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Forging a Postcolonial Sovereign State with Diasporic Peoples

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Abstract

European colonizing powers in carving out land mass for their colonies were unconcerned with the indigenous peoples who were bounded within the arbitrary colonized territories. Additionally, massive waves of migrants were brought in to fill the economic needs of developing the colonies. Consequently, all postcolonial societies are multi-indigenous peoples and multi-diasporic societies. This is a condition that poses obstacles to the forging of a sovereign people for the postcolonial nation. The fate of the diasporic peoples in the new postcolonial nation is highly dependent on several factors: namely, the size of the diasporic communities, the depth of their embeddedness in the domestic economy and to a very significant extent, the willingness of the indigenous government to recognize the diasporic peoples as citizens of the new nation. This paper examines the four paradigmatic possible fates of the diasporic peoples under different conditions in postcolonial Asia.

Keywords: plural society, colonialism, postcolonial state formation, diasporic communities, citizenship

Introduction

With severe shortage of labor in the Global North and dire economic and political conditions in the Global South—the nominal compass terminology refers to the economic and political differences between the rich developed and poor developing nations rather than geographical locations—there has been massive migration from the South to the North, either through legally regulated agreements between the sending and hosting nations or illegally, with individuals voluntarily paying and risking their lives to find employment as undocumented migrants, or involuntarily being trafficked into modern slavery in other developing countries without ever reaching the destination, North. These migrants constitute the new diasporic peoples globally. Diasporas have a much deeper history as the legacy of colonialism in all the postcolonial nations in the South.

European colonizers, when carving up the continents of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, were unconcerned with the fact that different indigenous peoples were being bounded into the arbitrary boundaries of the colonized territories. Additionally, in the face of resistance from the indigenous people to labor in the extractive capitalist economy,[1] colonial regimes freely imported migrants from elsewhere, including their other colonies, to fill the economic need of the colonies. Low-end migrants were brought in as indentured laborers to work in infrastructure construction, plantations, and mines; the European-educated ones to fill the lower rungs of the colonial administrative service or learned professions; still particular ethnic groups were deployed as comprador businessmen that served as the middleman between the indigenous people and the White colonizers. The indigenous peoples tend to be left out of the modernizing economy, at the bottom of the economic hierarchy. Typically, a colonial regime consisted of a small corps of officers supported by contingents of diasporic peoples. Additionally, while its rule depended on coercive military domination, with its small corps of officers, a colonial regime would prefer to govern indirectly and through a divide-and-rule strategy. Local indigenous rulers were maintained with colonial administrators serving as "advisors," whose advice the rulers were obliged to comply with, and capable individuals,

usually successful businesspeople, were appointed as leaders to manage their respective diasporic communities. The different ethnic communities lived apart in segregated sections of the territory and engaged in specific economic activities in an ethnic division of labor. Interactions between the communities were purely economic and transactional. Colonial societies were veritable "plural societies," a concept developed by a British colonial scholar-administrator, J. S. Furnivall, to describe nineteenth-century colonial societies in Southeast Asia: "It is in a strictest sense a medley of people, for they mix but do not combine. Each group holds by its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the marketplace, in buying and selling . . . with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit."[2] Such was the condition throughout colonized Asia.

An outlying case of a postcolonial nation is one "without" an indigenous people, a nation whose resident population are all descendants of early migrants; thus, a settler nation. The commonly recognized present day settler nations are White-Anglo United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Historically, colonialism was closely linked to the British philosopher, John Locke's labor theory of property.[3] Locke suggests that an individual by virtue of having worked on the land for its produce can lay claim to the land as one's private property. This theory was classically derived from Christian theology that God has decreed the earth and all within it for the use of humans. Land that is unexploited by human labor is "unproductive" and thus "waste" land; it is human labor that renders land more productive than land in its natural state. An individual who works on the land is thus entitled to the fruits of his labor as private property. This labor theory of property had been used to justify the colonialization of the vast continents of America, Australia and New Zealand where the colonizing British declared these continents as "terra nullius"—territory without a master or owner—treating the indigenous and aboriginal people who lived off the land as "non-human," without civilization. Thus, the willful massacre of the indigenous people in order to settle in the new-found land. Similar pretense of "terra nullius" was not possible in colonizing Asia, with its deeply rooted ancient

civilizations and religions. An exception is Singapore, a settler nation where the majority population are not descendants of White British stock but Chinese, who were immigrants and colonized subjects themselves.

With the exception of Japan, China and Thailand, the rest of Asia were colonized by different European imperial powers. Japan was an imperialist nation which colonized Korea, Manchuria, and Taiwan, and was responsible for the Pacific War. Thailand and China had to cede territories to the European imperialist nations to avoid colonization. All of the South Asian subcontinent was colonized by the British, while the Southeast Asia was divided among British (Malaya, Singapore and Burma), French (Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia), Dutch (Indonesia), Spanish, and American (The Philippines) colonizers. As a legacy of colonization, all these postcolonial states are multi-ethnic states, with both indigenous and diasporic peoples. Without the conventional commonalities of race, language, religion, with even the experience of colonization being highly differentiated, such a mixed population posed severe challenges to the nascent postcolonial nation government that must forge a unified sovereign people out of the multiethnic population as citizens of the new sovereign nation. This paper is concerned with the fate of diasporic peoples in this postcolonial national sovereignty project in Asia.

The paper aims to substantiate, with case studies, the different strategies deployed by indigenous political leaders who have reclaimed their postcolonial nation, to manage the diasporic communities in their midst and the responses of the latter in managing the consequences.[4] Methodologically, this paper is not a "comparative" study because it does not seek to document the presence/absence of a set of constitutive elements that the cases share with or differ from each other. Instead, each case is conceptualized as a paradigmatic case that verifies one political fate of diasporic people in a postcolonial nation. Together, inter-referencing the four cases constitute a set of paradigmatic typologies that, I believe, exhaustively map out the possible political (mis)management of diasporic peoples among postcolonial nations in Asia and beyond.

