

# Solitude is the new trend

14 NEW STRAITS TIMES

## Comment

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Freedoms in plural Malaysia must work to secure peace and prosperity

### Unacceptable interference

**I**NTERNATIONAL law provides for non-interference and non-interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign nation. While the latter more particularly deals with force — coercion or military — the latter is more expansive, although the parameters are unclear. However, the European Union's 2002 resolution critic of Malaysia's National Security Council Bill and another urging the withdrawal of the country's anti-sedition law is manifestly an interference in the domestic affairs of the country. Malaysia naturally is not amused, saying that it "strongly believes that full respect must be provided to any sovereign country to decide on its internal affairs... to ensure continued peace, security and stability". But, as is Malaysia's practice, it intends to seek a solution through dialogue. After all, what option does a small country have.

However, it is generally recognised that the principle of non-interference is very much compromised once the United Nations human rights charter gained international acceptance. Those states perceiving themselves as policing the world for abuses have interested, often with force. The United States and its allies invaded Iraq because Saddam Hussein was determined as a dictator.

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Alghan women's rights was the trigger for violating Afghanistan. Libya was openly destabilised, also to overthrow its alleged dictator. In Syria, the call for regime change on the grounds of human rights abuse is another example. Iraq and Libya are now failed states. Afghanistan is a lawless opium-exporting country. Syria, meanwhile, is in ruins although its president is still in place.

That foreigners can dictate their perceptions on trials over a nation is intolerable, what more a democracy like Malaysia, where the ruling coalition has been returned three and again. The 1990 general election, for example, was certified by the Commonwealth observers as fair. What is the EU trying to imply: that the majority voice is somehow mistaken, misled or stupid? Are not local culture and values an integral part of the national identity of most Malaysians unthinkingly den the passport of Western liberalism? Nevertheless, having said that, the liberal nations of freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly are enshrined in Article 10 of the Constitution of Malaysia.

As to the country's anti-sedition law, first, it is a criminal legacy. Secondly, the propping argument in the West is enough for the country to act cautiously in this regard. Already, the debate has begun to decline populism as another bioteknological predisposition not unlike homosexuality. It, therefore, behooves the liberal to properly weigh the "logical" conclusion that this non-judgmental attitude regarding sexual procreation might take humanity. The feminist fight against child marriages has yet to be resolved and already some in the West are arguing to legalise pedophilia. Furthermore, the religious sensibilities of a majority Muslim country cannot be disregarded. Until such time as a cogent argument can be made for LGBTI freedom, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex rights in Islam, in the same vein as that being asserted for gender equality, Patriarchy cannot even, for fear of regime change, say, surrender to EU interference. For Malaysia, democracy means respecting the moral laws and values that govern the lives of its citizens.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2015

## Solitude is the new trend

**LONELINESS:** The lack of love and modern products that focus on those living alone make for an increasingly isolated world

**A** DOCUMENTARY by Channel 4 News last month movingly showed the suffering that loneliness causes to millions of elderly people. Margaret Nickless attempted, with tears in her eyes, to describe her plight in the words, "If you have never been lonely, you cannot imagine what it is like". Roy Croucher described loneliness in the words, "You know that when you return to a totally empty home, you know that loneliness will afflict you again. And you spend all your days waiting for the phone to ring".

The number of people living alone across the world is approaching 300 million. That figure is also growing by the year. The rapid rise in the number of people who live alone or feel lonely, particularly in Western societies, is attracting considerable interest among scientists and is the subject of much research.

As in so many areas, America tops the list. More than 32 million people in the country live alone; 28 per cent of households consist of only one person. Eric Klinenberg, a professor at New York University, approaches the subject differently and suggests that solitude is a new "trend". The world of brand names and consumerism have certainly made solitude a trend. Products aimed at people who live alone are extraordinarily popular across the world. World-famous brands concentrate on products aimed at single people.

In short, people who live alone are regarded as a significant "economic market". The reason for this is that the majority of people who live alone generally tend to lead active lives; they frequently dine out and participate more often in activities such as going to concerts, the theatre and cinema and they make more use of sports centres.

Therefore, instead of measures to prevent solitude, people are literally being encouraged to adopt it. And, of course, that leads to a serious increase in the numbers of people living alone.

Another surprising thing is that the great majority of people now live alone out of choice, not because they have to.

Klinenberg attributes this to people now having the purchasing power to meet their needs on their own.

To put it another way, he is saying that as people's economic means grow, so does their potential for living alone.

The reason why young people prefer to live alone, according to Klinenberg, is their search for an identity. Another factor associated with the increase in the number of people living alone is technology. The fact that people are in constant contact thanks to the internet and social media is another important factor in the rise of people living alone.

