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POLITICS IN MALAYSIA

Squaring the circle of Malay nationalism and Malaysian multiculturalism is never easy and probably unachievable. This dilemma has again emerged in recent controversies over freedom of religion, the relation of Islam and the state, and the advancing of Malay "special rights" through affirmative action. The ensuing disquiet troubling Malaysia's more thoughtful citizens informs the essays of the young scholars brought together here by the senior Malaysian political economist and United Nations research director E. Terence Gomez.

Clive S Kessler, University of New South Wales

This book explores the contours of the contemporary landscape of Malaysian politics, focusing especially on politics among the majority ethnic Malay community. In particular, it explains why changes in patterns of political mobilisation and the rhetoric of the dominant parties—particularly the PAS and UMNO—have been so limited, despite the overt and growing dissatisfaction shown by Malaysians with the state of their political system and the ability of these parties to represent their interests. It considers the recent history of events and discourses within Malaysian society and UMNO and PAS, in relation to important issues including human rights, law and democracy, gender and Islam. It then goes on to analyse why important transitions have occurred in society yet political parties have not adapted themselves to these changes and remained reticent about instituting meaningful reforms involving these matters. Overall, this book analyses some of the most pressing issues in contemporary Malaysian politics.

Edmund Terence Gomez is a Research Coordinator at the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD). He also holds the post of Associate Professor at the Faculty of Economics & Administration, University of Malaya.