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## Al-Faruqi's Concept of *Tawḥīd* and Its Relevance to *Madani's* Idea in Addressing the Issue of Racism in Malaysia

Ruqayya Azhari\*  
Che Amnah Bahari\*\*

Religious diversity is frequently a barrier to interreligious relations. This is due to the fact that religious diversity usually leads to disputes and conflicts. As a result, many scholars offered proper approach to managing this diversity. Robert N. Bellah is popularly known with his idea of Civil Religion. This study aims to explain the concept of Civil Religion as proposed by Bellah then analyzing the implementation of his ideas for managing religious diversity. This study employs qualitative methodology through library research to collect the data. Thus, the data is analyzed by adopting descriptive and critical analysis methods. The findings revealed that Civil Religion in Bellah's view is a set of religious beliefs that are the basis and foundation for the identity and self-understanding of the United States as a nation and people. Second, Civil Religion places religion and belief under the state constitution in managing religious diversity. Third, Civil Religion is part of the understanding of religious pluralism, and even though it is a new religion, it has become the main reference for all human behavior.

**Keyword:** Tawḥīd, Racism, Ethnicity, Madani, Nation Building.

### Introduction

The vision of building a united Malaysian nation was embodied in the 'Bangsa Malaysia', and this idea was presented by Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed in his Vision 2020 project in 1991.<sup>1</sup> However, it seems that this grand national project has not succeeded, given the reality of

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<sup>1</sup> Mohamed Mustafa Bin Ishak, "From Plural Society To Bangsa Malaysia: Ethnicity And Nationalism In The Politics Of Nation-Building In Malaysia" (PhD Thesis, University of Leeds, 1999).

Malaysia today. Ethnicity remains one of Malaysia's major social deficits in creating national unity.<sup>1</sup>

One of the persistent problems in inter-ethnic relations in Malaysia is the multidimensional racism that hinders national unity efforts. This issue was depicted by the increasing number of reported cases of racism in Malaysia, based on NGO data and media reports.<sup>2</sup> It becomes more complex with the super-diversity phenomenon that Malaysia is facing, as people are different not only because of their ethnicity, culture, and religion but also because of their ideology and the new way they value their environment.<sup>3</sup>

Amidst these challenges, national unity is an ongoing agenda in Malaysia. A thoughtful point elaborates on the challenges of 'Isothymia'- 'Megalothymia' and the violation of the Malays' rights as the mutilating factors towards the unity of the nation.<sup>4</sup> Mohd Rodzi attributes the importance of history and history subjects as a tool for strengthening the nation-building process and attaining the objectives of the national education policy.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, Siddiq Fadzil affirms that any national agenda in the Malaysian context must be Islamically justified, or else this agenda will not receive any support from the significant Malay Muslims in the country.<sup>6</sup> In parallel, the concept of *Tawhīd* by Ismail Raji al-Faruqi in his book *Al-Tawhīd; Its Implication for Thought and Life* offers a new understanding of unity and the issue of racism in the light of divine guidance. Therefore, this article aims to understand

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<sup>1</sup> "Dasar Perpaduan Negara, 2021-2030" (Kementerian Perpaduan Negara (KPN, Putrajaya, 2021)), retrieved April 4, 2023, <https://www.perpaduan.gov.my/index.php/en/policy-of-unity/dasarr-2/policy-of-unity/national-unity-policy>.

<sup>2</sup> *Malaysia: Rascism Report 2022*, (Petaling Jaya: PUSAT KOMAS, 2023), retrieved May 31, 2023, <https://komas.org/download/Malaysia-Racism%20Report%202022.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Lina Mastura Jusoh, "Cabaran Memperkukuh Kesepaduan Sosial dalam Masyarakat Superdiversity di Malaysia," *International Online Journal of Language, Communication, and Humanities*, 2021, pp. 109–20.

<sup>4</sup> Afi Roshezry Abu Bakar and Mohd Azmir Mohd Nizah, "Cabaran 'Isothymia'- 'Megalothymia' Dalam Pembinaan Negara Bangsa Malaysia Dan Pencabulan Ke Atas Elemen-Elemen Anak Watan," 2020, <https://oarep.usim.edu.my/jspui/handle/123456789/12327>.

<sup>5</sup> Mohamad Rodzi Abd Razak, "Pembinaan Negara Bangsa Malaysia: Peranan Pendidikan Sejarah Dan Dasar Pendidikan Kebangsaan," *Malaysian Journal of History, Politics & Strategic Studies* 36 (2009): 90–106.

<sup>6</sup> Siddiq Fadzil, "Pembinaan Bangsa Malaysia: Antara Wawasan Nasional Dan Aspirasi Islam," in *Pembinaan Bangsa Kepelbagaian Dalam Bingkai Kesatuan*, (Selangor: Institut Darul Ehsan (IDE), 2018), 1–17.

the idea of *Tawhīd* transmitted by Ismail Raji al-Faruqi and its applicability to the problem of racism in Malaysia.

### ***Al-Faruqi's view of Tawhīd as of his Al-Tawhīd: its Implication on Life and Thought***

*Tawhīd* has become an essential topic among Muslim scholars from the early Islamic era to today. The reason is that *Tawhīd* is the epicentre of the Islamic faith, which has shaped its worldview. Muslim scholars and revivalists have formulated the definition and significance of the *Tawhīd* worldview in response to the challenges of the time.<sup>1</sup> The book *Al-Tawhīd: its Implication on Life and Thought* by al-Faruqi, to which this article mainly refers, is one of the best-known examples of the relevance of the *Tawhīd* worldview as a response to the challenges of the modern world. Al-Faruqi redefines the concept of *Tawhīd* in a new and distinctive way<sup>2</sup> that focuses on its practical implications.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, reference is made to a lecture that was broadcast on the YouTube channel 'IIIT Online Classes'<sup>4</sup> on the topic of "Tawhīd dan Implikasinya kepada Pemikiran dan Kehidupan" (Tawhīd and Its Implications for Thought and Life). The invited speaker, Anis Malik Thoha, a prominent scholar in the Usuluddin and Comparative Religion, gave this lecture and explained the concept of Tawhīd. He described the nature of *Tawhīd* as complete in all aspects of life and attributed Islam as a religion of an absolute monotheistic religion. The unique concept of God in Islam is different from other monotheistic religions such as Judaism and Christianity, where the concept of God in these religions is interwoven with the characteristics of human beings.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mohd Kamal Hassan, "Faruqi's Vision of a Tawhidic Worldview" in the 2nd International Conference on Contemporary Scholarship on Islam: The Legacy of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, Senate Hall, IIUM: Unpublished, 2013). Cited as Faruqi's Vision of a Tawhidic Worldview.

