**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**DEVELOPING A CONTEMPORARY CRITIQUE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC POLICY AND RACIAL INTEGRATION IN MALAYSIA**

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## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

a) Developing an understanding of what racial integration means to Malaysians

b) Developing an understanding of how directly manifested & locally tangible public policy influences the extent and direction of racial integration

c) Developing an understanding of how indirect, remotely manifested and intangible national unity related public policy influences the extent and direction of racial integration

d) Developing an idea of what defines an individual's identity as well as how individual Malaysians manage the contradictions and complementarities between their Malaysian identity and their racial identity

## METHODOLOGY

1. Research Strategy
   a) Literature Review
   b) Evaluations of hyphotesis and assumptions
   c) Comprehensive analysis of data

2. Survey Methodology

   Focus Groups Sessions
   a) 9 groups
   b) 6 – 10 participants per session

3. Sample
   a) Stratified (Clustered) Random Sample
      i. Category 1 : 3 Ethnic Urban Groups : 1 Malay, 1 Chinese, 1 Indian
      ii. Category 2 : 3 Ethnic Rural/Semi-Rural Groups : 1 Malay, 1 Chinese, 1 Indian
      iii. Category 3 : Multiracial Mix Groups : West Malaysians

   b) Purposive Sample
      i. Category 4 : Multiracial mixed Groups(Sabahans)
      ii. Category 5 : Multiracial mixed Group (Sarawakians)

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

The issue that is often raised is related to religious tolerance while in Sabah and Sarawak, the issue of religion is not so hot discussion than in Peninsular Malaysia where conflict often occurs between the Malays and Indians are religious.

The potential of education in nurturing and enhancing national integration is very significant that respondents from Malays and Indians agreed that "mixed education" is very important in improving racial integration.

Focusing on local housing as a strategy to improve integration shows that the people of Sabah and Sarawak do not care which race is their neighbor. This contrasts with the Malays who were more concerned with racial as their neighbors. Meanwhile, expensive housing areas are mostly inhabited by Chinese who have a strong economy compared to other races.

**CONCLUSION - INTEGRATION STRATEGIES**

**Integration as a Process**

An important conclusion can be approxirnately drawn i.e. that there are various stages that need to be accomplished prior to achieving full integration i.e. integration here being in the sense of forming strong and robust relationships irrespective of race. The priority at every stage, and indeed an overall ethos here, is to remove the obstacles to integration rather than to impose integration from above.

In other words, inter-racial integration is a process, with each stage in the process addressing particular issues that essentially require addressing if real, meaningful, sustainable and renewabte intepration is the end objective. Therefore, integration should not be attempted directly at the outset of efforts to overcome suspicions and animosties. Taking this direct aproach is akin to trying to run before you can walk, and similarly would lead to iil-conceived initiatives and frustrated attempts to achieve stated unity objectives.

**Stage 1 : Preventing Conflict**
The Malays have found that religious practice of Indians can cause conflict between Malays and Indians. Therefore, the relationship of people of different faiths and religions should be strengthened, especially in low-cost housing areas and squatters.

**Stage 2: Strengthening Intra-racial Unity**
It was found that racial identity is more used in the identification of individual identity than identity as a Malaysian. It is therefore important to formulate strategies that can form intra-racial unity where races include elements of individual identity such as culture, tradition, customs, religion and language.

**Stage 3 : Understanding and bridging differences**

Differences of opinion between the people of Sabah / Sarawak and the Peninsula are quite significant in terms of racial unity. Sarawakians say that knowledge of the different customs and traditions of Sarawak allows them to adapt to the way of life of other people in their daily lives. While the Malays, Indians and Chinese in Peninsular states that limited their daily interactions for certain activities such as eating with other people in the business and understand other people is limited to festivals and religious practices only.

**Stage 4 : Encouraging interaction and building overlaps**

It is found that encouraging inter-racial interaction can increase inter-racial unity. However, the busyness of society in their daily affairs such as work is one of the barriers to interaction between races. Therefore, it is important to establish multi-racial housing placements where interactions between multi-racial populations can be enhanced especially in community activities.

**Stage 5 : Encouraging interaction – Building a Malaysian Identity**

The Malay community is proud to be Malaysians with their security, no hunger and the strong religious practice and identity as a Malaysian state covers 3 main races in Malaysia. Chinese and Indian people in the city feel they are proud to be Malaysians despite their discrimination. While the rural Indians are not so proud to be Malaysians because they feel treated like immigrants where they do not receive proper treatment from the Government.

**FOCUS GROUP LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

First, with regard to the conclusions drawn from the focus group feedback, it has to be taken into the consideration that the qualitative nature of the responses mean that the conclusions drawn here have to be further tested within a broader combined qualitative-quantitative study relatively wider in scope in order to achieve a measure of greater validity. This is to say that the specific subjective nature of focus group research and the more general problem of developing generalisations via qualitative research have to be addressed in any future follow on research.

In other words, focus group research of this nature is always designed to be the penultimate stage of research. Among others and in addition to validity issues, taking this view also gives due recognition to the fact that the respondents were more likely to express culturally expected views rather than actually held personal opinions.

Notwithstanding this, and as the report clearly illustrates, what has been achieved here are the identification of several specific issues which have been guidedly developed by the responses of groups of Malaysians. There is definite potential that future focused research on any one of these issues, or even a combination of them, has the possibility of developing instructive policymaking guidelines that serve to build greater inter-racial integration in a meaningful and sustainable way.