

# Formation of malaysia essay sample

Government



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a) Factors leading to the formation of Malaysia in 1963

1. Only Malaya was an independent nation while Singapore, Brunei, Sabah and Sarawak were still under British control. These territories were considered too small to be independent entities. It was felt that a merger with Malaya would bring early independence to these territories.
2. The British were agreeable to a merger of these territories and granting independence as there were many similarities between Malaya, Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei, in terms of the legal system, economy, history, financial structure and people.
3. Political uncertainty in Singapore with the Socialist Front posing serious challenge to PAP's dominance. The governments of Malaya and Britain were not in favour of the socialist forces winning in the elections and taking over Singapore's administration.
4. Rising communist threat in these territories. There was a greater danger for Malaya and Singapore if the communists in these places join forces. By merging and granting independence to these territories, the communists could be easily defeated.
5. The British were confident their economic and social interests in these territories would be protected with the merger and independence of these territories.
6. Alliance government in Malaya realized merger must not be only with Singapore because the ethnic balance will change with Malays losing the majority. The merger proposal was to also bring in Sabah, Sarawak and

Brunei to protect the indigenous people, preserve the ethnic balance and maintain their majority.

7. Sharing of economic recourses for mutual benefit. Through merger, these member states will have better economic and trade cooperation which was expected to benefit all. In particular, it was expected to bring progress to the economically less developed Sabah and Sarawak.

8. Common stand in foreign policy and international relations.

9. Other events before the formation of Malaysia.

a) Internal opposition: Though there was general agreement for the merger, some groups within these territories were against the move.

b) External opposition: Indonesia and the Philippines were against the merger. c) Cobbold Commission was formed to investigate the views of the people in Sabah and Sarawak towards the merger. Commission reported that 80 per cent of residents in the two states were in favour of the merger. d) A referendum was held in Singapore with 71 per cent of the residents favouring a merger.

e) Inter-government committee (Landsdowne Committee) was formed to prepare the basic framework of a new Malaysian Constitution.

f) Malaysia agreement signed in July 1963

a) Though initially in favour of the merger, Brunei opted out of the federation for the following reasons:

1. Several requests of Brunei were not acceded. They include the allocation of parliamentary seats, control of oil revenue, financial autonomy, investments, and low tax rates.
2. Strong opposition from the Brunei People's Party, which wanted Brunei, Sabah and Sarawak to unite to form a North Kalimantan government. The party's leader, A. M. Azahari, was able to influence the people of Brunei to oppose the merger.
3. Armed rebellion by the Brunei People's Party on 8 December 1962. Though the British put down the rebellion, there were fears Brunei's entry would cause political problems.
4. Brunei feared it would lose a large part of its wealth, especially oil revenue, if it joined the federation.
5. Concerns over the power and status of the Sultan of Brunei after merger. Brunei wanted the Sultan's seniority in the Council of Rulers to be considered from the time he was installed as the Sultan of Brunei and not when Brunei joined the federation.

Major reasons for the separation of Singapore from the Federation of Malaysia:

1. Several misunderstandings arose between PAP and the Alliance leaders causing tense relations between the Federal Government and Singapore, especially on issues relating to the economy, party politics and ethnic relations.
  2. Singapore's concern over lack of economic development after merger.
  3. PAP attempted to contest and take over the role of MCA in the
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Alliance government. PAP has been constantly criticizing the MCA as not being capable of representing the Chinese or bringing development to the community. 4. Several PAP campaigns were seen as intruding into issues of Malay privileges and raising ethnic tensions, which led to riots on 21 July 1964. 5. Lee Kuan Yew's "Malaysia for Malaysians" campaign had stirred up emotions and angered Malay nationalists, with the potential of racial disturbances. 6. Tunku Abdul Rahman's efforts to reduce tensions failed and Singapore was formally separated from Malaysia.