<sup>2</sup> Fadzilah Din, "The Significance of Religious Key Terms and Their New Meanings in Al-Faruqi's Al-Tawhīd: Its Implications for Thought And Life," *Al-Itqan: Journal Of Islamic Sciences And Comparative Studies* 1, no. 1 (December 31, 2017). Cited as The Significance of Religious Key Terms.

<sup>3</sup> Asma Kounsar, "The Concept of Tawhid in Islam: In the Light of Perspectives of Prominent Muslim Scholars," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 6, no. 2 (n.d.): 94–110.

<sup>4</sup> IIIT Online Classes is the official Youtube Channel for The IIIT East and SEA Office that offer remote learning opportunities through Online Academic Enhancement Courses.

<sup>5</sup> *Tawhīd Dan Implikasinya Kepada Pemikiran Dan Kehidupan* (YouTube: IIIT Online Classes, 2022), retrieved June 16, 2023

*Tawhīd*, in its literal meaning, is the Act of making or considering something singular.<sup>1</sup> It is built on the foundation of the *shahādah*, the witnessing that there is no God but Allah and Muḥammad is His messenger.<sup>2</sup> Al-Faruqi then asserted that *Tawhīd* is a religious experience, a worldview, and the essence of Islam.

*Tawhīd* is a religious experience in that God is central to the Muslim's religious involvement. The affirmation of the unicity of God makes God the central position in every Muslim's life, actions, and thoughts. The concept of God in Islam is unique and differs from other religions in many aspects. The first aspect is that God is the core of normativeness, suggesting that God is the being Who commands. Human beings are creatures where God's normativeness is normative. It is a relational concept, not a relative one, negating the notion that God depends on others. It means that his divine command is perceptible and realizable to human beings. Second, God is the ultimate goal; He is the goal toward which all chains are directed and in which they come to rest. Third, God is supreme and must be unique, which excludes the possibility that He is similar to creation. This concept of God in Islam makes God the only source of guidance and the ultimate goal in a person's life.<sup>3</sup>

In explaining *tawhīd* as a worldview, al-Faruqi said, "*Al-Tawhīd* is a general view of reality, truth, the world, space and time, human history and destiny."<sup>4</sup> This statement is consistent with the meaning of worldview, which has been defined as an interpretive framework through or with which one makes sense of the data of life in the world.<sup>5</sup>

Al-Faruqi established the interpretive framework of the *Tawhīd* by listing five core principles of the *Tawhīd* that he claims exist in every structure of human nature: (i) Duality - Reality consists of two kinds or orders: God and non-God. (ii) Ideationality – The relationship of the two orders of reality is ideational, working with the human faculty of

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[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwP7hYabH8DKxp5CZIQHSM3\\_nMrdg\\_5wQ](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwP7hYabH8DKxp5CZIQHSM3_nMrdg_5wQ).

<sup>1</sup> "The Meaning Of Tawheed," *Irsyad Al-Fatwa series*, No. 1, November 3, 2014, retrieved May 23, 2023, <https://muftiwp.gov.my/en/artikel/irsyad-fatwa/irsyad-fatwa-umum-cat/2010-irsyad-al-fatwa-series-1-the-meaning-of-tawheed>.

<sup>2</sup> Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *Al-Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*, (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1998), p. 1, cited as Al-Faruqi, *Al-Tawhīd*.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Faruqi, *Al Tawhīd*, pp. 2–4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Norman L. Geisler and William D. Watkins, *Worlds Apart: A Handbook on World Views*, (Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003).

understanding. (iii) Teleology – The nature of the cosmos is purposeful. Nothing was created in vain or for fun. (iv) Capacity of Man and Malleability of Nature – Man has the freedom and capacity to fulfil his purpose out of the divine command, and God has designed all His creations to be malleable enough to accommodate/concretize the human pattern and purpose. (v) Responsibility and Judgement – With all that has been mentioned, man is responsible for his actions and is subject to accountability, which completes the meaning of the moral obligation imposed on man. Through these five principles, the concept of *Tawhīd* becomes relevant in every sphere of human life, shaping one's perspective and interpretation of one's existence.<sup>1</sup>

Speaking about *Tawhīd* as the quintessence of Islam, al-Faruqi mentioned that it is the defining principle of Islam, its culture and civilization. It harmoniously binds the constitutive elements of civilization through its form, giving the character and identity of Islamic civilization. Here, al-Faruqi shows how *Tawhīd*, as a religious experience and worldview, transforms civilization by affecting its form and function. He emphasized that transformation at the functional level of civilization constitutes its relevance to the essence of *Tawhīd*. Muslims, thus, developed the science of *‘ilm al-Tawhīd* and subsumed other principles of knowledge under it. Al-Faruqi validated this idea in his book, shown in the following chapters, indicating the role of the *Tawhīd* in other principles like the principle of history, epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, social order, Ummatism, family, political order, economic order, world order, and esthetics. Hence, al-Faruqi completed the scope and force of *Tawhīd* in human life.<sup>2</sup>

Al-Faruqi then continued to compare the concept of *Tawhīd* with other related issues in other religions,<sup>3</sup> such as God, humanity, and materialism in Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, communism, and secularism. This comparison serves a dual purpose: (i) the recognition of God as the sole creator of the universe. (ii) the equality of all human beings as creatures of God, endowed with the same essential qualities of creaturely humanity, with the same cosmic status and moral obligation.<sup>4</sup>

From the above viewpoint, it is observed that al-Faruqi's presentation of *Tawhīd* is unique and differs from other traditional

<sup>1</sup> Ferhat John, "Tawhid and Social Justice: An Islamic Perspective," *International Journal of Creative Research Thought* 9, no. 6 (2021): 737–44.

<sup>2</sup> Hassan, "Faruqi's Vision of a Tawhidic Worldview."

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Faruqi, *Al-Tawhīd*, p. 30.

ways.<sup>1</sup> For example, the one presented by Sayyid Quṭb and Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī<sup>2</sup>, though equally essential, focused more on linguistic usage rather than the applied side. What differs from these great scholars is that al-Faruqi has a new twist to the terminology of Tawḥīd by combining the elements of faith and ethics simultaneously. He elaborated on implementing this concept in a way significantly related to ethical behaviour,<sup>3</sup> known today as a process of relevantization.

