

The Influence of 3R (Race, Religion, Royalty) on the Harmony of Society in the Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

The harmony of a society of various races and religions is a unique identity that Malaysia has had since independence. However, efforts to maintain this harmony are certainly faced with various challenges, especially in the era of information and communication technology boom. The introduction of the 'Comprehensive Direction of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR 4.0)' and 'National Digital' are seen to further increase accessibility and boost Malaysian society's involvement with ICT. However, the facilities offered have been misused to the point of inviting insults to religion, race and royal institutions, as well as hate speech which is becoming more and more common. The study aims to identify the influence of the 3R elements (Race, Religion, Royalty) on the harmony of society in Malaysia in the era of industrial revolution 4.0 (IR4.0). This study was conducted qualitatively by analyzing literature data, which was further analyzed inductively to summarize the influence of the 3R issue on digital platforms on the harmony of society in Malaysia. After the GE-14 general election, the seeds of tension have started to grow, leading to the birth of sensitive issues, especially related to religion and race, which if not managed well, could potentially lead Malaysia towards division and enmity. Therefore, the 3R element plays an important role as the core of the formation and strengthening of harmony in community relations in Malaysia. On that basis, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (SKMM) itself has given serious attention to any attempt to sue one of these three main cores. The strengthening of these three elements can be a driving force in creating a more harmonious and responsible multi-racial and religious society, in line with the government's efforts to build racial unity that is increasingly fragile after GE14.

Keywords: Race, Religion, Royalty, Harmony, Digital

INTRODUCTION

The Industrial Revolution 4.0 has contributed to the rapid development in information and communication technology. To ensure that Malaysia does not fall behind in this development, the government has planned the Comprehensive Direction of Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR 4.0) and National Digital to ensure that the implementation of digital infrastructure in this country can benefit all citizens, further driving Malaysia's economic growth. This direction will focus on six main components which are digital talent development, new technology, everything economy, community and government related. In addition, the government under the 12th Malaysia Plan (2021-2025), is also committed to improving the country's digital communication through the implementation of a digital infrastructure plan, known as the National Digital Network (JENDELA). This plan becomes an important platform in providing comprehensive and high-quality broadband service coverage, as well as preparing the country for a steady transition to 5G technology. The government has also injected additional investment worth RM400 million through the Prihatin Rakyat Economic Stimulus Package (PRIHATIN) to enable the telecommunications industry to strengthen the performance of their respective

networks. Therefore, all parties including the state government, local authorities, ministries and relevant agencies have been mobilized to support the government's aspiration to make communication services a basic facility to drive the country towards a digital economy.

In the current context, the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic and the enforcement of the Movement Control Order (MCO) have indirectly introduced Malaysians to a new norm, including the use of social media and online applications for various purposes and needs. The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) reported a sudden increase in demand for broadband since the implementation of the MCO. This is because business activities, learning, conferences, meetings and so on are conducted from home. Compliance with the implemented MCO saw a 23.5% increase in internet traffic flow across the country in the first week of the MCO, and further increased by 8.6% in the second week. The development of various online applications and social media platforms has had a positive impact on human life. However, this development indirectly also contributes to the negative impact on virtual citizens, especially the abuse of the facilities offered through activities that violate consumer ethics, laws and Islamic law. Among the most frequently reported cases are cyberbullying and the spread of false, defamatory and misleading information.

After GE-14, the people's involvement is more active and aware of current political developments. The level of media freedom that is becoming more open although from one point of view gives a positive impact, but the abuse of this freedom by touching on sensitive issues such as Malay privileges, the status of Malay kings as well as the position of religion and Islamic institutions is seen to have caused tension in the community. Provocative statements related to race and religion that are becoming more and more contagious these days have prompted the government to introduce the Religious and Racial Hatred Act to curb the growing trend of insulting race and religion. At the same time, the government is also considering giving full authority to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) to delete the display of false information, defamation and racism on social media (Astro Awani, 2020). Dissemination of unauthentic information, especially that which touches on the sensitivity of race, religion and royal institutions is an offense under Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act (AKM) 1998. This enforcement action is one of the government's initiatives to curb and address the escalating abuse of social media.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted qualitatively to collect information, data and reference materials from the right sources. Qualitative research focuses on efforts to obtain non-numerical information (Cresswell, 2013) that can provide in-depth information about the background of a matter. Qualitative research uses a natural approach to understand the true state of a phenomenon in a specific context without manipulating any real situation. This study uses the bibliographic method, which is by analyzing literature data obtained from previous studies. Research has been done on books, theses, dissertations, journals and related scientific studies used to collect data. The data obtained is then analyzed inductively to describe, analyze and draw conclusions from the data in the process of finding the validity of facts, data and information that is specific to the general public. Inductive research begins with detailed observations in general situations and then moves towards formulating more specific insights and theories. Inductive research involves an in-depth process of the research situation and examining relevant explanations to form a conclusion when the study is completed. In this study, the influence of the 3Rs on the harmony of society in Malaysia. This finding plays an important role in determining the position of 3R as well as its needs in the context of the nation state in Malaysia.

