

editors still have a lot of work ahead of them before their objective is achieved.

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*The Malaysian Economy: Spatial Perspectives.* By George Cho. London: Routledge, 1990. Pp. 314.

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#### NOTES

1. Quoted from the Foreword to the reviewed publication by Suk Bum Yoon, Director, APDC.
2. The views expressed in this review are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations.
3. EIA studies will normally cover the following *basic features*:
  - description of main characteristics of project;
  - estimation of emissions, residues, wastes etc.;
  - description of proposed measures to reduce harmful effects;
  - assessment of compatibility of project with environmental regulations and land-use plans;
  - non-technical summary of the total assessment.The *main procedural elements* of the EIA will normally include the following:
  - the developer (often with assistance from consultants, regulatory bodies and other organizations) prepares an environmental impact study which is submitted along with his application for project authorization to the competent authority;
  - the study is published and is used as a basis for consultation involving both statutory authorities possessing relevant environmental responsibilities, and the general public;
  - the findings of the consultation process are presented to the competent authority;
  - the assessment study and consultation findings accompany the proposed project through the remainder of the competent authority's authorization procedure.
4. For a good, comprehensive and systematic study, see M.P. MacDonald, "Methodology for Integrating Environmental Considerations into Energy Development", in *Environmental Considerations in Energy Development* (Manila: Asian Development Bank, May 1991), pp. 185–230.
5. Peter Hills, "EIA and the Energy Sector: Possibilities and Constraints", paper presented to the Conference on Environmental Strategies for Asia Pacific Oil and Gas, Kuala Lumpur, 26–27 August 1991.

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This book describes the impact of economic development on the land and its people and addresses important geographical issues by examining the record since independence in the late 1950s. Central to the discussion is the contention that the interaction of socio-economic groups is determined as much by their ethnicity as by their socio-economic status.

There are six chapters plus a postscript. The first comprises a wide-ranging but, in any particular instance, a rather brief assessment of each of the ingredients Cho identifies as essential to the socio-economic background of the Malaysian economy. The components discussed include the political history, regional context in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), composition of the population, the New Economic Policy (NEP), sectoral output, spatial distribution of gross domestic product (GDP), labour force and unemployment, balance of trade, colonial legacy, government policy on poverty and inequity, and national development.

The second chapter focuses on development planning and the major shifts in policy as the infrastructure preoccupation of the colonial heritage was gradually replaced by the issues of poverty and equity. Cho indicates how from 1971, with the NEP in place, formal development plans became more than a collection of development projects and discusses in some detail the main features of each of the four plans which preceded and the four plans which followed the introduction of the NEP through to the termination of the NEP and the Fifth Malaysia Plan in 1990. This is a very useful analysis and demonstrates the fundamental shift which occurred in the government's goals and priorities over the period of the eight plans.

The main concession to the "spatial perspectives" of the title comes in chapters three and four which discuss planning in the context of the rural and urban sectors respectively. The importance of

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regional programmes is elaborated upon by discussion of the administrative framework and regional development authorities, as well as the Federal Land Development Authority, which have constituted the major vehicle for systematic rural development and an evaluation of some rural development authority projects. The author notes the project orientation of land and rural regional development as a product of the adopted strategy of growth with redistribution, and questions whether in the absence of substantial economic growth the goals of reduced poverty and niche ethnic occupations can be achieved.

Following a general description of urbanization and urban population growth (much of it based on pre-1980 sources), Cho provides a comparison of GDP, broad sectoral distribution of GDP and urban share of population for each state. Selected correlation coefficients are cited and confirm, for example, the positive correlation between urbanization and GDP. Ethnicity, rural-urban migration and unemployment comprise central issues discussed, with brief mentions of housing problems, squatters and sundry other social issues and a concluding section on urban management and planning.

Another chapter is devoted to the issues related to the promotion of industrial growth and the strategies adopted under the various development plans. This is followed by an evaluation of industrial location especially in terms of free trade zones, licensed manufacturing warehouses and export processing zones and the conflict between the evident benefits of the dispersal of manufacturing and the deficiencies of some peripheral industrial centres which proved to be uncompetitive and had limited success in achieving technological transfer. The inherent export-domestic dualism in the industrial structure, and future prospects for industrialization are also examined.

The final substantive chapter examines a series of issues considered central to Malaysia's socio-political economy. Ethnic diversity is again addressed for its political and economic significance, with particular reference to Malay politics,

the role of UMNO and of Islam, and the rights, privileges and role of the hereditary rulers.

In a short postscript, the author (writing before announcement of the post-NEP National Development Policy) questions the appropriateness of carrying forward the central principles of the NEP unless economic growth is still the essential underlying requirement for any effective restructuring and redistribution. He observes that there is evidence that mass attitudes are supportive of the growing trend towards authoritarian rule in Malaysia. This could entrench the danger of transferring wealth to and further enriching Malay élites (including, perhaps, a new wealthy class) rather than realizing the redistributive goals benefiting the masses.

This is a useful book which deals mainly with structures and issues: it is not data driven, does not analyse sectoral growth or balance in any detail, does not have a large number of maps and diagrams illustrating spatial variations, and is not particularly concerned with differential progress between states. More surprising, perhaps, is that even in the discussion of industrial location, spatial elements are couched in the broadest terms and there are no maps of distributions at either the national or local scales. What it does provide is a systematic review of the widely discussed issues of ethnicity, rural and urban change, and how government and government policies have modified structures to achieve development plan goals. Although many of these elements have spatial manifestations most, like the book, transcend the regional and are essentially national in their significance and management.

The author is to be congratulated for the inclusion of extensive discussion, where appropriate, on East Malaysia which is often excluded from such volumes (ostensibly on Malaysia) because of the difficulty of including it within a framework of discussion more appropriate to Peninsular Malaysia alone.

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