Forging a Sovereign People as Citizens

The difficulties of forging a sovereign nation for postcolonial nations with multi-ethnic indigenous peoples are different from those with a majority indigenous people and one or several diasporic peoples. In the case of multi-indigenous peoples, in principle each of the indigenous groups could constitute itself as a nation with the right to self-determination.[5] Upon independence, the indigenous ethnic groups would have to negotiate a way of sharing "ownership" of the postcolonial nation through some power and governance sharing arrangement. This was always a fraught process filled with potential conflicts. The demographically largest and dominant ethnic group might want to claim "ownership" of the nation and the right to form the government, while the other demographically significant groups might want to secede and constitute their own nations, especially if they were geo-spatially concentrated in segregated parts of the new nation. The most positive outcome possible would be a federated nation-state with clear division of jurisdictions of governance between the central government and the relatively autonomous regions with different ethnic concentrations. Failure to arrive at a workable power sharing arrangement often results in prolonged violent secessionist civil war. Examples of Asian postcolonial nations with multiple indigenous peoples that ended with secessionist civil wars included the Sumatran Acehnese armed resistance to their incorporation into a Java-centered Indonesian central government, the Moro Muslims in Mindanao in southern Philippines resisting the Catholic dominant nation in Manila, and Muslims in Southern Thailand resisting incorporation into the Buddhist-centered Thai nation. In the cases of Acehnese and the Moro Muslims, the prolonged armed conflicts had ended with agreement for local state autonomy, in precarious peace agreements with the respective governments, while a low-grade civil war continues in southern Thailand. In the case of Myanmar, the postcolonial nation has, since independence in 1948 until today, not been able to secure and consolidate its domination and control the large number of small indigenous communities in the border region. Consequently, conflicts between the military of the state and different ethnic-based armies are regular affairs.

For colonial plural societies with a demographically and politically dominant indigenous people and single or multiple diasporic peoples, the indigenous people would understandably see the decolonized state as a return of their "homeland" to the rightful owner. However, as mentioned above, they were likely to be at the bottom rung of the economy in the new postcolonial state. They would be resentful of the fact that they had been economically exploited and marginalized not only by the colonizers but also members of the different diasporic communities. In addition to institutionalizing affirmative action to improve the economic position of their own people, the indigenous government might be vengefully reluctant, or refuse, to recognize the diasporic peoples as citizens of the new state. The outcome depends on several factors. Firstly, if the diasporic population is relatively small and economically inconsequential to the new postcolonial state, they can be denied citizenship and be coercively expelled and cast adrift as stateless refugees, without any protection in a world of nation states. Secondly, if the diasporic peoples are deeply embedded in the domestic economy, from successful entrepreneurs to practicing professionals to working class laborers, the denial of citizenship could potentially affect the economic survival of the new nation in the immediate years after independence, then there are two possible outcomes. In response to the inevitable dismantling of their economically privileged position during the colonial regime, the diasporic people may attempt to secede from the postcolonial state and establish a nation for themselves, within the postcolonial territory. Alternatively, the diasporic peoples may be absorbed as citizens but with less than a full bundle of citizenship rights and entitlements, i.e. they remain "second-class" citizens, as the indigenous government redresses the dissimilatory practices of the colonial regime. Finally, in the rare instance of a settler society, where all groups are of diasporic origins, the postcolonial state could attempt to develop a new national identity above the ethnic identities of the different communities. Each of the four cases analyzed below illustrates one of these possible fates of the diasporas in nascent postcolonial nations.

Secessionist Liberation Tamil Tigers Eelam in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka or Ceylon (its colonial name) was first colonized by the Portuguese in the early sixteenth century, by the Dutch in the mid-seventeenth century, and finally, transferred to the British in the late eighteenth century, who consolidated its control of the island in 1815. In 1799, a certain British colonial official, Hugh Cleghorn, had described the ethnic composition of the island thus:

> Two different nations, from a very ancient period have divided between them the possession of the island. First the Cingalese [sic] inhabiting the interior of the country, in its southern and western parts, from the river Wallouve [Walawe] to that of Chilow [sic], and secondly the Malabars [Tamils] who possess the northern and eastern districts. These two nations differ entirely in their religion, language and manners. The former who are allowed to be settlers, derive their origin from Siam, professing the ancient religion of the country.[6]

This description established the fact that Tamils were already in Sri Lanka no later than the eighteenth century, but the Sinhalese were the earlier inhabitants and claimed to be indigenous. What it did not mentioned is that the Sri Lankan Tamils was a minority, which never exceeded twelve percent of the island's population. Furthermore, their migrant diasporic status could be linked back to their south Indian origin, the present Tamil Nadu state. The British also brought in waves of low-caste Tamil migrants as indentured workers for the newly established plantations, built on dispossessed Sinhalese land. These low-caste Indian Tamils were differentiated from the established Sri Lankan Tamils of Jaffna in the north. A third component of Tamils are identified, and identify themselves, separately by their religion as Muslims. Finally, there is the smallest "ethnic" group of Burghers, who are descendants of mix-marriages between the indigenous people and Europeans, with elevated social status in the colonial regime.

The upper caste members of the Jaffna Tamils were favored with colonial education in English, supplemented by American Christian

missionary schools. With English language facility, they were widely used to fill the lower rungs of the colonial civil service and the learned professions,[7] leading to an over-representation of them in all government services and political institutions. In the first Legislative Council election in 1912, when only the English-educated were enfranchised to vote, an equal number of Sinhalese and Tamils were elected. This gave the Tamils the "ground" for claiming parity with the Sinhalese as two "majority" peoples, with the Muslims and Burghers as minorities. However, when full enfranchisement was introduced in 1931, 38 Sinhalese, of whom 27 were Buddhists, five Tamils and three other minorities were elected.[8] As a last-ditch attempt to retain their "dominant" position, the Sri Lankan Tamil elite proposed a "fifty-fifty" representation in the forthcoming self-government and independent state. This was rejected even by the colonial regime. Political independence was granted in 1948.

After independence, the Sinhalese majority began to "correct" the imbalance of the colonial era. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party, supported by the Buddhist majority, which came into power in the mid-1950s, made Sinhala the singular national language, instead of two national languages, Sinhala and Tamil. Admissions to professional courses in university, hitherto dominated by Tamils, were changed to reflect the relative proportions of the ethnic groups. In the military and police services, top ranks began to be occupied by Sinhalese, displacing Tamils. Educated Sinhalese began to compete successfully for civil service jobs.[9] The continuing decline in their positions unavoidably impacted the Sri Lankan Tamils, with grave political consequence for the nascent postcolonial state.