Examples of relevantization are shown in al-Faruqi's application of *Tawḥīd* in different contexts of human life. First, in the chapter on the *Principle of Ethics*, al-Faruqi explained that identifying the divine purpose in human beings is the basis of Islamic Ethics. Obedience to God and the responsibility to become His vicegerent on earth is the instrument for man to realize and fulfil the ethical part of the divine will in space and time. Islam considers any action that can make even the slightest contribution to the cosmos as an act of worship as long as it is done for the sake of God. Islam holds that man is created innocent, endowed with the capacity for knowledge and has free will that enables him to be responsible for his moral actions.

With this point at hand, al-Faruqi asserted that Islamic ethics is the 'ethics of action', which translates the value of intention into actions that bring about change in the present and future. He further stated that Islamic ethics is totalistic in that there are no limits to its action and change in all areas of human life and that it is universalistic, transcending all human differences. Islam recognizes that all human beings possess the quality and endowment constitutive of their humanity, so no one outside its relevance can become the object of moral aspiration. Al-Faruqi completed the scope of Islamic ethics by relevantizing the active role of Islamic spirituality in its worldly duty, such as political participation, which negates the idea of self or world denial. The pursuit of the world is done in fulfilment of the divine command and compliance with its ethical limitation. Al-Faruqi said, "A full and innocent enjoyment of the world, combined with persistent activism for its betterment, and regulated by ethical commandments against exaggeration, injury, injustice, hatred, and discrimination."<sup>4</sup>

In the chapters of *The Principle of Social Order* and *The Principle of the Ummah*, al-Faruqi linked the concept of *Tawḥīd* to the welfare of society. He described that Islam is the very matter of life;

<sup>1</sup> The Significance of Religious Key Terms.

<sup>2</sup> Faruqi's Vision of a Tawhidic Worldview.

<sup>3</sup> The Significance of Religious Key Terms.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Faruqi, *Al Tawḥīd*, pp. 61–84.

Islam declares all nature of life as innocent, suitable, and desirable because it is the creation, the gift of God. This nature is different from the view of life of other religions, which assume that life is a punishment and evil in its existence.<sup>1 2</sup> He emphasized that the Islamic ethics of action changes life and eventually leads to social impact. This idea presupposes the existence of the 'Ummah' (Islamic society): a body of people held together and moved to action by the divine will and the Islamic social order.

Al-Faruqi continued his point by describing the Ummah's characters and nature according to the principles of *Tawhīd*. Firstly, he said the nature of Islamic society is universalism. He mentioned that the Ummah is against particularism and ethnocentrism because these two ideas deny the unity of God-given values that belong to human beings equally. These ideas also argue that the group is their source of value and their creator and, therefore, limits the value to the members of a single group. These differences in value between groups make rivalry and conflict inevitable.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, Islam recognizes the nature of groupings and the diversity of human beings, but it rejects any ultimacy of such groupings as definitive of man, as the final criterion for good and evil. Therefore, Islamic society does not discriminate between people regardless of their tribe, nation, or race. Islamic society is open to all as a constituent member or as a *dhimmi* (covenantor). This idea also shows that Islamic society must strive to expand to include humanity and cannot stop until it succeeds.<sup>4</sup>

The second nature of Ummah, as specified by al-Faruqi, is totalism, which means that the Ummah's determination is relevant to every aspect of life. It loses its Islamicity if it limits its activities to certain areas of life, such as its members' economic, social, or political needs. The totalism of Islamic society also consists in the coherence of society and the state, for what society prescribes also becomes the administrative policy of the state.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Laura W. Ekstrom, *Evil and Theodicy*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009293075>.

<sup>2</sup> Robert J. Vitillo, "Discerning the Meaning of Human Suffering Through the Discourse of Judeo-Christian Scriptures and Other Faith Teachings," *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management* 48, no. 5 (November 2014): 1004–8, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2014.06.018>.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Faruqi, *Al Tawhīd*, pp. 61–84.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Third is the essence of responsibility, which includes freedom and mandate. Al-Faruqi clarified that responsibility is the condition for every deed to have its moral value. This idea points out that realizing God's command to man by his will is voluntary and without coercion. If the realization is done by force, it may succeed in fulfilling the divine pattern, but the Act will lose its moral value. To make the realization of the divine morally valuable, the Ummah sees itself as an instrument of the divine will, like a grand school whose main task is to teach, educate, convince, persuade, enlighten, and guide people to realize their goals.<sup>1</sup> The question arises: Can the idea of al-Faruqi be applied to Malaysia's current trend of racism, shown in the following discussion?

### **The current trend of Racism in Malaysia**

Malaysia is a multiracial country. As of May 2023, Malaysia's population was 33.2 million, comprising 70.1% Bumiputera, 22.6% Chinese, 6.6% Indian, and 0.2% other.<sup>2</sup> This dynamic aspect of Malaysia's social fabric also challenges the establishment of national unity, one of the most crucial elements in maintaining the country's stability. The bloody racial conflict of May 13, 1969, shows the adverse effects of the sectarian and structural imbalance of the different races in Malaysia,<sup>3</sup> which is known as racism.

There is no universal legal definition of racism. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines racism as a belief that race is the fundamental determinant of human characteristics and abilities and that racial differences cause an inherent superiority of a particular race. This belief influences behaviour and attitudes toward another race in the form of prejudice and racial discrimination, such as unequal treatment, restriction, exclusion, lack of access, and preference.<sup>4</sup>

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) notes in its paper entitled "Dimensions of Racism" that racism can occur in various dimensions, namely education, health care, and the workplace, where it is expressed in the way the majority treats

<sup>1</sup> Al-Faruqi, *Al-Tawhīd*, pp. 85-119.

<sup>2</sup> "Quarterly Demographic Statistics" (Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSEM), 2023), retrieved June 16, 2023, <https://www.dosm.gov.my/portal-main/release-content/8c705dac-ef05-11ed-96d5-1866daa77ef9>.

<sup>3</sup> Noraini M. Noor, "The Future of Malay-Chinese Relations in Malaysia," in *Peace Psychology in Asia*, ed. Noraini M. Noor and Cristina Jayme Montiel (New York, NY: Springer US, 2009), pp. 161-72,

<sup>4</sup> "Racism." *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, retrieved May 23, 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/racism>.

the ethnic minority and in the stereotypes minority groups have of the majority.<sup>1</sup> From all these definitions, racism is measured by the behaviours and actions that reflect and promote the belief of racism.

