



UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA  
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AND POLICY STUDIES

GOVERNMENT POLICIES TOWARD  
IMMIGRANTS

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### Abstract

Immigrant's population can be seen increasing from time to time and government had implemented various policies toward the immigrants and the implementation of the policies. The study examines the several policies that government had been implemented. A target respondent is the government agencies officers that involve in implementing the policies toward immigrants. The method used to obtain the date or information is through interview where we conducted the interview in three government agencies such as immigration department, department of work and Kota Kinabalu city council. The main findings of this research are about the policies that government been implemented and the implementation of the policies toward the immigrants. From the findings, there are several policies had been identified and also the implementation of the policies toward the immigrants. as a conclusion, from the result of test conducted the objective of this research are achieved and even though this research faced with limitation, but still it is successfully conducted with cooperation from the respondents.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Research Background

Malaysia has a longstanding history of receiving immigrants since centuries ago when the Malacca founded in the 1660s. After achieving independence in 1957, Malaysia continued to receive a stream of immigrants and the flow of immigrants was not restricted until the number of illegal immigrants ballooned in the 1980s. Currently there is an estimated 3.3 million of the population whereby 2.1 are legal immigrants and the remaining is illegal. (Teh, 2009)

In Sabah, migration started during the colonial period, Sabah (then known as British North Borneo) experienced a different wave of immigrants through the British who imported a foreign worker to fuel the economy growing. Since the creation of the Malaysian Federation in 1963, Sabah has continued to receive migrants from its geographically close neighbors. In the 1970s, fighting between Muslim separatists and government forces in Southern Philippines was a major impetus in the influx of migrants to Sabah (Institute for Development Studies, Sabah, n.d ) This migration in term of labor force continue even after Sabah gained its independence through Malaysia on September 16, 1963.

## Immigrants

Until today, immigrants still come to Sabah for several main factors and one of it is to seek economic opportunities. There are two types of migrants which is temporary migrants and permanent migrants (Department of statistic Malaysia, 2006). The immigrants are includes the illegal immigrants, foreign workers and refugees (special task force). Some of the permanent migrants happen because there are local people who more prefer to hire the immigrants rather than the local people because they will provide small pay and nowadays there are some employers that provide a cheap labor notably in the construction and plantation industries. There are also those works in the service industries such as restaurant and maids. That is the reason why the number of immigrants is more in the major town in Sabah such as Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan, and Tawau.

Another factor is the political instability. According to Institute of Development Studies, Sabah in the 1970s, fighting between Muslim separatists and government forces in Southern Philippines was a major impetus in the influx of migrants to Sabah. Some 57,197 refugees, mostly Muslims, who arrived in Sabah at the height of the Mindanao conflict, were granted refugee status on humanitarian grounds. For the most part however, the majority of migrants in the post-independence era came to Sabah for economic reasons. Since the creation of the Malaysian Federation in 1963, Sabah has continued to receive migrants from its geographically close neighbors. In the 1970s, fighting between Muslim separatists and government forces in Southern Philippines was a major impetus in the influx of migrants to Sabah.