The leader of the Ceylon Tamil League began to espouse the idea of a "pan-Tamilian state," to be constituted by "Ceylon, Southern India and Tamil colonies (presumably the Tamil global diaspora), . . . the union and solidarity of 'Tamil Akam', the Tamil Land,"[10] invoking the above mentioned Cleghorn's claim that Tamils possessed the north and east of the island. On the eve of independence, the leader of the Federal Party, its Tamil name was *Illankai Thami Arasu Kadchi* (ITAK) (Lanka Tamil State Party), Chelvanayakam, asked: "If Ceylon is fighting to secede from the British Empire why should not the Tamil people if they feel like it, secede

from the rest of the country?"[11] The two names of the party were not contradictory; "Federal Party" suggested a federated state for Sri Lanka, with autonomous "traditional Tamil homeland" as a member state.

With the whittling down of their privileges, violent revolt from the Sri Lankan Tamils was to be expected. Inter-ethnic violence broke out in the mid-1950s. However, the Tamil separatist political parties, including Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) continued to participate in the parliamentary process, even joining coalition governments to negotiate a power sharing agreement until the mid-1970s,[12] when episodic violence were initiated by young radical Tamils. Among the radical groups was the Liberation Tamil Tiger Eelam (LTTE), the youth wing of the TULF, under the leadership of Velupillai Prabhakaran. LTTE carried out attacks on the police, killing of government supporters and members of rival Tamil groups,[13] violently expelling Sinhalese and Muslims from Jaffna,[14] and robbed banks to finance their political and terrorist activities.[15] By the mid-1980s, in "less than fifteen years of its establishment (in the 1970s) it succeeded in dominating regional politics in the Jaffna peninsula, and in the Tamil areas in the north and the east of the island."[16] By 1979, the government imposed emergency rule on Jaffna, with its own abuses of power and violence on Tamils, particularly youths suspected of terrorist activities. All subsequent Sri Lankan presidents maintained concurrently a military engagement and political negotiation with Tamil separatists.

India, especially Tamil Nadu, covertly supported the LTTE morally, financially and militarily, supplying arms and providing sanctuary and training bases in India. In 1987, in an attempt to regain control of Jaffna, the Sri Lankan army had "inflicted a number of defeats on the LTTE and had them on the run."[17] India threatened to intervene militarily if the Sri Lankan army entered Jaffna, thus saving the LTTE from total defeat. The Indo-Sri Lankan Accord, in 1987, brought the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) into LTTE territory. The number of IPKF men increased rapidly to 100,000 as they engaged and defeated the LTTE in battles. However, its controversial presence led then President Premadasa to ask the IPKF to leave. In 1991, the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Ghandi inside India by the LTTE ended India's involvement in the Sri Lankan civil war.

Meanwhile, the LTTE was allowed to reoccupy the territory that it had lost to the IPKF. Premadasa was assassinated in 1993. After failing in peace negotiations, his successor President Kumaratunga expanded the army and ordered it to eliminate the LTTE in Jaffna and the Northern Province. In 1999, the LTTE failed in an attempt to assassinate President Kumaratunga. Her successor, President Mahinda Rajapaksa, broke a temporary ceasefire agreement between the government and LTTE. The Sri Lankan military reengaged a weakened LTTE, due to the defection of the Tamils in the eastern provinces. The Sri Lankan army, under Lieutenant General Sarah Fonseka, finally defeated the LTTE, in May 2009, with the body of Prabhakaran found in the battlefield.[18]

After nearly four decades of armed struggle, the Sri Lankan Tamil separatists had failed in their secession attempt to establish an independent state within the sovereign Sri Lanka nation. They have persistently rejected any power-sharing formula in co-governance with the Sinhalese Buddhist majority, without having first "regained" their mythical "traditional homeland" within the island. This desire for the "homeland" showed that the Sri Lankan Tamils, despite centuries of residence on the island, had never shed their diasporic ethnic identity. This identity was reaffirmed and reinforced when they aligned themselves with co-ethnics in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu, who aided and abetted the LTTE's armed insurrection. As a diasporic people, the Sri Lankan Tamil's claim to a "homeland" would amount to a "(re)colonization" of a part of the sovereign Sri Lankan state, after having rid of the British. For the Sinhalese majority, the LTTE and other Tamil separatists would have to be resisted and defeated militarily, if necessary.

Expulsion of Rohingyas in Myanmar

Burma became a British colony in 1887, after three Anglo-Burma wars. It was governed as a province from British India. By the early twentieth century, students and activist Buddhist monks began to agitate for political change with strikes and insurrection. In 1937, Burma was separated from British India, and a fully elected representative

legislature was instituted. After the Japanese Occupation during the Second World War, the negotiation for independence was successfully concluded in 1947, with Aung San, founder of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, emerging as the national leader. He was assassinated before the formal declaration of independence in 1948. Another League member, U Nu, became the first prime minister. The country was beset with ethnic political divisions and insurrections from the outset. In 1962, the first military coup led by General Ne Win seized power and remained in place until the 8 August 1988 (8888) revolution. In 1990, the newly established National League for Democracy (NLD) won the general election, but the military refused to give up power and placed NLD leader, Aung San Suu Kyi under house imprisonment for 16 years. In 2015, the NLD won a landslide by-election and shared power with the military in government, with Aung San Suu Kyi as the "state councilor," *de facto* a prime minister. During her term in office, she had refused to criticize the military regime, which had started killing and expelling the Rohingyas. In 2020, NLD again won a landslide general election but by 2021 it was removed by another coup, and Aung San Suu Kyi, again imprisoned with trumped-up charges.