To deal with this issue of racism, **the Malaysian Federal Constitution** provides for the equality of citizens in **Article 8** and prohibits discrimination against people to a limited extent.<sup>2</sup> In addition, **Article 153** of the Constitution provides for reserving quotas deemed appropriate by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to protect the unique position of the Malays and indigenous people of the states of Sabah and Sarawak<sup>3</sup> concerning the share of civil service positions and scholarships, exhibitions, and other similar educational or training privileges or special facilities granted by the Government. These articles of the Constitution are the prevailing policy in Malaysia; the interpretation of rights is seen in the context of equity rather than equality.<sup>4</sup> However, this unique preference, in **Article 153**, is often interpreted as racial discrimination that violates the meaning of equal human rights as defined by international organizations such as ICERD.<sup>5</sup> Despite that, it is equally important to recognize its legal standing in Malaysia. The anti-ICERD rally in 2018 shows that all issues concerning **Article 153** are sensitive to the Malay and Bumiputera communities in general.<sup>6</sup> This article excludes the discussion of Malaysia's legitimate law while exploring how the concept of *Tawhīd* can be applied in the spirit of the Constitution.

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<sup>1</sup> Kevin Boyle, "Introduction," in *In the Dimensions of Racism. Proceedings of a Workshop to Commemorate the End of the United Nations Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination* (UNHCR, 2005), pp. 1–12, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/DimensionsRacismen.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> *Federal Constitution, The Commissioner of Law Revision, Malaysia*, (Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Nasional, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Suyatno Ladiqi and Aizatul Zuhari, "Malay Rejection on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination," in *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Science and Technology in Administration and Management Information, ICSTIAMI 2019, 17-18 July 2019* (Jakarta, Indonesia: EAI, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.17-7-2019.2303407>, cited as Ladiqi, Malay Rejection on Elimination

<sup>5</sup> Jasmine Penny, "Sons of The Soil"—Malaysia's Preference Laws For Malays as a Violation Of Equal Protection" (Southwestern Law School, 2021), retrieved September 23, 2023 <https://www.swlaw.edu/sites/default/files/2022-03/Penny%20%2827%20SW.%20J.%20Int%271%20L.%20388%29.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Ladiqi, Malay Rejection on Elimination.

According to the *Malaysia Racism Report 2022* published by Pusat KOMAS,<sup>1</sup> the data collected on the number of incidents of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in Malaysia shows a jump of 49% in 2022 compared to the total number of cases in 2021. The data collected for eight consecutive years from 2015 to 2022 shows that the highest number of incidents was recorded in 2018, with 76 cases; in 2022, there were 82 cases. These data show that the vast increase in cases was influenced by the general elections held in Malaysia during those years. This may be due to the racist cards and hate speech used by politicians to win votes or maintain power. The negative culture of political practice in Malaysia is even more evident when the data collected shows that racist or religious political tendencies are the most visible trend among the other trends of racism cases in the country.<sup>2</sup>

Racial discrimination against the indigenous race known as Orang Asli in Malaysia can be seen in the alarming number of school dropouts among Orang Asli students. Kurniawati Kamarudin and Sakini Mohd Said reported in *Bernama*<sup>3</sup> that 42.29 percent of Orang Asli students had not completed their schooling by grade five in 2023. According to the KOMAS 2022 survey of the Orang Asli community in some cities in Malaysia, one of the main factors contributing to school dropout among Orang Asli students is targeted bullying and racial discrimination against Orang Asli children in school based on their language, physical condition, and poverty.

Rusaslina Idrus, a lecturer at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Malaya, attributed the cases of bullying and discrimination to the lack of knowledge about the Orang Asli community.<sup>4</sup> This negative attitude toward the Orang Asli had become a culture at school and was passed down from generation to generation.

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<sup>1</sup> Pusat KOMAS is a non-governmental human rights organisation set up in August 1993 that advocates for democracy and non-discrimination. Specifically, they advocate against racism and racial discrimination in Malaysia, and support the advocacy of the rights of the Peninsular Malaysia indigenous peoples (Orang Asli).

<sup>2</sup> *Malaysia: Rascism Report 2022*, (Petaling Jaya: PUSAT KOMAS, 2023), retrieved May 31, 2023, <https://komas.org/download/Malaysia-Racism%20Report%202022.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Kurniawati Kamarudin and Sakini Mohd Said, "Orang Asli: High Dropout Rate Due To Lack Of Monitoring, Evaluation Of Aid Programmes," *Bernama*, January 3, 2023, retrieved May 31 2023, [https://www.bernama.com/en/b\\_focus/v2/news.php?id=2152503](https://www.bernama.com/en/b_focus/v2/news.php?id=2152503).

<sup>4</sup> Kurniawati Kamarudin, "Orang Asli: Bullying, Racist Slurs Among Reasons For School Dropout Issue," *Bernama*, December 30, 2022, retrieved April 27 2023, [https://www.bernama.com/en/b\\_focus/v2/news.php?id=2152291](https://www.bernama.com/en/b_focus/v2/news.php?id=2152291).

These challenges are evident in mainstream schools, where Orang Asli students typically struggle to adapt to other races and cultures.<sup>1</sup>

In the 2021 report on the 'Technical Survey on Discrimination in Education' prepared by Architect of Diversity Malaysia and NGO Sekolah Semua,<sup>2</sup> 50% of the total 2,441 respondents reported having experienced perceived discrimination in education. Of these, 36% have experienced verbal discrimination, 21% have been harassed or bullied, and 18% have been prevented from accessing opportunities because of their identity. Of the respondents who reported experiencing discrimination based on race in school, Indian respondents reported the highest percentage (87%) of having those experiences compared to other racial groups, namely Malays, Chinese, and Bumiputera.<sup>3</sup>

Racial discrimination in employment also occurred in the form of selective employment and different salary rates offered by a company based on an employee's race. According to a report from FMT in April 2022, a manager had violated MR DIY's company diversity and inclusion policies when he turned away a woman seeking a job because of her race.<sup>4</sup> Another case reported by MSTAR that same year uncovered wage discrimination by a company against a 22-year-old Malay employee who was paid a lower amount than the base wage offered to Chinese applicants for the same job.<sup>5</sup>

Another dimension of racism taking shape in Malaysia is the issue of housing. A post published on the *SAYS website* cited figures of racial discrimination faced by several Malaysians when seeking housing. Most of these cases result from generalized attitudes by certain realtors or homeowners who accuse certain races of having bad characteristics that make them unqualified to rent the place or who prefer certain races

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Sekolah Semua is a social initiative by Architects of Diversity Malaysia (AOD), a non-profit organization that aims to bridge communities and identity groups among youth in Malaysia for justice, peace and a sustainable future.

<sup>3</sup> Architect of Diversity, "Discrimination in Education Survey Series 1: Technical Report Sept 2021," retrieved May 31 2023, <http://sekolahsemua.my/en/report/>.

