State contestations in constructions of 1Malaysia

Saying it different to different people

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This article seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge about the relationship between political discourse and national identity. 1Malaysia, introduced in 2009 by Malaysia’s then newly appointed 6th Prime Minister Najib Razak, was greeted with expectation and concern by various segments of the Malaysian population. For some, it signalled a new inclusiveness that was to change the discourse on belonging. For others, it raised concerns about changes to the status quo of ethnic issues. Given the varying responses of society to the concept of 1Malaysia, an examination of different texts through the critical paradigm of CDA provide useful insights into how the public sphere has attempted to construct this notion. Therefore, this paper critically examines the Prime Minister’s early speeches as well as relevant chapters of the socioeconomic agenda, the 10th Malaysia Plan, to identify the referential and predicational strategies employed in characterising 1Malaysia. The findings suggest a notion of unity that appears to address varying issues.

Keywords: 1Malaysia, inclusiveness, referential strategies, predicational strategies, Critical Discourse Analysis

Introduction

This study examines state constructions of inclusiveness within the context of 1Malaysia, a blueprint for national unity and inclusiveness proposed by Prime Minister Najib Razak in 2009, and officially launched on 16 September 2010. Specifically, this article will examine the manner in which inclusions in identity are constructed within the context of 1Malaysia in selected extracts from the Prime Minister’s speeches and a specific policy document, the 10th Malaysia Plan.