From the outset, independent postcolonial Burma had difficulties in uniting the various indigenous peoples, locally known as "*taingyintha*" (national races) with the Burman majority. The first Prime Minister U Nu in a radio broadcast, three months after independence, exhorted the nation "to work for the solidarity of *taingyintha,*" without any success:

> Under no circumstances can we allow taingyintha unity to be destroyed. Shan, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Mon and Burman must be united. The mass of taingyintha in the union must be united. Our Union of Burma cannot go back to the fragmented "every man to his own chief" way that we've been . . . throughout Burmese history.[19]

The same call for unity was made by coup leader General Ne Win, in 1964. This time with coercive implications:

> To speak of unity and amity among taingyintha is to say that Kachin, Karenni, Karen, Chin, Burman, Shan and other taingyintha inhabiting the Union of Burma need to be resolved to stick together for life, through weal and woe. Only then will taingyintha be able to join hands with each other and work trustingly for the good of the Union and the good of all its inhabitant races.[20]

The idea of the "national races" is double-edged.[21] On the one hand, the unity of national races is meant to serve to ideologically bring the nation together; the nation's name was changed from Burma, which stresses the Burman majority, to Myanmar, as embracing all the national races. On the other hand, each national race remains distinct and if necessary, must be forcefully brought into the fold of the nation. This accounts for the ongoing armed conflict between the national military and the frontier tribal communities, which has intensified since the most recent coup in 2022.

While the concept of "national races" is aimed at inclusivity and uniting the nation, it is also a term of exclusion of the non-national races. The impact on resident Indians was immediate. Indians have massively migrated into Burma after the mid-1980s, when Burma was governed from India. They filled the entire spectrum of the economy, from lowly indentured laborers and rickshaw pullers to merchants, traders, shopkeepers and moneylenders to Burmese farmers and, as professional engineers, doctors, university professors and of course, the colonial civil service. Just before the Second World War, they constituted half the population of Rangoon and about 16 percent of the total population. Resentment against the Indians was deep seated as the Burmese were left out of the economic development brought by colonization. In 1964, in the promotion of the "Burmese Way to Socialism," Ne Win nationalized all private enterprises, including the Indian businesses and expelled hundreds of thousands of Indians.

Significantly, in Ne Win's call for unity of the 135 national races, the Rohingyas were not included. The Rohingyas had settled in Arakan state, the present-day Rakhine state, supposedly since the fifteenth

century, where Arakanese kingdom was founded.[22] Arakan state was the first Burmese territory to be colonized by the British in the First Anglo-Burma War in the 1820s. The Rohingyas of today are of mixed ancestries, "with Bengalis, Persians, Moghuls, Turks and Pathans, in line with the historically pluralistic population of Arakan State."[23] Instead of being recognized as a national race, they were deemed to be "illegal" recent migrants from neighboring, present day Bangladesh and were denied citizenship, whether by birth or naturalization, even if they can prove that "they and their predecessors lived in the country prior to independence."[24] The denial for citizens by naturalization would suggest that the Rohingyas were post-1950s migrants, which was blatantly false. Discrimination of the Rohingyas was particularly intense because they were Muslims in a country where Buddhism is a core Burmese identity, and the Buddhist sangha is closely associated with national politics. In contrast, ethnic Chinese have been known to use their Buddhist affiliation and the temples to shield themselves from possible violence.[25]

According to Ullah, Rohingyas had been periodically forced to leave Burma—in "late 1700s, early 1800s, the 1940s, 1978,"[26] in 1991, 1992 and 2012. The massive exodus of Rohingya refugees in 2017 started with the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) attacking more than 30 police posts in Arakan state in late August. Troops and Buddhist mobs ransacked, burnt the villages, killing villagers of all ages. Since then, hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas have tried to escape genocide by rickety boats, ending up as stateless refugees in neighboring Southeast Asian nations, particularly Thailand, Malaysia and Aceh in Indonesia. Having risked their lives at great financial cost to secure a place in the boats, they faced even greater abuses upon arrival on land. The women were subjected to sexual abuse by a whole series of men, from traffickers to pirates at sea, to immigration officers, police, military, and even other refugees, while the men could end up being "sold as slaves" for hard labor or on Thai fishing boats.[27] Many were murdered as mass graves have been found in the Thai-Malaysia border. Meanwhile, "[t]he state of Myanmar has converted the space and specific topography of the entire northern Rakhine into a 'camp,' where the Rohingyas face not only displacement but also 'encampment,'"[28] where torture, rape, and mass

killing take place. While those who attempt to escape by boat live what one of them calls an "amphibious life":

> In Myanmar we lived most of our lives on land, but after I left home a large part of my life has been spent in water and land under extreme torture and pain. I do not consider myself as a human anymore, because nobody considers us human anyway . . . . [W]e are like animals, perhaps, you can call us a *byang* (frog), like frog we are *ubhochor* (amphibian), we partly live our lives in land and partly in water, we can only come out at night like the nocturnal animals, and like frog we are a dark and ugly, a blot in the face of humanity.[29]

The Rohingyas shared several similar characteristics with the Sri Lankan Tamils. Both can be linked back to a place of origin in the Indian subcontinent, Bangladesh and Tamil Nadu, respectively. Both were economically better off and often privileged by the colonial regime over the indigenous people, Burmese and Sinhalese, respectively. Both were a religious minority in a Buddhist majority state. The difference is Sri Lankan Tamils were entitled to all the citizenship rights and have actively participated in the electoral parliamentary politics in the postcolonial state, whereas the Rohingyas were denied citizenship. While the Sri Lankan tried to absorb the Tamils into the sovereign postcolonial state, the Myanmar government denied the Rohingyas citizenship in order to expel them from the country as it had done with the Indian diaspora in the 1960s.