<sup>4</sup> FMT, "Action Taken against Employee over Racial Discrimination, Says Mr DIY," April 7, 2022, retrieved June 1, 2023 <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2022/04/07/action-taken-against-employee-over-racial-discrimination-says-mr-diy/>.

<sup>5</sup> Wais Qorni Azizan, "Mujur FB Ada Fungsi 'Translation', Majikan Kantoi Amal Diskriminasi Gaji... Gadis Ini Selidik Iklan Berlainan Bahasa, Kerja Sama Upah Berbeza.," *MSTAR*, April 21, 2022, Retrieved June 1, 2023 <https://www.mstar.com.my/lokal/viral/2022/04/21/mujur-fb-ada-fungsi-translation-majikan-kantoi-amal-diskriminasi-gaji-gadis-ini-selidik-iklan-berlainan-bahasa-kerja-sama-upah-berbeza#close>.

when selecting their clients.<sup>1</sup> This type of discrimination applies not only to Malaysian citizens but also to other races, especially foreigners such as expatriates<sup>2</sup> and refugees.<sup>3</sup> This unjustified treatment makes it difficult for many people in society to meet their basic needs: having a roof over their heads.

The Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) released a statement condemning a viral video containing racist remarks and slurs against BAM by a Malaysian living in China and working there as a coach. BAM stated that they would take necessary action, including sending an official complaint to the Chinese Badminton Association (CBA) to take further action against this person, and stated that such a racist person should not be hired as a coach in a sport that people of all races and religions love.<sup>4</sup> In other cases reported by Sadho Ram in *SAYS*, the Youth and Sports Ministry of Malaysia said that the National Sports Council (MSN) and the Malaysian Hockey Confederation (MHC) have decided to suspend Hanis Nadiah Onn, a 26-year-old national field hockey player, from representing Malaysia in international tournaments including the 2023 SEA Games for posting racial slurs against Malaysian Indians in an Instagram comment.<sup>5</sup> The confederation will re-evaluate this disciplinary decision if Hanis shows a positive change in her attitude throughout the period.<sup>6</sup>

To deal with the issue, in 2018, the Ministry of National Unity launched the National Unity Index (IPNas) as an indicator/benchmark to

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<sup>1</sup> “Malaysians Share Horrible Stories of How They Struggled To Rent A Place Due To Racism,” *SAYS*, nd. Retrieved June 1, 2023, <https://says.com/my/lifestyle/malaysians-share-horrible-stories-of-how-they-struggled-to-rent-a-place-due-to-racism>.

<sup>2</sup> Tasmia Rahman, “How Racism Affects Tenancies In Malaysia,” *Speed Home Blog*, January 15, 2021, retrieved June 1, 2023, <https://speedhome.com/blog/renting-out-to-expatriates-in-malaysia-a-focus-on-how-racism-affects-tenancies/>.

<sup>3</sup> Syed Jaymal Zahid, “Landlords Slam Ampang Condo’s Management For Snitching On Their Refugee Tenants To Immigration,” June 11, 2022, retrieved June 1, 2023, <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2022/06/11/landlords-slam-ampang-condos-management-for-snitching-on-their-refugee-tenants-to-immigration/11850>.

<sup>4</sup> Fabian Peter, “BAM Slam Former Player Over Racist Remarks,” *New Straits Time*, February 14, 2022, retrieved June 1, 2023, <https://www.nst.com.my/sports/badminton/2023/02/879304/bam-slam-former-player-over-racist-remarks>.

<sup>5</sup> Sadho Ram, “National Hockey Player Hanis Onn Suspended Over Her Racial Slur Against M’sian Indians,” *SAYS*, February 9, 2023, retrieved June 1, 2023, <https://says.com/my/sports/national-hockey-player-hanis-onn-suspended-over-her-racial-slur-against-m-sian-indians>.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

measure the cohesion and national unity achieved in Malaysia. This index addresses ten types of social deficits that are prevalent in society. The first social deficit listed is ethnicity, indicating that ethnic diversity is one of the main obstacles to creating a national unity if the interaction between ethnic groups is not managed prudently.<sup>1</sup> The IPNas score of 0.62 achieved in 2022 on a scale of 0 to 1 indicates that national unity in Malaysia is improving compared to the score of 0.567 achieved in 2020. Despite this result, the Minister of National Unity, Datuk Aaron Ago Dagang, believes that further efforts to organize programs to promote mutual understanding among ethnic groups are essential to avoid further problems in the future.<sup>2</sup> The Malaysian government is planning to conduct the third IPNas this year.<sup>3</sup> There is so much racism; how could one relate Malaysian nation-building with al-Faruqi's *Tawhīd* in coping with this?

### **The applicability of al-Faruqi's concept of *Tawhīd* in Malaysia's Nation-Building**

Malaysia, as a multiracial and multireligious country, is open to the application of the concept of *Tawhīd* as it shares many similar grounds with the reality of Pax Islamica (peace order). Al-Faruqi referred to the Pax Islamica as the consequence of *Tawhīd* as a religious experience in world history.<sup>4</sup> The Pax Islamica occurred in the Islamic state of Madinah, led by Prophet Muḥammadﷺ which included various tribes and religious societies that came together and consciously agreed on mutual terms of social responsibility and accepted the supremacy of the Divine. Upon joining the order, all members are entitled to all the rights and privileges associated with the covenant. In Malaysia's context, the federation's religion is Islam; mutual coexistence can be established by maintaining respect for the Divine within the Constitution and with the

<sup>1</sup> "National Unity Policy" (Ministry of National Unity, 2021), retrieved June 16, 2023 [https://www.perpaduan.gov.my/phocadownloadpap/penerbitan/ENGLISH%20VERSION%20DPN\\_compressed.pdf](https://www.perpaduan.gov.my/phocadownloadpap/penerbitan/ENGLISH%20VERSION%20DPN_compressed.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> "Indeks Perpaduan Nasional (IPNas) Meningkatkan 0.62 Peratus Tahun Lalu.," *Berita RTM*, May 9, 2023, retrieved May 23, 2023, <https://berita.rtm.gov.my/~berita/index.php/semasa/63062-indeks-perpaduan-nasional-ipnas-meningkat-0-62-tahun-lalu>.