The Reality of Social Interaction in a Plural Society in Malaysia

Social interaction that occurs between multi-racial and multi-religious communities such as in Malaysia, is usually in a state of ebb and flow. The nature of humans as creatures of conflict (*homo conflictus*) causes elements of difference, competition and opposition among them to always exist (Novri, 2014). In the context of the pluralistic society that exists in Malaysia today, the symptoms of conflict are certainly unavoidable. However, effective conflict management can have a positive effect through the mobilization of ideas and actions to achieve a better life. This can indirectly avoid the negative effects of conflict such as hostility, hatred, negative stereotypes, fights and violence. The experience of multi-community relations in Malaysia shows that ethnic and religious elements are not the main factors that cause conflict between communities. On

the other hand, the socio-economic imbalance factor and the government's weakness in offering a comprehensive policy in dealing with the issue caused some parties to manipulate ethnic and religious factors to trigger conflict and tension in society (Chamil, 2007).

According to Mansor (2006), the factors of inter-racial tension in Malaysia can be divided into three phases, namely phase 1 (1950-1970) caused by issues of citizenship, social contract and language, phase 2 (1970-1990) caused by issues of socio-economic imbalance leading to the implementation of the New Economic Policy as well as phase 3 (1990-millennium) which witnessed the exploitation of religious issues leading to a critical impact on harmony between communities. Nazri & Hidayat (2012) stated that this exploitation of racial and religious factors should not be taken lightly because it is like a ticking time bomb those risks triggering unexpected effects and causing tension between the multi-racial and religious communities in Malaysia. These two factors are often seen as the best provocation capital by some parties who hide behind certain agendas and demands to fuel the fire of sensitivity and conflict.

Reports say that in the era of New Malaysia, issues of religion, race and king are discussed more and more often. This issue is not only being talked about more and more in the community, but it has also increased among parliamentarians who witnessed the words religion and Islam being mentioned 3627 times in parliament in 2009 (Aidila & Lee, 2020). Issues such as the equalization of rights for the LGBT group, challenging the legitimacy of the origins of the Malays in Malaysia, disputing the function and structure of Islamic institutions such as JAKIM, challenging the privileges of the Malays and the sovereignty of Malay kings, the proposed closure of tahfiz centers and the right to veil for workers Muslim women by pluralist groups have received strong objections and provoked opposition with nationalist groups. The extreme attitude and provocative approach in dealing with these issues has become a threat to the integrity of the relationship between religion and race in a pluralistic society in Malaysia. This is because for the Malay community, the issue of custom, culture, language, royal institutions and the Islamic religion is a sensitive element because it involves the dignity and sovereignty of the nation.

According to Ridhuan (2020), the main basis that causes conflict and opposition between the Malays and other races stems from the constant insistence towards increasing existing rights because they adhere to the principle of equality. This insistence, on the other hand, was welcomed firmly by the Malays who still hold fast to the social contract that guarantees special rights and privileges for the bumiputera group. This is because each specific provision was drafted considering the views and consent of various parties including the main races that have existed in Malaysia since independence. Similarly, the special position of the Islamic religion which has been given the status of the federal religion in the 1957 and 1963 Constitutions (Redzuan et. al, 2017). This provision is seen as fair because the basis of justice in Islam does not mean equalization but the repayment of rights to those who deserve them. A social contract is built based on a mutual agreement between the different races in Malaya to accept, understand, respect and tolerate each other's status quo in an effort to create unity towards independence. These facts have clearly proven that there is no comprehensive equality between the Malay (bumiputera) and non-Malay communities, on the contrary, what can be created is justice guided by the fulcrum of the Federal Constitution (Ridhuan, 2010).