From Partners in Government to Second-class Citizens: Chinese in Malaysia

The British colonization of the peninsula Malaya was done largely by treaties in the late nineteenth century. It began with the Treaty of Pangkor between the British and the Sultan of Perak in 1874. The latter had sought the help of the British colonial administration in Singapore to quell the civil strife over mining rights between local Malay chiefs and

the Chinese secret societies, which controlled the Chinese mine workers in Perak.[30] Under the Treaty, Perak became a British protectorate, in which a Resident was appointed as "advisor" on all matters, except religion and local customs, in the Sultan's court. The Resident's advice must be heeded by the Sultan. A similar arrangement was established with the states of Selangor, Pahang and Negri Sembilan. These four states were subsequently brought together under a singular British administration as the Federated Malay States. In 1885, the Bangkok Treaty saw Siam cede the four northern Malay states of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Terengganu to the British. These were the Unfederated Malay States where the Sultans managed to retain their autonomy as they were not obliged to accept the advice of the British Advisors. Under the indirect rule arrangement, the British protected Malay ownership of the land and the Malay peasants, and unlike the Sri Lankan and Burmese cases, the British set up elite schools to educate Malays to fill the lower ranks of the civil service.[31]

Throughout the nineteenth century, a large number of ethnic Chinese migrants were brought in by Chinese licensees for tin mining in Perak and Selangor. Meanwhile, large numbers of low-caste Tamils from southern India, were imported to work in the newly established rubber plantations. Tin and rubber were the two major exports of Malaya from the nineteenth century till after the Korean War in the late 1950s. Over time, Chinese expanded demographically and economically into the cities and came to dominate the small and medium-sized enterprise sector.[32]

Until the beginning of the Second World War, immigrant Chinese and Indians were registered as "aliens," despite the fact that an increasing number of them were born in Malaya. Without local citizenship, the Chinese, including those born in Malaya, were politically and affectively oriented towards and invested in their "homeland." They financially supported China against the Japanese invasion and took different sides in the civil war between the Communist Party of China and the Kuomintang. The Indians were oriented towards the independent struggles in India. A Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) was established to advocate for India's independence from British colonialism.

When the British returned to Malaya after the Second World War in 1946, they proposed to bring the eleven Malayan states, without Singapore, into a unitary state of the Malayan Union. The proposal included giving the resident Chinese and Indians Malayan citizenship. A unified state would have also reduced the authority of the sultans. In 1946, Malays constituted only half of the national population, the Chinese approximately forty percent and dominant in the domestic economy, and the Indians, ten percent. As they had legitimate fear of losing control of their nation, the Malayan Union proposal was overwhelmingly rejected by the Malays, under the leadership of the newly established United Malay National Organization (UMNO). Realizing they had much to lose in an independent Malaya, Tan Cheng Lock, a fifth generation local born Chinese, spearheaded the organization of the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) as a political party. However, he made several attempts to de-communalize the party by joining hands with some Malay political leaders to establish a multiracial political party.[33] Meanwhile, after India had obtained independence in 1945, the MIC turned itself into a political party to focus on the interests of Indians in Malaya.

In 1948, the eleven states were reorganized as the Federation of Malaya, formally a British colony. The first general election for a Federal Legislative Council was conducted in 1955. An alliance of three ethnically or "racially" (race rather than ethnicity is conventionally used in Malaysia and Singapore) exclusive parties—the UMNO, the MCA, the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC)—won 51out of the 52 seats contested: UMNO with 34 seats, MCA 15 and MIC 2. Obviously, UMNO was the dominant party and the other two parties were junior partners. After a ten-year insurgency war with the Malayan Communist,[34] the Federation was granted independence in 1957. The Constitution provided special rights to the Malays as indigenous "race," or *bumiputra*s (Sanskrit for "sons of the soil"), and citizenship was granted to all Chinese and Indians who had lived in Malaya for a stipulated number of years and to all who were born in Malaya. The Alliance went on to every general election after independence. Recognizing the economic dominance of the Chinese in the domestic economy, a Chinese was made the Minister of Finance.

This relatively stable condition was radically disrupted in the 1969 general election, when the Alliance lost its critical two-third majority in the federal parliament and lost two state governments, Kelantan and Perak, to the Pan Malaysian Islamic Party, and the island of Penang to the predominantly Chinese Gerakan Party. During the UMNO victory celebration parade in Kuala Lumpur, violent conflict broke out between the Malays and the Chinese. A national emergency was immediately imposed. When parliament resumed in 1970, the Alliance was disbanded, replaced by the *Barisan Nasional* (BN), with expanded number of political parties, but remained under the leadership of UMNO. A New Economic Policy (NEP) was institutionalized as an affirmative action policy aimed at raising the Malay's share to forty percent of the national economy, as economic inequality between the Chinese and the Malays was identified as a major cause of the race riots.

With the NEP, racial divisions hardened. Land is reserved for Malay farmers, government contracts were distributed among Malay businesses, racial quotas were imposed on employment in civil service and university enrollment. Better performing Chinese and Indian students found themselves done out of national tertiary institutions and the families had to spend significant sums of money to study overseas or at private distance-study programs run by foreign universities in Malaysia.[35] The NEP had evidently engendered an urban Malay middle class and encouraged the urbanization of rural Malays. Unfortunately, without market discipline, the NEP became an institution of nepotism, corruption and political patronage to enrich the UMNO leadership and their cronies, instead of economically uplifting the Malay community as a whole. As the NEP coincided with the general economic growth of all Asian economies due to globalization, there was not much grievance raised by the Chinese and Indians, as they have prospered with the economic development.[36] Nevertheless, locked out by the ethnic quota system, there was significant out-migration of talented non-Malays; there are currently more than a million Malaysian workers, across different occupations, in Singapore alone. This has become a public concern of brain drain of talents in recent years.

After thirty years, the policy that was meant for ten years, is still in

place and the general Malay population remains economically behind the Chinese. Meanwhile, the proportion of Malays in the total population has increased to close to 70% in the late 2000s, while the proportion of Chinese has shrunk to a little more than 20%. The political significance of the Chinese has thus diminished and their ability to extract concessions from the electoral politics severely limited. Unavoidably, the idea and feeling of being "second-class" citizens among the diasporic Chinese and Indians have intensified.[37] After more than six decades of political dominance, UMNO was finally defeated by a coalition of the other Malay-based and multiracial political parties, the *Pakatan Harapan* (Alliance of Hope) in the 2018 general election, after a massive corruption scandal involving no less than the Prime Minister, Najib Razak. Unfortunately, the new coalition government, under former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, was burdened with internal conflicts, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. The 2022 general election produced no clear majority. Support for reformist inter-racial political parties, such as Party *Keadilan* (Justice Party) and the Democratic Action Party (DAP) continued to be largely the non-Malay voters. Meanwhile the Malays had largely abandoned UMNO and switched to voting for the Pan Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS). PAS broke through its hitherto restricted regional electoral support in the northern states in peninsular Malaya to emerge as a national party. It won 49 seats instead of its usual between 20 to 25 seats in the federal government and became the single largest party in parliament. The reformist Anwar Ibrahim, who led a coalition of Pakatan Harapan, had to join with the tainted, if not toxic, UMNO to form a "unity" government. To stay in power, Anwar has had to cater to the Malay-Muslim voters' demands and walk back from much of the reformist agenda that he has long promised. The disappointment of the urban Chinese and Indian populations with his government is palpable, yet they do not have alternative political parties to vote for. Malaysian is thus locked into a divisive Malay dominant race-based political system which stands in the way of the emergence of a non-race based national identity, despite expressed desire for a *bangsa Malaysia*, a Malaysian sovereign people. Malaysia will remain a Malay-Muslim nation, *ketuanan melayu*,[38] with the diasporic Chinese and Indians facing reduced bundle

of citizenship rights. A Malay Malaysia was one of the primary reasons that caused Singapore to leave the Federation of Malaysia, after three years of membership.