<sup>3</sup> "Kementerian Perpaduan Negara Bakal Laksana IPNas Kali Ketiga Tahun Ini," *Astro Awani*, June 11, 2023, retrieved September 13, 2023, <https://www.astroawani.com/berita-malaysia/kementerian-perpaduan-negara-bakal-laksana-ipnas-kali-ketiga-tahun-ini-423443>.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Faruqi, *Al-Tawhīd*, p. 9.

commitment of both the government and the citizens to carry out their responsibilities as set out in the Constitution.<sup>1</sup> The violation of the responsibility and rights of both government and citizens is another reason why racial conflict and racist behaviour are prevalent. This condition is reflected in the core principle of *Tawhīd*, the capacity of man and the malleability of nature, and the principle of responsibility.

Moreover, the idea of Ummah as a unifying element established by al-Faruqi in *al-Tawhīd* can be applied to the idea of a Malaysian nation (Bangsa Malaysia), which Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed proposes as a means of national integration.<sup>2</sup> The proposed Malaysian nation is not a melting pot that would destroy the identity of the people in the name of unity. Instead, it attempts to integrate the people's values as a nation. This proposal aligns with the spirit of Pax Islamica, which does not have to be a monolithic system but relegates the Ummah to integrate and assimilate all the elements, such as cultures and styles of living, into the Islamic unit and preserve its Islamic existence.<sup>3</sup> The ideal character of the Malaysian nation is the commitment to share communal values such as loyalty to the state and its culture. Al-Faruqi's concept of Ummah, which defines Ummah as a society with the same goals and actions, can strengthen the understanding of unity and inclusiveness of the Malaysian nation. The spirit of Ummah within a nation will thus unite people in a specific goal: to protect the welfare of the people and the state, which is indeed the Divine command, a superordinate to unite people.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, Siddiq Fadzil's descriptions of Malaysia's National Principle (*Rukun Negara*) cemented a durable and robust *Tawhīdic* foundation towards developing nation-building in various dimensions.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **Article 3** in the Federal Constitution declares that Islam is the religion of the federation and other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the federation.

<sup>2</sup> A.B Shamsul, "Nations-of-Intent in Malaysia," in *Asian Forms of the Nation*, ed. Stein Tonnesson and Hans Anlov (Richmond: Curzon, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, "The Islamic World Order-Pax Islamica," in *Essential Writings Ismail al Faruqi* (Kuala Lumpur.: Center for Islam in Contemporary World Shenandoah University, 2021), pp. 189–204.

<sup>4</sup> Henri Tajfel, "Social Identity And Intergroup Behaviour," *Social Science Information* 13, no. 2 (April 1974), pp. 65–93.

<sup>5</sup> Siddiq Fadzil, "Pembinaan Bangsa Kepelbagaian Dalam Bingkai Kesatuan. Amanat Pimpinan Muktamat Nasional Keenam Wadah Pencerdasan Umat Malaysia (WADAH), 15th September 2012," in *Pembinaan Bangsa Kepelbagaian Dalam Bingkai Kesatuan*, (Shah Alam: Institut Darul Ehsan, 2018), pp. 19–41, cited as Pembinaan Bangsa.

The first principle of the *Rukun Negara* - 'Belief in God' (*Kepercayaan kepada Tuhan*) flags the nation an awareness and affirmation of God to carry out all activities based on faith in the social, political or economic spheres.<sup>1</sup> The second pillar - loyalty to the King and Country reflect the *Tawhīdic* obligation, indicating the vocal fealty of the people. The essence is the happiness of the people and the nation, as demonstrated by respect for one another and reciprocal acts of kindness and understanding. The monarch represents the majesty that tends to the people's needs and offers comfort.<sup>2</sup> The third principle - 'the Supremacy of the Constitution' (*Keluhuran Perlembagaan*) is the nation's bastion, which governs all governmental affairs to protect the interests of the people and the institutions of check and balance.

Similarly, the fourth principle - Rules of law (*Kedaulatan Undang-undang*)- plays a crucial role in prosecution and upholding justice for people.<sup>3</sup> The last principle - 'Courtesy and morality' (*Kesopanan dan Kesusilaan*) must be imbued and deeply ingrained in people's behaviour patterns, for it is the essence of *Tawhīd*.

The above brief clarification on Pax Islamica, as proposed by al-Faruqi, to a certain extent, has a similar dimension of practices applied by Malaysian leaders to deal with racism. The question comes to mind about racism: what is the relevance of *Tawhīd* in the current political Madani administration?

### **The relevance of *Tawhīd* and the Madani Policy in addressing racism**

Anwar Ibrahim, the current Malaysian Prime Minister, addresses Madani policy as his basis in administration. The word MADANI is the acronym for the core values: *keMampanan* (Sustainability), *kesejAhteraan* (Prosperity), *Daya cipta* (Innovation), *hormAt* (Respect), *keyakiNan* (Trust) and *Ihsan* (Compassion), also known as SCRIPT.<sup>4</sup> In its spirit, Madani is about reforming Malaysia into a country that believes in humanity and good values such as fair, just and effective governance,<sup>5</sup> which helps to deal with racism.

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<sup>1</sup> Pembinaan Bangsa.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Anwar Ibrahim, *SCRIPT: For a Better Malaysia - An Empowering Vision and Policy Framework for Action*, (Shah Alam: Institut Darul Ehsan, 2022). cited as SCRIPT

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 25.

The value of respect is defined in the Madani concept as a word that contains the connotation of human dignity and equality as put in its vision:

*“We must learn to respect integrity, honesty, and fair dealings. We must respect all others, their communities, beliefs, and ways of life. We need the media, including social and digital media, to respect truth, fairness, and privacy and be free of bias, prejudice, and political interference. We must show respect to our spouses and our families, employees, and public servants. We must also respect ourselves, behave dignifiedly and to our bodies, and care for our health and mental well-being.*

*This requires us to recultivate a culture of respect, which has always been a cornerstone of Malaysian society.*

*But we ought also to shape a politics of respect, which requires not just respect for our democracy:*

*— free, fair, and corruption-free elections within political parties and across the nation*

*– but also a transparent, accountable government that listens to the citizens and pays heed to the needs and demands of the nation, that learns from its mistakes and does all in its power to serve its duties.”<sup>1</sup>*

In fact, veneration for human dignity (*karāmah insāniyyah*) is a value that concerns the situation of marginalized people and those affected by the division of society, and it also targets the function of the Ministry, civil servants and community leaders in urban and rural areas.<sup>2</sup> In resolving racism, human dignity was adopted as the basis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948.<sup>3</sup> One of the results of this continuous effort to uphold human dignity as opposed to racism is reflected in the current Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek’s statement of December 15, 2022, in which she mentioned the Ministry’s commitment to focus on the concept of human dignity through manners, morality, and integrity as one of the seven main thrusts of the Malaysian Ministry of Education.<sup>4</sup> She emphasized that implementing this concept

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 25

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 66

<sup>3</sup> “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (United Nations, 2015), retrieved April, 25 2023, [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/udhr\\_booklet\\_en\\_web.pdf/](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf/).

