few of the lower group respondents voice out their grievances and misgivings at the higher class, the government should try to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor as quickly and effectively as possible. The government should not encourage the allocation of different residential areas for higher and lower class citizens for this tend to alienate them further from each other.

The study should not stop here. Exploratory studies should be conducted on other studies that are related to the subject of political attitudes, such as the study on primary group influence on political attitudes or individual personality's



influence on political attitudes in a particular community/society in Malaysia. The study may not have opened a new frontier in the psycho-political domain, but this study is more or less comparable to 'a pebble on the shore of the vast sea of knowledge'.

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