Multiracialism in Settler Nation Singapore

Singapore was established as a trading post of the Anglo-East India Company in 1819 through a treaty between Stamford Raffles, a company officer, and Sultan Hussein of Singapore. Hussein, who had lost his claim as the Sultan of the Riau-Johor Empire to his younger brother, was consecrated as the Sultan of Singapore by Raffles, by sheer imperialist arrogance, in order to legitimatize the treaty. In 1823, the Company Resident, John Crawfurd, cunningly manipulated the Sultan and the Temenggong (equivalent to present day prime minister) to cede control of the entire island to the Company, for each a generous annual pension.[39] Due to its geographical location as the sea route gateway to East Asia, the trading post grew quickly, attracting migrants from China and the neighboring islands in the Southeast Asian archipelago. English-educated Indians were brought in by the British to fill the lower ranks of the administrative service and the military. Low-caste migrants, including convicts, were brought in to construct infrastructure and government buildings. Since the mid-1820s, migrant Chinese quickly became the majority population on the island.

Until the end of the Second World War, the migrant population were affectively and politically oriented towards their respective homelands. The Chinese financially supported the anti-Japanese resistance in China and were divided between the Chinese Communist Party and the republican Kuomintang over the civil war; the Southeast Asian migrants were concerned with the Indonesian independence struggle against Dutch colonialism,[40] and an Indian National Army was established during the Japanese Occupation, instigated by the Japanese military.[41] In 1954, a limited franchised election for the Legislative Council was conducted. The Labor Front won a majority of the seats and David Marshall, a noted Jewish lawyer, became the first Chief Minister of Singapore.[42] When Marshall failed to obtain independence from the

colonial office he resigned and was replaced by Lim Yew Hock, who took a hard line on suppressing the restive labor unions and the Chinese high school student movement. His action convinced the British government to agree to a fully locally elected parliament for domestic self-government. In the first general election held in 1959, the People's Action Party (PAP) won 43 of the 51 contested constituencies to form the government; it has since governed without any interruption.

The PAP was constituted by two factions: a group of British university-educated professionals who were social democrats, and a group of locally educated Chinese high school radical socialist labor union leaders. The British-educated provided a cover of legitimacy for the radicals with the colonial government, while the radicals provided the former with mass electoral support. This was, therefore, as much a partnership of political necessity as a shared motivation for decolonization. In its ascendancy to parliamentary power, the PAP had ridden the groundswell of anti-colonial sentiments of the alienated Chinese educated youth under the colonial regime and the workers' dissatisfaction with their working conditions. The uneasy coalition of the two groups, however, came to a reckoning on the issue of merger with independent Malaya.

Despite a desire for political independence, local political leaders across the ideological spectrum believed then that Singapore, a small island without any natural resources other than its strategic trade route location, could not survive as a city-state. They therefore sought independence through merger with Malaya. The Malayan government was disinterested as with Singapore's Chinese population, a merger would tip the racial balance towards ethnic Chinese demographic dominance. However, fearing the left-wing of the PAP, allegedly "communists" or "communist sympathizers," could come into power in Singapore, the Malayan Prime Minister, Tengku Abdul Rahman, agreed to a merger if the social democrats could get rid of the left-wing threat. Disagreements on the conditions for merger led to the left-wing to split to establish the opposition, *Barisan Sosialis* (Socialist Front), in 1961. In 1962, a referendum which advantaged the PAP government's position on the merger was supported overwhelmingly by the electorate. In 1963, the

PAP government carried out the infamous Operation Cold Store; a night raid that rounded up more than one hundred individuals, including some *Barisan* leaders. They were placed in detention without trial, some for more than two decades, under the Internal Security Act, a colonial emergency law, for alleged communist activities.[43] With further British machination, Singapore, Malaya and two small British colonies, Sarawak and North Borneo (renamed Sabah) in the large Indonesian island of Kalimantan, were merged to form the Federation of Malaysia, in 1963. Singapore's membership in Malaysia lasted barely three years. In his maiden speech at the Federal Parliament in Kuala Lumpur, Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, as a member of the opposition, made an impassioned call for a "Malaysian Malaysia" based on racial equality and meritocracy, in contrast to a "Malay Malaysia," where Malays as indigenous owners of the nation have reserved privileges. Further acrimony between the two governments led Singapore to leave Malaysia and become an independent city-state on 9 August 1965.[44]

On that day, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew declared: "We are going to have a multiracial nation in Singapore. We will set the example. This is not a Malay nation; this is not a Chinese nation; this is not an Indian nation. Everybody will have his place; equal; language, culture, religion. And we will continue helping the Malays as we promised to do in competition with UMNO."[45] Singapore is possibly the first constitutional multiracial nation, where the equality of race is placed above liberal equality of individuals. Founding Singapore as a multiracial nation was in fact a necessary decision for two reasons. First, Singapore is a settler nation. Although unlike earlier mentioned White settler nations, the majority population is not descendants of the British colonizers but ethnic Chinese, who were colonized subjects themselves. Being non-indigenous, the Chinese have no proprietorial claim to the land. For the same reason, neither do the South Asian peoples. The Southeast Asian islanders and their descendants are indigenous to the region but not of the island itself and are in the minority. Second, being in the world's largest indigenous Muslim region, Singapore as a Chinese nation would not be accepted by the neighboring countries with amity, especially in light of its geographical proxmity to Communist China in the Cold War

era. Thus, a multiracial nation was a political necessity that was made to be a virtue.