<sup>4</sup> Kalbana Perimbanayagam, “MOE To Focus On Seven Main Thrusts,” *New Straits Time*, December 15, 2022, retrieved June 16, 2023, <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2022/12/861081/moe-focus-seven-main-thrusts>.

in the education system can help tackle some of the issues in the sector, including racism.<sup>1</sup>

This educational assertion proves to be fruitful in the future, for what was envisaged by Madani's *SCRIPT* concurrently implemented in many fields, such as the economy, institutionalization, education, culture, and development.<sup>2</sup> In the context of al-Faruqi's *Tawhīd*, the similarity of ideas is seen in the latter's chapter on Ummatism, highlighting "...that Ummah is a society where actionalism is totalist and not totalitarian, authoritative and not totalitarian."<sup>3</sup> Like Anwar Ibrahim's respect for "...all others, their communities, beliefs, and ways of life...." Al-Faruqi also specified that Ummatism requires "the doer to involve others in action as co-doers or co-operators"<sup>4</sup> to share the action as subjects to transform the world into paradise.<sup>5</sup> He further prescribed that the other selves (non-Muslims) be invited, educated, warned, and adequately moved to join in necessary deeds;<sup>6</sup> henceforth, racism could be ironed out.

Another view of respect in Anwar's *SCRIPT* is treating others how one expects to be treated and hoping that God will treat them with compassion and mercy. The barrier between man and the mercy of God is none other than major sins from which God has commanded us to steer away.<sup>7</sup> On this plane, al-Faruqi viewed God's compassion and mercy when Islamic Law is no longer enforced in people's affairs, and Muslims lose the privilege.<sup>8</sup> This idea reflects the significance of rights rendered to people that must be ensured to gain the mercy of God - *Rahmatan li al-ālamīn*.

More of al-Faruqi's humanism practicality is in tandem with Anwar Ibrahim's *SCRIPT*, shown in the following viewpoints. The former elaborated that Islam does not discriminate against anybody,<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rebecca Rajaendram, "Education Ministry Sets Sights On Tackling Racism, Extremism, Gangsterism In Schools" *The Star*, December 15, 2022, retrieved June 16, 2023 <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/education/2022/12/15/education-ministry-sets-sights-on-tackling-racism-extremism-gangsterism-in-schools>.

<sup>2</sup> "Malaysia Madani To Restore Dignity Of The Nation," *Bernama*, January 19, 2023, retrieved September 20, 2023 <https://www.bernama.com/en/news.php?id=2157587>.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Faruqi, *Al-Tawhīd*, p. 78.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 76

<sup>5</sup> *SCRIPT*, p. 76.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Faruqi, *Al-Tawhīd*, p. 77.

<sup>7</sup> *SCRIPT*, p. 70.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Faruqi, *Al-Tawhīd*, p. 92.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*.

even though he may belong to another faith, culture, civilization or age.<sup>1</sup> Al-Faruqi continued to clarify that Islam obliged the Muslims to cultivate their faculties to understand themselves, nature and the world where they live, to satisfy their innate craving for food, shelter, comfort, sex and reproduction, to ensure the harmony between their spouse.<sup>2</sup> Muslims must work and till the earth into a producing orchard, a fertile farm and a beautiful garden to express their understanding, craving and realizing works of aesthetic beauty.<sup>3</sup> The examples cited reveal the infusion of the *Tawhīdic* aspect in life connected with respect for others, thus eradicating racism.

As for the political blend with the *Tawhīdic* outlook, Anwar's *SCRIPT* resembles al-Faruqi's thought. For example, in political involvement, just like Anwar, al-Faruqi emphasized that the ummatism of Islam blessed man's will to power and participation in the process of gaining power is a religious duty.<sup>4</sup> The Ruler rules and executes the Law of God, and the Ruled obeys the law. Both parties are equally responsible for perpetually mobilizing their efforts to align with the Law of God.<sup>5</sup> In fact, al-Faruqi, during Mahathir Mohammad's administration,<sup>6</sup> has played a vital role in reforming and reinvigorating the *ukhuwwah* spirit as an 'Islamic worker-brother' to convince the ABIM organization that unity and avoiding conflict with the Malaysian government was essential for the survival of the Ummah and the Islamic revival.<sup>7</sup> In his letter to ABIM, al-Faruqi wrote:

"...Our and your task is to pull together behind his leadership, to spare no erg of energy in fulfilling this crucial Islamic goal...it is, therefore, my and my colleagues' judgment that you ought to respond to Mahathir's gesture of goodwill (his removal of restrictions and stopping of harassment) with an equal or superior gesture of support and cooperation. It is not only becoming but imperative for the Islamic movement publically to proclaim its slate clean of any condemnation of the Government's policies of Malay reconstruction...in the name of Allah and the interest of the Islamic world movement, I renew my appeal to you to do everything in your

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.82.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Faruqi, *Al-Tawhīd*, pp. 83–84.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 84.

<sup>6</sup> Mahathir Mohammad was the fourth and the seventh Prime Minister of Malaysia

<sup>7</sup> Tasnim Abdul Rahman et al., "Transforming Islamic Values in Malaysia: The Role of Al-Faruqi," *Revelation and Science* 5, no. 1 (June 24, 2015), <https://journals.iiu.edu.my/revival/index.php/revival/article/view/121>.

[possible] power to break the frigid ice that has formed between the movement and the government and to move closer toward shura and cooperation in obedience to Allah Ta'ala and His Prophet.”<sup>1</sup>

In this context, al-Faruqi's contribution to Malaysia in dealing with racism and uniting its people has the same affinity to the current Madani political system. The worldview of *Tawhīd* gives Malaysians the opportunity to see the nation in its original state as a gift from God and thus to understand that all actions to preserve it are an act of praise on everybody's part.<sup>2</sup>

Likewise, Siddiq Fadil affirmed that the standard of *Tawhīd* preserving the natural well-being of all the members of the country transcends the racial, political and economic agenda. However, to some extent, they are relevant to setting the goals of achieving national unity. However, Malaysians must be cautious as excessive thought on materialistic achievement, as sought through the affirmative action of NEP (National Economic Policy), may lead to conflicts of interest and polarization.<sup>3</sup> Just like the Madani system and al-Faruqi's thought towards the unity of the nation, focusing on the quality of basic needs such as income, education level, and where people live will lead to more equity over time than race-based solutions<sup>4</sup> is an appropriate move to deal with racism. Indeed, Anwar, in his *SCRIPT*, aims to ensure equitable distribution and social through restructuring the economy to make Malaysia a leading Asian economy and provide people with the benefits they need to achieve a better quality of life.<sup>5</sup>

## Conclusions

In conclusion, Ismail Raji al-Faruqi's concept of *Tawhīd* provides a philosophical framework for applying *Tawhīd* in different areas of life and is very appropriate to cope with racism. He established *Tawhīd* as a religious experience, worldview, and essence of Islam and its civilization with all the characteristic principles to demonstrate its

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<sup>1</sup> Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, “[Letter to the President of ABIM],” January 11, 1981.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Faruqi, *Al-Tawhīd*, pp. 162–63.

