

'Ketuanan Melayu' enslaving the community
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COMMENT A lot of things have developed recently centring on the formulation and implementation of grandiose public policies under the Ketuanan Melayu leadership.

Public opinion and perception however say most of them have proven ill-conceived, poorly implemented or constructed, causing colossal wastage of life, money and other resources, and hardly ever comprehensively and professionally managed.

Many of them are even crooked and sinful in nature. Just look at the Maminco debacle, the forex fiasco in the 80s, the recent PKFZ controversy, faulty submarines, lost air force jet engines, abuse of public institutions, broken public institutions, and very recently the falling roof of a stadium in Terengganu and revelations of possible hanky panky with the construction figures of the new Agong's palace and with the Felda accounts.

It's the devil's free for all out there. When was the last time we got up in the morning, turned on the alternative communication media, read the latest exposure of government indiscretions and misconduct and not had our hair stand on end?

I am presenting this article hoping to understand the issue so as to enable us, the poor Malaysian citizenry, withstand the effects of failed Ketuanan Melayu policies. If we are to be run down by a bus, at least we should know what make it is.

Welcome to the C-string and the D list of Ketuanan Melayu thinking.

C for Contention

The C stands for 'Contentions' (or assumptions):

The basic assumption is that human thinking is divisible into two - the natural and the rational. There are several features of the natural norm:

- i) It accepts all wisdom inherited from the elders, and that these are accepted without any criticism, doubt, or scepticism. Just look at the way the Malay accepts his culture and tradition, and even his religion to illustrate this point.
- ii) Any inherited wisdom is considered the truth and the whole truth. It can never be wrong. Again take note of the Malay contention that the Malay race is the best, and Islam is the only one religion for mankind. His favourite ideology 'untuk agama, bangsa dan negara' says it all.
- iii) It has no facility or avenue to realise its own mistakes. The Malay mind is not privy to alternatives so he is never wrong. So to follow his inherited wisdom as outlined in the illustrations on tradition, culture, and religion above is the right thing to do.
- iv) It has no facility to solve its own mistakes on its own volition.

To illustrate the viability and credibility of these assumptions we might just look at this new institution called Perkasa under the leadership of Ibrahim Ali. We try to analyse the thinking underlying this institution's creation.

The objective mind can detect at least some of these assumptions, indicating the high probability that the Malay thinking norm belongs to this category.

The second is the rational or scientific norm, where all wisdom received from the past are first given evaluation, analysis, scepticism and doubt; where truth is based on observation, experimentation, deduction and induction. Nothing is accepted as the truth until it is proven beyond doubt that this is so.

Stringing the Cs

These four Contentions would produce the ensuing string of Cs:

i) Conformity:

The Malay accords high value to group (or Malay) interest, identity, influence and solidarity. Everything is done not in his name but in the name and interest of the family, and of course of the Malay race, the religion of Islam and (only) lastly, the country. The spirit of the individual in him is not fully developed. He pays scant regard to his individual interest.

ii) Conservatism:

The Malay penchant for conformity renders him supporting the status quo, to be conservative. Again his penchant to preserve and protect Malay tradition, language, and culture as an example of this feature.

iii) Comparison, lack of:

Malay thinking is unilateral ('Malay is the best race'), judgmental ('My ustaz is the best imam around') and the tendency for syllogism ('Najib is our present PM. Our past PMs have been good. Therefore Najib is the best PM we ever had'). It has tendency for hyperbolism, but not privy to alternatives.

iv) Control by a central authority:

The individual is under control of his parents in the family and by his ethnic society.

* The Malay polity is controlled by an autocratic body, in the form of a king or a strong personality.

* For religion, control has always been in the hands of a central body namely the priestly or ulama class.

* In a democracy, authority ought to be in the hands of the people, but this has been hijacked possibly by the elected governing body done by imitating the religious control exercised by the ulama. The government would almost automatically assume a superior role over the population.

Now, there is nothing silly or stupid about all these principles. Any and every culture would have undergone them at some point or other.

The moot point is they reflect the thinking norms of simpler days gone by and still found in simpler societies of today. But the world has become very complex and change comes

quickly, so much so that they say you have to run in order to stay still.

Today humankind has a fairly firm understanding of nature and is able to control it. We live in a technical and scientific world buzzing with amazing technology.

This buzzing 'new world' is featured by change which unfortunately the conservative and conformist mind is not privy to.

v) Change:

There are two issues here. Change is an elusive concept and takes place only in the mind.

More importantly it takes place only if you are aware of it taking place. If there is no awareness, there is no change, only evolution.

My contention is that the mainstream Malay mind has not got sufficient awareness that change is taking place. His natural thinking has not developed to scientific thinking. So here comes the following Cs:

i) Conflict.