To constitute a multiracial nation, the highly complex ethnic and sub-ethnic peoples were administratively reduced and simplified into three "races": the Chinese population, which subdivided itself in terms of dialect, place of origin and surname, was classified as "Chinese," with Mandarin as both the official language and the formal school language, while all dialects were banned from broadcast media; all South Asians, including Indians (with their diversity of languages), Sri Lankans, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, were classified as "Indian," with Tamil as the official language, as they constituted the largest number in the South Asian community; all Southeast Asian islanders were classified as "Malay," defined by their common religion, Islam; finally, there was the residual category of all the "Others," completing the abbreviation of CMIO. Malays were recognized as the indigenous people and constitutionally provided with some special rights to improve their economic condition. Malay language was retained as the national language, a legacy of Malaysian days. Other than that, the CMIO categories form the basis of allocation of public resources where race and religion, which are co-extensive, are relevant considerations.[46]

At the time, the Chinese constituted approximately 75% of the total population; the Malays, 15% and Indians, 10%. This proportion has been institutionalized as the ratio to be maintained in the population. Mandarin, Tamil, Malay and English are institutionalized as the four official languages, but English is privileged as the language of public administration and the main medium of instruction from primary to tertiary education. In practice, racial "equality" is maintained through requiring every primary and secondary student to learn the student's ethnic language, or "mother tongue," as a second language; relatively equal number of race-religious holidays are celebrated as national public holidays—two Muslim, two Christian, one Hindu and one Buddhist and two days for Chinese New Year; each race has its own "community self-help" organization to assist its own disadvantaged members. The special privileges of the Malays include free education at all levels, government assistance in mosque building

in all public housing estates and, direct parliamentary representation of the Minister of Muslim Affairs. Racial peace and harmony have been elevated to the highest level of public good, overseen by a Presidential Council for Religious Harmony. Public comments that disparage race and/or religion are subject to criminalization under the sedition laws,[47] under the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act, for potentially disrupting social and political stability.[48] Within this large picture of racial harmony, instances in which a government policy disadvantages one race or another are rationalized as necessary to preempt potential racial conflict. In the long run, the disadvantages suffered by each race somewhat even out.

Politically, no member of parliament, whether of the government or in opposition, can afford to serve exclusively the interests of one's own racial group but must place these interests below the national interests. The overall electoral system has been modified to include a "group representative constituency" (GRC), in which several electoral constituencies are grouped together. Each contesting political party has to field a slate of candidates, of which at least one must be a non-Chinese, to contest all the grouped constituencies. This modification guarantees at least 25 percent of the parliamentarians in each government are not Chinese, this being their proportion in the national population. An emergent discussion on "Chinese privileges," especially in politics,[49] has not gained much public or academic traction.[50] Thus, while harmony between races and religions as public good have very high societal discursive presence, they cannot be mobilized as political resource by any racial or religious groups to win votes. The state is not captured by any racial or religious groups. The PAP government sets itself up as an independent adjudicator of differences and disputes that might arise among the three races.

Economically, meritocracy is the basis for the competition and distribution of rewards. After more than six decades, with constant emphasis on education and exhortation by community leaders and politicians, the racial economic imbalance has been significantly alleviated, and there is now a visible and growing Malay middle class. The economic inequality in Singapore now runs more along class lines

rather than racial divisions. With over six decades of sustained economic growth that has improved the life of its people across the board, a sense of belonging has palpably emerged and entrenched. Each successive generation has increasingly identified themselves as Singaporeans first, race-identity second, with a minority who would like to see race being expunged from nationality completely.

Conventionally a state without an indigenous people, language and culture, and even bloodline might be thought to be disadvantaged in nation-state formation. Ironically, settler nations show otherwise. A successful settler society is one in which the state does not have an indigenous racial identity but can possibly evolve a race-blind national identity. This is supposedly true of Americans, Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders—except in these cases, the descendants of the White Anglo-Saxon dominate every aspect of the society; they are racial by default. Singapore is a unique settler society in which the majority Chinese were colonized subjects like the rest of the society and accepts being "minoritized" as being equal to the smallest racial group, the Indians.[51] The presence of the Indians enables Singapore to avoid the dichotomous and divisive politics of a dominant Chinese and a minority Malays; they make multiracialism discursively and materially realizable.

Conclusion

In their demarcation of colonized territories, colonizing powers were unconcerned with whom they bound up with the randomly drawn boundaries. To rapidly develop an extractive economy, colonial regimes would freely import migrants from wherever they could get them to fill the economic niches that the indigenous peoples were disinterested in or unwilling to occupy. Consequently, every postcolonial society is a multi-ethnic society of multiple groups of indigenous and diasporic peoples. As an independent sovereign nation-state, it is essential that a postcolonial state establish a sovereign people as its citizens. This is a process fraught with difficulties, often paved with violent conflicts. In cases of multiple indigenous peoples, post-independence political instability is frequently caused by armed secessionist movements in

which every indigenous group desires to be an independent nation. The best possible outcome is a federated state in which each indigenous people is granted local autonomy, rather than a centralized unitary state. Myanmar is an example of the attempt to set up a unitary centralized government that failed. In cases where there are significant diasporic peoples, federalism is not a solution to state formation, as the diasporic peoples have no proprietorial claim to any part of the land to build their own "nation"; secession by a diasporic people is not strictly speaking a legitimate claim. The ultimate failure of the Liberation Tamil Tiger Eelam to establish a Tamil "homeland" within Sri Lankan territory is a case in point. Unfortunately, the willingness of a postcolonial state to grant citizenship to the diasporic peoples is entirely dependent on the indigenous people who have "reclaimed" their nation from the colonizers. This is complicated by the fact that in colonial society, the indigenous people were left out of economic development; as diasporic peoples prospered, the indigenous people remained at the bottom rung of the economy. Affirmative action to redress this economic imbalance is, understandably, a policy priority of the nascent postcolonial government. In this process, despite centuries of residence in the postcolonial national territory, the migrant origins of the diasporic communities are never completely erased and can be readily invoked by the postcolonial government to expel the diasporic peoples from the new nation. The mass killing and expulsion of the Rohingyas from Myanmar is only the latest of such processes. If expulsion could threaten the immediate economic survival of the new nation, citizenship for the diasporic people is granted, often grudgingly, without equal rights to those of the indigenous people, as second-class citizens. The Chinese in Malaysia exemplify this development. A special mention needs to be made regarding the conditions of diasporic Chinese community worldwide; with the rise of China as a global power, even historically embedded and well-integrated diasporas are subject to renewed, if mild, suspicions and discriminations. An example is the case of the long-established Filipino-Chinese community caught in the ongoing conflict over territorial claim, between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea.[52] Finally, a settler nation in which the citizens of the postcolonial nation are all