Therefore, a clear understanding and acceptance of the foundation of the construction of this social contract is seen as the main formula for preventing the tension of ethnic and religious relations today (Nazri & Hidayat, 2012). However, the current reality shows that the social contract is no longer considered as a pioneer of unity that needs to be continued but instead a new foundation that emphasizes equality of rights needs to be implemented for the New Malaysian generation across racial and religious differences. The shallowness of certain parties in understanding the psychology of the Malay community has prompted them to highlight the idea of ratifying the International Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) to ensure that the equal rights agenda is successfully implemented. However, the action eventually invited a backlash from the Malay community and Muslims who mobilized against the idea through the ICERD Protest Rally in 2018. This incident should give awareness to various parties that efforts to preserve harmony between multi-racial and religious communities in Malaysia should be put on the agenda together by all parties especially by focusing ideas and actions towards more important things such as poverty eradication, improving the quality of education and economic balance.

The Influence of 3r on Society Harmony in Malaysia

The economic downturn after the threat of COVID-19, plus the national political turmoil that erupted at the end of February 2020, is seen to have re-invigorated the political temperature of the country. Popular social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have been used as a medium for debate and provocation related to current issues, especially related to race and religion. The Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN) reports that a total of 266 investigation papers have been opened in the first 6 months of 2020, among them involving offenses of incitement and the dissemination of false or seditious news. Of these, 172 cases are still under investigation, while 30 cases have been charged in court, another 12 have been given warning notices, 13 are in the trial process and 17 have pleaded guilty (Amir, 2020). According to the Minister of Home Affairs, Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainuddin, this figure recorded a drastic increase when compared to the previous three years, namely 78 cases (2019), 31 cases (2018) and 9 cases (2017). These cases apparently cause anxiety and unrest among the public, especially when it comes to sensitive issues such as royal institutions, race, religion, position and privileges of rights protected by the Federal Constitution.

The freedom of speech granted after GE-14 shows the level of awareness and political participation that is increasing among the public. All the policies and policies planned by the government are so enthusiastically discussed in various fields including on social media. In one aspect, this is a sign of the people's confidence in the actions and activities of the government so as not to stray from the path of leadership and good governance. Nevertheless, the weakness of the government in dealing with some issues effectively or at least correcting the perception that is floating around in the community is seen to have given room to fish out negative emotions from the community using the capital of race and religion. Issues such as the equalization of rights for the LGBT group, challenging the legitimacy of the origins of the Malays in Malaysia, disputing the function and structure of Islamic institutions such as JAKIM, challenging the privileges of the Malays and the sovereignty of Malay kings, the proposed closure of tahfiz centers and the right to veil for workers Muslim women by pluralist groups have received strong objections and provoked opposition with nationalist groups. The extreme attitude and provocative approach in dealing with these issues has become a threat to the integrity of the relationship between religion and race in a pluralistic society in Malaysia. This is because for the Malay community, the question of custom, culture, language, royal institutions and the Islamic religion is a sensitive element because it involves the dignity and sovereignty of the nation (Mansor, 2010).

a) Race and Religion

Based on the statistics of religious adherents in Malaysia in 2010, three of the four main religions in Malaysia show the dominance of certain races over 90%, namely Islam (Malay: 90.1%), Buddhism (Chinese: 97.8% and Hinduism (Indian: 98.7%) Christianity is more prominent in Sabah and Sarawak with the dominance of Other Bumiputeras such as Iban and Kadasan-Dusun, contributing to 64.7% of the total number of Christians in Malaysia. It is not surprising that issues involving race and religion are easily manipulated and fueled by parties -certain parties in pursuing their agenda without considering the risk of conflict and tension that may arise. In Malaysia, the level of tension between races and religions will be measured through the Community Tension Index (IKM) which is an indicator used by the National Unity and Integration Department (JPNIN) to see the level of community tension in Malaysia manifested through actions triggered or triggered through violence, riots, demonstrations, protests, attacks, fights and issues reported on social media and mass media that could undermine unity.

IKM helps JPNIN to understand the situation happening in the country and its long-term effects on ethnic relations and the stability and prosperity of the country. The monitoring carried out by JPNIN through IKM will be informed to the government so that intervention actions can be taken to ease (defuse) the tension that occurs. Based on the JPNIN report for the years 2008-2017, a significant decrease can be seen between two phases, namely Phase 1 (2008-2012) and Phase 2 (2013-2017). The first phase shows a high rate which is an average of 22 and shows a decrease in the second phase which is an average of 12.7. However, this decrease does not actually reflect the level of relations between races and religions that are becoming more harmonious. This is because the indicators used by JPNIN are more focused on incidents of tension that occur on the ground such as riots and demonstrations without considering the tension that exists on social media. That is why JPNIN has planned to improve the index in the future so that sensitive issues discussed on social media

sites are also considered in the index (JPNIN, 2020).