When heat meets with cold, when plus meets with minus, when black meets with white then sparks are created. There are very many plusses colliding with minuses in Malay life. The changing demands of an urban life with that of his pastoral past is a immediate example.

ii) Corrosion.

Malay beliefs and values are corroded. For example, the case of culture again. The 'old' Malay wants his traditions to be preserved, but modern life is eroding it at an alarming rate.

iii) Contradiction.

Vast amounts of contradiction are produced.

iv) Consistency, or lack of:

Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's leadership has been labelled by an irate public as flip-flopping, showing wobbly and inconsistent thinking. Remember when he cancelled an international inter-faith meeting to be held in Kuala Lumpur? The cancellation was so last minute participants including the Archbishop of Canterbury had to cancel their travel plans.

v) Criticise and condemn:

hindraf ag protest note 300607 bannerAll new knowledge especially those that do not fall within the ambit of Malay perception of truth are criticised and condemned (and eventually rejected). The non-Malay segment of the citizenry are marginalised and termed 'pendatang' (immigrants), prostitutes and beggars. Political opponents are harassed and intimidated.

vi) Coercion:

This is where Malay polity believes very strongly that his views are right. He uses the central authority 'bestowed' on him to subdue the people.

These situations arise:

The individual is coerced to be loyal and show respect his elders, race and religion as a matter of sacred duty. The Malay mind is not privy to the modern day wisdom that loyalty and respect must be earned.

Society is coerced to adhere strictly to religious tenets and principles. The Islamic religion is full of dogmas to ensure this in any case.

The people are compelled to be loyal to the Ketuanan Melayu leadership and government of the day.

Those who do not conform are intimidated, penalised and punished. This is very easily done with the very long list of laws like the ISA, OSA, PPPA, and the Sedition Act.

vii) Corruption:

When the people are suitably intimidated, coerced into subservience and submission then the axiom that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely comes to full fruition (no illustration needed here).

We are fairly done with the C-string of the Malay mind. Feel free to add more, for there can be many more not yet touched upon.

D for Denial

Now for the D standing for 'Deny' or 'Denial'.

To the Malay mind, any and all that does not come within its known parameters are suspect. The Ketuanan Melayu will hardly ever voluntarily admit to any short-coming, mistake, misgiving, or mismanagement.

Instead it thinks nothing of cheating, lying, hiding of facts, projecting half-truths, or cover-ups. When Khairy Jamaludin sarcastically called Ibrahim Ali (right) a 'jaguh kampung' or village champion, a derogatory remark, Ibrahim Ali turned it around by claiming it as a huge compliment!

This is a clear example that the Ketuanan Melayu institution and leadership is all about, firstly, its political and social survival following the axiom that politics is the art of the impossible; and secondly, not having to say sorry.

The features, purpose and method of denial are many, some of which are:

- * Protecting the status quo.
- * Not acknowledging the existence of established facts despite obvious evidence, like disputing the happening of the Holocaust.
- * Conflict and contradiction are deemed to be the work of the devil or enemies of Islam.
- * All myths and perceptions are constantly nurtured by constant repetition via the government controlled mass media.

* By constant indoctrination.

* By discrediting the messenger.

* By making the work of civic societies difficult. This is to deny all and sundry from volunteering information or feedback. Just ask the Sisters in Islam for proof. The notion that no Muslim or non-Muslim may even analyse and criticise any tenets of Islam is another illustration.

Pygmalion effect

My rationale for listing this C-string and the D list is quite simple.

There is this item in human psychology known as the Pygmalion effect. Simply stated it means that a person will behave in the manner he is treated by another.

An illustration would be a teacher saying to his students that they are stupid and will not pass their exams. The students will somehow become stupid with many failing their exams.

Now the Ketuanan Melayu has been spoon-feeding the Malay, strengthening his crutches, giving accolades to his 'Third World' mentality.

Furthermore, it drums into the Malay mind that he is weak, needs help now and forever and is dependent on the government for his survival. Without this concerted help the Malay will not survive, it says again and again and again. It is creating the Pygmalion effect.

fnbkl dsa protest 210408 submarine posterBecause of this the Malay mind will be more deeply embedded in the changeless paradigm box of confusion, conformity, conservatism, contradiction, conflict, and always denying his shortcomings. The Ketuanan Melayu is also denying new ideas from rescuing the Malay from the box of the changeless status quo.

In this situation his leaders are busy involving themselves with the most rotten C of all - corruption.

Now I propose to name the make of the bus that is flattening the Malaysian polity. I wish to call it the 'Ketuanan Melayu Pygmalion'.

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