

CULTURE AND POLITICS: AN ANALYSIS OF
UNITED MALAYS NATIONAL ORGANISATION (UMNO)
1946-1999

BY

AZEEM FAZWAN AHMAD FAROUK

A DISSERTATION IN FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR
2002



Abstract

In attempting to trace the different phases of UMNO's organizational development, this study analyzes the party as a functioning structural subsystem. This is not to say that all party groups perform the same functions and possess identical structural properties. Social and political environmental conditions vary from one culture to the next. The same is true of "functional priorities". Parties are merely a particular structural response, therefore, to the needs of a social and political system in a particular milieu.

This study is concerned with how UMNO has evolved and adapted with problems of rule enforcement, morale, task performance, productivity, regulatory mechanisms, and reward systems. Nevertheless, this study has taken into account the fact that UMNO, as a political-power motivated and instrumental group, is a specific subclass of social organizations, with particular types of substructures and specialized activity patterns. Above all, the party structure has specific group properties, which are basic to understanding the party as structural organism, and as a functional unit in the socio-political system.

Abstrak

Kajian ini adalah mengenai evolusi UMNO. Khasnya, ia berusaha untuk memberi satu analisa bagaimana parti tersebut telah melalui beberapa fasa yang berbeza dan bagaimana ia berfungsi dalam satu “structural subsystem”. Namun demikian, ini tidak bermakna semua organisasi politik melakukan fungsi yang sama dan mempunyai carta organisasi yang sama. Ini adalah kerana keadaan sosial dan politik berbeza dari satu budaya ke satu budaya yang lain. Parti politik hanyalah merupakan satu struktur yang cuba untuk memenuhi kehendak sistem politik dalam keadaan sekeliling masyarakat.

Kajian ini juga berusaha untuk memberi gambaran bagaimana UMNO telah berubah dan menyesuaikan strukturnya dengan masalah undang-undang tubuh, moral, produktiviti, mekanisma kawalan dan sistem ganjaran. Dalam melaksanakan kajian ini kami telah mengambil kira UMNO sebagai satu organisasi yang beraksi di pentas di mana motif utamanya ialah untuk mendapatkan kuasa. Selain itu, untuk memahami dengan mendalam struktur UMNO, kita harus melihat bagaimana ia berfungsi dalam keadaan sosio dan politik tertentu.

Preface

This study is concerned with UMNO's organizational evolutionary process. I became interested in this subject after reading Maurice Duverger's *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* in which he has successfully sketched a general theory of parties, vague, conjectural, and of necessity approximate, which may yet serve as a basis and guide for detailed studies. In undertaking this study, I have followed the path of the "classical" scholars who wrote about political parties – Ostrogorsky, Michels, Weber, Duverger who conceived them as being above all organizations, arguing that in order to understand and explain their activities and transformation, it was necessary to analyze their organizational core.

Since this study is primarily interested in tracing UMNO's organizational transformation, it calls for an approach that will explore a wide range of variables. Making use of several social scientific disciplinary traditions i.e. history, political science and sociology, I have paid a particular attention to UMNO's different phases of development as well as its power structure. Perhaps the title of this study – *Culture and Politics: An Analysis of United Malays National Organization (UMNO) 1946-1999* is somewhat misleading. Nevertheless, a perspective of this kind implies referring to Robert Michels' view of parties as instruments for the maintenance and the widening of power of some men over others, as well as to other theories of neo-Machiavellian school, from Pareto's theory of elites to Gaetano Mosca's theory of organizations as decisive instruments of domination of the minorities – the political classes over the majorities. The striving for the defense of this power is an important component in the continual conflicts

with all organizations regardless of their category or type, and regardless of the functions they serve or are supposed to serve within the social system. In the realm of political relations, the emergence of a new organization can bring about a broadening of the boundaries of the political system, i.e. the entry of social groups which had previously been excluded from the benefits of participation. Invariably, however, this also brings about the rise of a new power elite, one that will replace the pre-existing ruling classes or ally with them. The very organization that has consented to this rise to power will, from that moment on, be the principal instrument through which this new ruling class will defend its social power.