Yet, neither advances in technology or communications or transportation are in fact responsible for so many people living alone. There is but one reason for this problem that is growing by the day: the loneliness that is afflicting the world. The lack of love in the world is the only reason why young avoid choice, or are condemned, to live in solitude.

People do not love one another. They disregard and take no interest in one another; elderly people find themselves abandoned, with nobody feeling the slightest pang of conscience. A blind eye is turned to their living isolated from the world. Young people, who receive no interest or love from the people around them, are encouraged to take up habits that will end up harming them. People who become tired of friendlessness and loneliness seek the company of dogs, cats, budgies, cars and tropical fish instead.

People who fail to find the love they seek live all the by off-living and decide to live alone. The list could be extended to even greater detail.

The fact is that loneliness is one of the greatest social scourges. Solitude is the most dangerous sickness caused by loneliness and one of the greatest causes of suffering. Indeed, international law has determined that isolation in the worst punishment for criminal offences.

The writer is the author of more than 300 books, translated into 73 languages, in public, religious and science.




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consumerism have certainly made solitude a trend. Products aimed at people who live alone are extraordinarily popular across the world. World-famous brands concentrate on products aimed at single people.

In short, people who live alone are regarded as a significant "economic market". The reason for this is that the majority of people who live alone generally tend to lead active lives; they frequently dine out and participate more often in activities such as going to concerts, the theatre and cinema and they make more use of sports centres.

Therefore, instead of measures to prevent solitude, people are literally being encouraged to adopt it. And, of course, that leads to a serious increase in the numbers of people living alone.

Another surprising thing is that the great majority of people now live alone out of choice, not because they have to.

Klinenberg attributes this to people now having the purchasing power to meet their needs entirely by themselves. To put it another way, he is saying that as people's economic means grow, so does their potential for living alone.

The reason why young people prefer to live alone, according to Klinenberg, is their search for an identity.

Another factor associated with the increase in the number of people living alone is technology. The fact that people are in constant contact thanks to the Internet and social media is another important factor in the rise of people living alone.

Yet, neither advances in technology or communications or transportation are in fact responsible for so many people living alone. There is but one reason for this problem that is growing by the day; the lovelessness that is afflicting the world. The lack of love in the world is the only reason why young and old choose, or are condemned, to live in solitude.

People do not love one another. They disregard and take no interest in one another; elderly people find themselves abandoned, with nobody feeling the slightest pang of conscience. A blind eye is turned to their living isolated from the world.

Young people, who receive no interest or love from the people around them, are encouraged to take up habits that will end up harming them. People who become tired of friendlessness and lovelessness seek the company of dogs, cats, budgies, cats and tropical fish instead.

People who fail to find the love they seek lose all the joy of living and decide to live alone. The list could be extended in even greater detail.

The fact is that lovelessness is one of the greatest societal scourges. Solitude is the most dangerous sickness caused by lovelessness and one of the greatest causes of suffering. Indeed, international law has determined that isolation is the worst punishment for criminal offences.

Criminals are condemned to isolation in prison because of their crimes. The longer the sentence, the worse the punishment. Life imprisonment, in one sense, means a life of solitude.

Contrary to what many academic studies suggest, solitude is not a natural part of life. Being together in a spirit of love and friendship and brotherhood, as the old saying goes, is the spice of life. It is inhuman to choose a life devoid of love and friendship or to impose such a life on others.

Human beings are created to wish to see beauty around them and to delight in it. A joyous faith in the heart and love of God gives rise to a profound love for the manifestations of Him. The soul can only be at ease when it sees the manifestations of God. Animals, plants, trees, fruits, foods and lovely views are all delightful manifestations of the existence of God but the most intense manifestation of God is human beings. The moral values, love and affection of God are most intensely manifested in humanity.

Like many other problems in the world, loneliness can be eradicated if people live by love. Everyone will then come together in a spirit of love and everyone, great or small, will be loved and respected. Nobody will be condemned to a life of solitude or even wish to live alone. They will spend their days in joy and happiness, as if every day were a holiday. We all have a duty to make those fine times a reality.

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[1] <https://www.facebook.com/Channel4News/videos/10153317764816939/>

[2] <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/eric-klinenberg-on-going-solo-19299815/>

[3] <https://toe.prx.org/2015/02/when-youre-lonely-life-is-very-long-rebroadcast/>

Adnan Oktar'ın New Straits Times'da yayınlanan makalesi:

<http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/12/118496/solitude-new-trend>

<https://www.harunyahya.info/en/articles/solitude-is-the-new-trend-88792>