descendants of colonized subjects has the opportunity to constitute a multi-ethnic or multiracial nation, where a shared national identity can evolve along with assured preservation of the cultural identity of all the diasporic peoples. Multiracial Singapore demonstrates this rare possibility. The four cases analyzed in this paper—secession, expulsion, second-class citizenship and state multiracialism—constitute four paradigmatic typologies of the fate of diasporic peoples in the state formation process of not only Asian but all postcolonial states.

Notes

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[2] John Sydenham Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice* (New York: New York University Press, 1956), 304.

[3] John Locke, *Of Property* (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 1980), 18–30.

[4] In this paper I have not considered the process of creolization, the melding of indigenous and diasporic peoples into a "third" ethnicity and culture, such as the mestizos in the Philippines. Significantly, in some cases, even long established inter-ethnic marriages have not erased the original ethnicity of the migrant partner as in the case of Sino-Thais, who frequently invoke their ancestor's Chinese origin.

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[6] Asoka Bandarage, *The Separatist Conflict in Sri Lanka: Terrorism, Ethnicity, Political Economy* (London: Routledge, 2009), 30.

[7] Ibid., 31. The first Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore, S. Rajaratnam, was a Jaffna born Tamil.

[8] Ibid., 36.

[9] For details of these changes, see Kingsley Muthumuni De Silva, *Sri Lanka and the Defeat of the LTTE* (Colombo: Vijitha Yapa Publications, 2012), 86–160.

[10] Bandarage, 35.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., 47–52.

[13] De Silva, 30–1.

[14] Ibid., 33.

[15] Bandarage, 68; De Silva, 27.

[16] De Silva, 29.

[17] Ibid., 66.

[18] Ibid., 204.

[19] Nick Cheesman, "How in Myanmar 'National Races' Came to Suppress Citizenship and Exclude Rohingya," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 47, no. 3 (2017): 464.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 467–8.

[22] Anusua Roy Chowdhury and Arafat Abid, "Treading the Border of (Il)Legality: Statelessness, 'Amphibian Life,' and the Rohingya 'Boat People' of Asia," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 23, no. 1 (2022): 73.

[23] A. K. M. Ahsan Ullah, "Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar: Seeking Justice for the 'Stateless,'" *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 32, no. 3 (2016): 287.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Elaine Lynn-Ee Ho and Lynette J. Chua, "Law and 'Race' in the Citizenship

Space of Myanmar: Spatial Strategies and the Political Subjectivity of the Burmese Chinese," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39, no. 5 (2016): 896–916.

[26] Ullah, 287.

[27] Chowdhury and Abid, 79.

[28] Ibid., 81.

[29] Ibid., 78.

[30] John Hillman, *The International Tin Cartel* (London: Routledge, 2010), 31–6. In addition, there was a dispute between two brothers regarding who should be the rightful sultan after the death of their father. The British intervened to reinstall the elder as the sultan in exchange for the latter's acceptance of the British protection.

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[32] James V. Jesudason, *Ethnicity and the Economy: The State, Chinese Business and Multinationals in Malaysia* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[33] Anna Belogurova, "The Malayan Communist Party and the Malayan Chinese Association: Internationalism and Nationalism in Chinese Overseas Political Participation, 1920–1960," in *Decolonization and the Cold War: Negotiating Independence*, eds. Leslie James and Elizabeth Leake (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 127.

[34] Yao Souchou, *The Malayan Emergency: Essays on a Small Distant War* (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Press, 2016).

[35] Parenthetically, it should be noted that the Chinese community has been legally permitted to retain its network of primary and secondary Mandarin-medium schools, alongside the Malay-medium national school systems. The better academic quality of the former has led many Malay and Indian parents to enroll their children in these schools, a sore point with Malay language nationalists.

[36] Robert Heffner, "Introduction: Multiculturalism and Citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia," in *The Politics of Multiculturalism: Pluralism and Citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia*, ed. Robert Heffner (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 28–31.

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[38] James Chin, "Pseudo Democracy and the Making of Malay-Islamic State," in *Routledge Handbook of Southeast Asian Democratization*, ed. William Case (London: Routledge, 2015), 399–409.

[39] Abdullah bin Kadir, *The Hikayat Abdullah: The Autobiography of Abdullah bin Kadir (1797–1854)*, trans. A. H. Hill (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1969), 222–3. For details of the transaction between Crawfurd, the Sultan and the Temenggong, see Gareth Knapman, "Settler Colonialism and Usurping Malay Sovereignty in Singapore," *Journal of Southeast Asia Studies* 52, no. 3 (2021): 418–40.

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[49] Zainal Humairah and Jumblatt b. Abdullah Walid, "Chinese Privileges in Politics: A Case of Singapore Ruling Elite," *Asian Ethnicity* 22, no. 3 (2021): 489–97.

[50] Daniel P. S. Goh and Terence Chong, "Chinese Privileges as Shortcut in Singapore: A Rejoinder," *Asian Ethnicity* 23, no. 2 (2022): 630–5.

[51] Chua Beng Huat, "Being Chinese Under Official Multiculturalism in Singapore," *Asian Ethnicity* 10, no. 3 (2009): 239–50.

[52] Maria Cepada, "Why the Loyalty Check? Chinese-Filipinos Fear Prejudice Fueled by Alice Guo Case, South China Sea Row," *The Straits Times*, September 2, 2024, accessed March 7, 2025, https://straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/why-the-loyalty-check-chinese-filipinos-fear-prejudice-fuelled-by-alice-guo-case-south-china-sea-dispute.

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