To obtain an understanding of UMNO's organizational development, I turned first to Ramlah Adam's *UMNO: Organisasi dan Kegiatan Politik* a seminal work for both historian and political scientists. Ramlah has provided an invaluable contribution on UMNO's first phase of development from 1945-1951 in which she sought to chart the party's inception and its activities under the leadership of Dato' Onn b Jaafar. Secondly, I relied on *John Funston's Malay Politics in Malaysia: A Study of UMNO & PAS*. In this comparative study, Funston focused on the years 1945-1969 to coincide with the emergence of broadly based political parties and ending of an era in Malaysian politics with the racial riots of May 1969. Unlike the two previous studies, the scope of this work is wider that is from 1946-1999. I should state at the outset that this is essentially a study on different phases of UMNO's development. In this work, I do not seek to construct and test a falsifiable model so much as offer a broad analytical framework with which to interpret more than fifty-three years of UMNO's organizational history.

In order to chart UMNO's organizational development, I have scoured **some** primary UMNO as well as **government** documents. I have also relied essentially **on** secondary books, articles, and journalistic accounts in an attempt to reconstruct **and** reinterpret UMNO's political record. Throughout my research, I have been less interested to gather new information **than** to offer new analysis. My hope is that this study **will** provide an impetus for further studies especially in political science and history in **the** area of political parties in Malaysia.

Abbreviations

ABIM	Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement)
APU	Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah (Muslim Unity Movement)
BMF	Bumiputera Malaysia Finance
BN	Barisan Nasional (National Movement)
CLC	Communities Liaison Committee
DAP	Democratic Action Party
FEER	<i>Far Eastern Economic Review</i>
Gagasan Rakyat	People's Concept
GDP	gross domestic product
Gerakan	Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Malaysian People's Movement)
IMP	Independence of Malaya Party
ISA	Internal Security Act
JUST	Just World Trust
KMM	Kesatuan Melayu Muda (Union of Malay Youth)
MARA	Majlis Amanah Rakyat (People's Trust Council)
MCA	Malayan/Malaysian Chinese Association
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MCS	Malayan Civil Service
MIC	Malayan/Malaysian Indian Congress
Menteri Besar	chief minister
MPAJA	Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation

NEP	New Economic Policy
NOC	National Operation Council
PAP	People's Action Party
PAS	Partai Islam Se-Malaysia (see PMIP)
PBDS	Parti Bangsa Dayak Sarawak – Party of the Dayak People of Sarawak
PBS	Parti Bersatu Sabah (United Sabah Party)
PKMM	Partai Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya (Malay Nationalist Party or MNP)
Peremba	property development subsidiary of UDA
Pernas	Perbadanan Nasional (National Corporation)
Petronas	Petroleum Nasional Berhad (National Oil Corporation)
PMIP	Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party
PNB	Permodalan Nasional Berhad (National Equity Corporation)
PPP	People's Progressive Party
PRM	Parti Rakyat Malaysia (Malaysian People's Party)
PSRM	Parti Sosialis Rakyat Malaya (Malayan People's Socialist Party)
Semangat' 46	Spirit of 46
UDA	Urban Development Authority
UMNO	United Malays National Organization
UMNO Baru	New UMNO

Contents

	Page
Preface	i
Contents	iv
 Chapter	
I Introduction	1
Organizational Structure and Centralization	19
 II UMNO: Genetic Phase and Nationalization	27
UMNO and Malayan Union	28
UMNO after the Malayan Union: Organizational Structure	42
UMNO as a Monolithic Party: Bureaucratization And Centralizing Tendencies	49
UMNO's First Organizational Dilemma	54
 III UMNO: The Second Phase – Substitution of Ends and Centralization	58
UMNO After 1951	59
Substitution of Ends and Compromises	65
UMNO and Citizenship Proposal	77
UMNO: Internal Structure and Centralizing Tendencies	85

IV	UMNO: Post-Colonial Erosion of Ethnic Cooperation and UMNO's Strategy of Domination	93
	Post-colonial Erosion of Ethnic Cooperation	94
	The May 13 Riots and UMNO's Strategy of Domination	116
	UMNO: Internal Structure and Centralization	124
V	UMNO: The Third Phase: Selective Incentives and Power Struggle	130
	Prelude to A Crisis	131
	New Economic Policy, Mahathir's "Malaysia Incorporated" and the 1987 UMNO Split	142
	UMNO: Internal Structure and Centralization	165
VI	Conclusion	171
	Appendices	178
	Bibliography	