Therefore, to deal with the tension that exists, the government has previously outlined three main thrusts as a new narrative to ensure harmony between races and religions in this country in line with the new Malaysian era. The three cores are Islam as a religion of mercy, the implementation of the maqasid sharia system in fair governance and the Malaysian model in coping with diversity. To realize the ideals of Malaysia as a model Islamic country, institutional reform based on the concept of Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin needs to be done. This idea was introduced as one of the government's new policies in shaping Malaysia's superior future. With the theme of 'Malaysia Negara Rahmah', this approach is expected to be able to translate the manifestation of Islam as a religion that realizes the interests of all human beings in every place, time and situation. The injection of waq'i elements through the Malaysia Model is expected to be able to highlight the flexibility of Islam in celebrating the value of the pluralism of customs, culture and religion in Malaysia without marginalizing the principles of Islam.

Nevertheless, Rahmatan lil 'Alamin's approach needs to have strong guidelines to avoid any distortion and misuse of the concept. Apart from highlighting the elements of moderation (*wasatiyyah*) and tolerance (*tasamuh*), this model also needs to emphasize the need to be firm on issues that can cause conflict and tension as well as the need to act fairly to friends and opponents. Racial and religious provocations are among the important agendas that need to be refined and dealt with to prevent the seeds of tension from taking root in the community and eventually triggering unexpected actions that can threaten the harmony and stability of the country. In addition, the element of constitutional nobility that exists in Rukun Negara needs to be well understood and accepted, especially in relation to the special provision given to the Malay race and the Islamic religion. Although some parties still claim that the Federal Constitution is based on secular principles, this argument has been rejected by Abdul Aziz (2008) who is of the view that the constitution itself never mentions that its foundation is secular. Even if viewed from the context of history and the practice of Malaysian society, it turns out that the special position of Islam in the constitution is a basis that is difficult to dispute its legitimacy.

Based on these privileges, it is not surprising when certain aspects related to Islam are given priority over other religions in Malaysia. This difference in treatment (by placing Islam in a special position) can only be rationalized by understanding the hybrid elements contained in the Federal Constitution (Faridah & Rohizan, 2014) in addition to the historical factors that underlie the construction of the special provision (Helwa & Jasri, 2013). Hybrid means a country with an official religion. The Malaysian Constitution is said to be hybrid with the existence of Article 3(1) which recognizes Islam as the official religion of the federation but at the same time also recognizes the religious freedom of other believers. The special provision given is seen as important especially in maintaining the identity of the Malays which is characterized by three main foundations which are religion, customs and language. Therefore, an attempt to demolish one of these foundations will invite negative implications for the Malays themselves as most Muslims in this country and further weaken the position of Islam itself (Zaidi, 2010).

b) Royal Institution

The Royal Institution in Malaysia is formed through three main components, namely the Malay Rulers, the Council of Rulers and the Yang di-Pertuan Agong. Malaysia basically practices a parliamentary democratic system which refers to a system of national government by the people (through their elected representatives in elections) and under the auspices of a constitutional monarch. The Constitutional Monarchy system means that the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and the Malay Monarchs run the national and state governments on the advice of the head of government, namely the Prime Minister as the head of government at the central level and the Menteri Besar or Chief Minister as the head of government at the state level (Abdul Rahman, 2014). In addition, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong also has the role of appointing members of the Cabinet of Ministers and Court Judges with the advice of the Prime Minister. He is involved in all three government bodies, namely legislative, executive and judiciary. Although YDPA plays a functional role without any absolute power, His Majesty is still a symbol of the power and sovereignty of the country, as well as a place to pour obedience and loyalty among the common people.

Based on the provisions of the Federal Constitution, YDPA is responsible for upholding the principle of neutrality, which means not taking sides, favoring or establishing relations with any political party. This is considering that he himself does not need support or loyalty from any politician to occupy the throne (Abdul Aziz, 2008). In addition, YDPA's position and role cannot be touched or disputed, either in public platforms or debates in parliament. Parliamentary immunity which guarantees the immunity of every member of the House to debate cannot be abused by touching the credibility and sovereignty of His Majesty. The Federal Constitution has guaranteed this privilege to prevent acts of provocation from any party that tries to touch on sensitive issues by taking advantage of parliamentary immunity. The doctrine of 'acting on advice' also guarantees his position from any implications of actions and policies decided by the government. The federal government cannot hide or use the name of YDPA in justifying all the policies set.