<sup>3</sup> Siddiq Fadzil, “Pembinaan Bangsa Kepelbagaian Dalam Bingkai Kesatuan. Amanat Pimpinan”, *Muktamat Nasional Keenam Wadah Pencerdasan Umat Malaysia* (WADAH), 15th September 2012.”

<sup>4</sup> Penny, “Sons of The Soil”—Malaysia's Preference Laws For Malays as a Violation Of Equal Protection.”

<sup>5</sup> “Madani Economy To Boost Malaysian Economy, Improve Quality Of Life – PM Anwar,” *Bernama*, July 27, 2023, retrieved September 11, 2023, <https://www.mof.gov.my/portal/en/news/press-citations/madani-economy-to-boost-malaysian-economy-improve-quality-of-life-pm-anwar>.

applicability. In the context of Malaysia, the concept of *Tawhīd* can be woven into the idea of nation-building by enriching it with the understanding of the Ummah, the unity of values, and the principle of responsibility and ethics. Moreover, the conceptual framework of *Tawhīd* propagated by al-Faruqī can be seen as applicable to the Madani policy framework through the focus and initiative of the government, including its economic policy. The concept of *Tawhīd* in the idea of human dignity or *Karāmah Insāniyyah* is prevalent in the value of respect in Madani policy and, at the same time, became one of the seven priorities in the education system set by the Malaysian Ministry of Education.

In implementing the concept of human dignity and avoidance of racism, it is recommended that:

1. The policy on the education system implemented should be a continuous project and not an ad-hoc basis.
2. More research collaboration on values of respect must be taken into account.
3. Policy on anti-discrimination provisions of the Employment Act 1955 must be applied to avoid discrimination.
4. The Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) must be finalized and implemented.

In short, point (1) speaks of the goals of the published National Unity Blueprint 2021-2030, which aims to build a nation with shared values. The government must include broader information and activities in school curricula related to other ethnic groups, such as the Orang Asli. The reason for this idea is to bring awareness to students of what they have in common and teach them respect for diversity. The Minister in charge has to implement the policy continuously and not on an ad hoc basis. The policy should be permanent, independent of political changes, to avoid the adverse effects that could result from the constant change of policies in the school system for students of different ethnicities.<sup>1</sup>

As for point (2), in the light of Madani *SCRIPT*, which encourages more research on the value of respect within cultures and promotes interaction between society through initiatives such as community

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<sup>1</sup> Noormaizatul Akmar Muhamad Nasir et al., “A Review of Racial Microaggression in Malaysian Educational System and Its Higher Education Institutions,” *International Journal of Higher Education* 10, no. 2 (November 30, 2020): 151, <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v10n2p151>.

exchanges, project collaboration and celebrations must be implemented and continuously practiced.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, point (3) deals with employment; the Ministry of Human Resources must make the amendment proposed in September 2018<sup>2</sup> to include job seekers in the anti-discrimination provisions of the Employment Act 1955.<sup>3</sup> This Act protects job seekers and employees from discrimination, including racial discrimination.

Point (4) speaks on the tenancy law, and the Ministry of Housing must finalize the Act on Racism specified in the Residential Tenancy Act.<sup>4</sup> The Ministry needs to give due attention to this suggestion and educate landlords and tenants about their shared role and responsibility in addressing racism. As of 2020, the Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) is still being drafted and expected to be introduced to Parliament next year.<sup>5</sup>

With all the points mentioned above, it is hoped that the Madani system of government will be able to address the issue of racism that beset Malaysian society according to the spirit and standard of *Tawhīd*. Finally, to create a God-conscious society that aims to live together in harmony, all stakeholders must act and contribute their parts to enrich society with solution-oriented programs and activities related to religiosity and spirituality. An example of this practice is the IIUM's educational agenda, which not only focuses on the Islamization of human knowledge and its relevance to contemporary life but also promotes programs and student activities that promote the Islamization

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<sup>1</sup> Anwar Ibrahim, *Membangun Negara MADANI; Visi dan Kerangka Dasar Reformasi*, (Shah Alam, Selangor: Institute Darul Ehsan, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> "Employment Act: Anti-Discrimination Provisions Must Extend to Job Seekers and Include Disability Status," *AWAM*, May 10, 2021, retrieved July 20, 2023, <https://www.awam.org.my/2021/05/10/employment-act-anti-discrimination-provisions-must-extend-to-job-seekers-and-include-disability-status/>.

<sup>3</sup> "Employment Act 1955, Act 256," January 1, 2023, retrieved July 20, 2023, [https://lom.agc.gov.my/ilims/upload/portal/akta/outputaktap/1741197\\_BI/Act%20265\\_FINAL\\_as%20at%201%20Jan%202023%20\(30.3.23\).pdf](https://lom.agc.gov.my/ilims/upload/portal/akta/outputaktap/1741197_BI/Act%20265_FINAL_as%20at%201%20Jan%202023%20(30.3.23).pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Dineskumar Ragu, "Racism, Landlords And Tenants: Two Views On New Law," *Free Malaysia Today*, April 20, 2022, retrieved July 20, 2023, <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2022/04/20/racism-landlords-and-tenants-two-views-on-new-law/>.

<sup>5</sup> Tarrence Tan, "Residential Tenancy Act Expected To Be Tabled Next Year, Says Deputy Minister," *The Star*, March 29, 2023, retrieved July 19, 2023, <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2023/03/29/residential-tenancy-act-expected-to-be-tabled-next-year-says-deputy-minister>.

of the self.<sup>1</sup> This type of effort will be able to reduce the negative impact of racism out of the practices of secularism of the modern world on people's way of life.

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<sup>1</sup> Sayyed Mohamed Muhsin, "Broadening the Dimensions of Islamization of Knowledge: Mohd Kamal Hassan's Perspective," *International Journal Of Islamic Thoughts*, 4, no. 1 (2015): pp. 31–42.

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