Every decision approved by the YDPA on the advice of the council of ministers, is considered an action of the federal government. His Majesty's immunity and privileges cannot be used as an excuse to protect the government from being prosecuted in any court. This act is also actually against the principle of the rule of law and has even indirectly defiled the sovereignty and dignity of kings (Suffian, 1987). This situation can be seen through the controversy over the appointment of the Attorney General, Tommy Thomas and the new Chief Justice, Tan Sri Richard Malanjum. Although the government informed that these two appointments had received the approval of the palace, the YDPA had acted on the advice of the government as provided for in the Federal Constitution. Therefore, the government itself is directly responsible for all policies and decisions implemented.

Although in principle the YDPA does not carry out executive functions directly, His Majesty has the right to obtain any information about the federal government from the cabinet. The right to obtain this information is one of the functions that can be carried out by His Majesty at his discretion. YDPA's discretion in this matter is not only limited to obtaining information, but His Majesty also has the right to determine the form of information he wants. Therefore, the ministers need to ensure that every necessary information can be presented to His Majesty without any restrictions if the information is still under the control and jurisdiction of the government (Jain, 1991). With provisions like this, YDPA can indirectly carry out a check and balance function to ensure that the ruling government is more careful in making judgments related to the affairs of government and national administration. In fact, this provided space, if successfully used efficiently, allows His Majesty to influence or change the government's decisions so that he is free from any actions that may cause harm and problems to the common people and the country (Abdul Aziz, 2006).

If the constitutional monarch format practiced in Malaysia is refined, the YDPA has the right to express its views frankly, although there is no denying that the final decision remains with the cabinet (Adifarizal, 2012). His Majesty also has the right to be consulted before a decision is made, in addition to giving advice, encouragement and reprimands to the ministers. In fact, His Majesty has the right to reject the advice given by the cabinet if it is felt to be against the principles and spirit of democracy, the Federal Constitution and the country's legal system. The same principle applies in matters of appointing key positions of the country that are accountable to His Majesty. The appointment of the prime minister for example, which although in principle his majesty's discretionary power in this matter is only formal and routine. However, in unforeseen situations such as ambiguous election results (no clear majority) or the occurrence of an internal conflict of the political party that won the election, the YDPA can make judgments according to its discretion to identify candidates who are felt to have the support of most members of the People's Assembly (Atory, 2004). His Majesty's role and authority in this matter can clearly be seen during the outbreak of the political crisis earlier this year, which is better known as the 'Sheraton Step'. The political alignment that took place to give birth to the Perikatan Nasional has highlighted the wisdom and precision of the YDPA in managing this crisis, so that it can finally be resolved without triggering any ongoing conflict.

Apparently, the existence of a royal institution in Malaysia has its own importance, both in terms of statehood and tradition and history. It functions as an umbrella of national sovereignty that shelters all people of multiple races and religions. YDPA acts as a symbol of the unification and unity of the people, as well as creating socio-political stability in the country (Amizah & Adnan, 2017). This role should not be underestimated because socio-political stability is an important foundation towards the formation of a strong and united nation. The importance of this royal institution is clearly enshrined in the Federal Constitution, where almost 10% or

19 of the 183 Articles in the constitution have touched on the position and role of the king, as an important structure of the nation state (Raja Nazrin, 2004). However, the current development of technology and social media such as Facebook and Twitter have witnessed the existence of attempts to drag royal institutions into political disputes, thus inviting intervention from the authorities (Syahira & Amizah, 2017). This situation needs to be addressed immediately, because the royal institution needs to remain the main pillar of community loyalty and unity, further contributing to the stability and harmony of the country.

CONCLUSIONS

The policy of harmony and love should be a catalyst in building a new Malaysian society, instead of being colored by provocative elements and conflict. In order to create a positive new political climate in Malaysia, each party needs to stop issuing provocative statements on religious, ethnic, racial and royal institutions because such actions will cause the bond of unity to loosen, the friendly relationship between religion and race to become more fragile and the risk of conflict breaking out. Unwanted. The good relationship built between the multi-racial and religious communities in Malaysia must always be maintained to guarantee the harmony of community life. This situation requires the cooperation of all parties to produce a national integration process. Sharing and adherence to commendable values and norms is an aspect that is agreed upon by all people across racial and religious boundaries. Although the world is growing rapidly, the role of royal institutions is still seen as relevant in protecting the unity and harmony of society. The technological sophistication that is evolving, in line with the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 should be put to good use, instead of creating chaos and disharmony in the country. Therefore, any threat that is seen as having the potential to hinder the building of this foundation of harmony needs to be immediately eradicated either through campaigns and dialogue or law enforcement to ensure that the stability and harmony that exists among communities of different religions in Malaysia can be maintained.

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